In 1979 the Indian Institute of Public Opinion came out with a startling revelation in a survey entitled "The Lonely Crowd revisited - Indian Youth: A Study in Alienation" and mused on the fact that "Those with higher education in particular are disgruntled with Indian society and are more likely to drop out or to be active." Although the statement is fraught with sweeping and overly facile generalisations, the content of truth in it nevertheless remains significant and crucial.

During the past few years there has been a marked deterioration in academic and non-academic role performance of the University students. Nonconformity to collegiate orders, fascination for the sensuous world, demonstration of dissent through non-conformity of behaviour, growing sense of isolation and futility of life and increasing attraction towards drugs and cannabis—illustrate the overwhelming stance of alienated youth in our campuses. The modern student, as represented in mass media - popular magazines, newspapers, is unkept, unwashed, pot-smoking, promiscuous and protesting.
According to newspaper reports some of the prestigious universities of the country have become the centre for creating a "lost generation of idle bohemians good for nothing". The reported cases of 'student casualties' i.e. dropouts, illegal drug users, unmarried pregnancies, academic failures, mild psychological disorders, juvenile aberrations are much lesser than what are actually observed. Much of the casualties remain unnoticed because of the relative resistance of the academic community which shows its reluctance in flashing the reality as it profanes the campus character. Moreover many of the casualties do not look different from their classmates and the overt pattern of their daily activities shows relatively little that is distinctive and observable.

Only a few

Nevertheless, the proportion of the casualties is quite small and the vast majority of students remain largely uncritical of the wiser society, fundamentally conformist in behaviour and outlook and basically adjusted to the prevailing collegiate and social orders. The survey conducted by Indian Institute of Public Opinion in 1972 reveals that "despite a lack of enchantment with
many of the policies, practices and values of government and other social institutions, a vast majority of youth do not appear to be deeply troubled personally and are happy with their friends and families."

The response

Although the theme has been adequately discussed and debated in popular mass media, our social scientists seem to be quite silent about it. There seems a tendency on the part of the commentators to dismiss this group of youth as a small minority and hence inconsequential. "The importance of a group should not be viewed in terms of their numerical strength. Their importance is to be discerned in their activities and the reverberations their activities make in society and not in terms of their mere numerical strength (Oomen, 1979). True, the group is in minority at the moment, but their bulk is swelling day by day. Comparing the figures of alienated youth in 1972 with 1979, the Institute of Public Opinion rightly observed that "the roots of alienation in Indian youth have grown ... in comparison to 1972 youth survey."
Of the enormous output of research on student dissent published each year in India, very little is specifically directed towards the problems of alienation and the order of "private dissentation" among students. The few researches which have directly or indirectly touched upon the theme have come out with such hypotheses as social tension (Srinivas, 1972; Chandra, 1971), Role - Conflict (Ellis 1971) Social Change and Conflict (Cormack, 1962; Libona, 1969) anomie college environment (Sinha, 1972; Patra, 1973; Pattnaik and Indiresan, 1979), Erosion of the hierarchical structure of the society (Altbach, 1968) the phenomenon of multiversity (Singhal, 1978) and the generation gap (Kashyap, 1972; Bhan, 1972). Most of the generalisations found in these works are based upon theoretical speculations. The attempts to generate theoretical insight based upon the empirical evidence is thus largely missing (Singhal, 1978). The few empirical works (Sinha, 1972; Srivastav, 1971; Sinha and Sinha, 1974; Patra, 1974; Patra, 1973; Abhimanyou, 1976; Sood, 1979; Pasdonjee, 1980) which deal with the problems of alienation in student community seem to have dealt the much complex issue in quite simplistic way. Before examining these studies, the main thrust here is to outline some
of the conceptual problems very often raised by the social scientists pertaining to the study of alienation.

**Conceptual Problems in the Study of Alienation**

Four major problems that frequently confuse the students of alienation are: (a) Meaning; (b) measure; (c) value connotation; and (d) the levels of focus.

**Meaning of Alienation**

The first problem centres round the definition and usage of the concept. The concept alienation, remarks Clark (1959) seems to have been assigned to the rank of 'extremely useful but 'loosely defined' higher construct. Moreover, the studies on alienation differ in research objective, in assumption in the operational criteria. This has resulted in a serious communication problem as well as conceptual and methodological difficulties in theory application.

Both the Marxists and the non-Marxist scholars have their own ways of looking at the problem; in conceptualising and consequently in interpreting the concept. The most important issue which has arisen over the meaning and viability of alienation pertains to the question:
whether the concept is a tool of social enquiry or an instrument for social criticism and practical action. The researchers who subscribe to the Marxist analysis, view alienation as a strictly objective or materialistic structural phenomenon (Archibald, 1976; Israel, 1976; Dixon, 1976; Geyen and Schweitzer, 1976; 1981; Schaff, 1981). On the contrary, the structuralist-functionalists and the adherents of survey method (Seeman, 1959; Blauner, 1964; Struening, 1965; Besag, 1966; Grazia, 1968, Neal, 1979) treat alienation as a social psychological experience, i.e., individually perceived and felt alienation. The objective structural conditions, in this framework, are the determinants of the degree of realism involved in the individuals response to the alienating structure. A group of researchers also share with Keniston (1968) that "the term alienation today so ill-defined that any one who sets out to study the psychology of alienated individuals must begin by defining carefully what it is he is studying."

Measure of alienation

The debate over the issue of measures of alienation to a large extent is based on the levels of focus i.e. self versus society. The Marxist scholars give
emphasis on the objective conditions of work environment, such as substantive complexity of work the degree of individual responsibility on the job, the conditions of occupational self direction, the extent of routinization and supervision, to determine the extent of alienation (Kohn, 1977, 1976; Tandon, 1972). On the other hand, the non Marxist scholars, especially those who are opposed to Marxist formulation, increasingly lay emphasis on the individually perceived and felt alienation (Seeman, 1975; Neal, 1979; Sinha, 1972; Tap, 1978; Payne, 1974; Olsen, 1976). Those who respond to the mainstream of such social-psychological tradition of survey research which is dominating most empirical approaches to alienation, subscribe to the Seeman's (1959) Conceptual framework i.e. the reduction of alienation measure to individuals perception of powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation and self-estrangement.

Levels of Focus

Another debate within structural and functional framework pertains to the level of focus i.e. the immediacy of object from which one is alienated: the person himself, the more proximate and immediate work
environment, and the society (Evan 1962; Han 1971; Hollian 1972; Neal et al., 1979). While many authors (Blauier 1964; Bonjean and Grimes, 1970) have assumed that alienation from society and from organization are interchangeable, Dean (1961), and Seemen and Evans (1962) consider alienation as a result of societal level causes. Clark (1959) and Perlin (1962) while focussing on alienation of workers states that the levels of focus must orient to the organization (work environment) because the "impact of environment on the workers were more crucial than the society". Although the contradictory positions taken by researchers with regard to the contextual analysis, are often debated, hardly any attempt has been made to empirically verify the debate: whether persons feel the same degree of alienation from the work environment as from society; if not, which is stronger and how much stronger is it.

Value Connotation of alienation

The fourth, perhaps the most puzzling problem confronting the alienation theorists is the value connotation of alienation. One of the major implications often embedded in individualised conceptualisation of alienation is that an alienated person is somewhat
abnormal and the awareness of alienation (powerlessness normlessness etc.) is not a realistic appraisal of one's own condition. In Western countries the 'Ghetto riots', 'unplanned pregnancies', 'delinquency', 'social dropouts', etc. are recognised as the manifestation of alienation. It became almost fashionable in the 1960s to refer to young people who in one way or another did not fit in as being alienated. Another group of researchers, on the contrary, view that alienation is a realistic evaluation of one's condition which is an indication that the "Process of de-alienation and liberation, at least in the realm of consciousness, has already begun". (Vidal, 1967; Kohn, 1976).

The often cited argument in this tradition is that individually perceived and felt alienation can have positive consequence for both the individual and society. As Lutz (1981) has demonstrated, "the concept of alienation in western thought from ancient philosophy and medieval theology to Hichte and Hegel, contained a wider spectrum of meaning and uses encompassing positive and neutral as well as negative value connotations. But this broader perspective on the notion of alienation was obscured or reduced in the course of time by the
progressive secularization of Western thought. Marx in particular was instrumental in reducing the concept primarily to its negative value connotation, largely in response to the intellectual climate of his time, and more specifically to Hegel's idealism in accordance with Feuerbach's materialist prescriptions and conception of human self-alienation in religious life as de-humanizing process". The manifestation of labour unrest, tardiness, absenteeism, labour turnover, insubordination, industrial accidents and product sabotage are considered according to some Marxist psychologist as possible behavioural indicators of alienated labour (Kinehart 1975; Afonja, 1978).

**Political Activism and Alienation**

From the controversy on value connotation of the concept emerges the long standing debate over the issue whether the political activists be considered in the same manner as those who have reacted by withdrawing into apathy and indifference. Keniston (1968) distinguishes between a pattern of behaviour which is activist from the one which is alienated. The activist youth "moves outwards into the arena of social and political
life, seeking to introduce and produce change." The alienated youth by contrast "moves inward seeking to find and develop his own inner world of aesthetically oriented personal experience".

Several years ago Merton (1957) distinguished between different modes of individual acceptance or rejection of cultural goals and the institutionalised means to their attainment. Conformity involved a pattern in which the individual accepted both the goals and the means. Retreatism described the individual who had rejected both the goals and the means to their attainment. Merton (1957) describes these people as being in society but not of it; "These, constitute the pure aliens". In Merton's typology innovation refers to a pattern in which the individual has accepted the legitimate goals of his society but has rejected the institutionalised means to their attainment. Rebellion on the other hand, refers to a pattern in which the system of goals and means as it presently exists have been rejected and replaced with a new system. Both innovation and rebellion can produce activists - the efforts to change either the entire society (rebellion) or some significance part of the society (innovation).
Flacks (1967) refers to alienated youth as those who have rejected traditional social values, are rebellious, against the institutionalised structure of authority and are 'un-involved in political and social issues'. On the contrary, the activist youth are involved politically and socially but have rejected the traditional values and structures of authority.

Every responsible study or survey shows apathy and privatism to be central characteristic feature of alienation. But most of the researchers and commentators seem to confuse two distinct varieties of student dissent - they fuse alienation i.e., private dissent with political activists or protestors. There is a common tendency among the Indian social scientists to equate political activism with mal-adjustment. For instance, Libona (1969), Sinha (1972), Patra (1973), Sinha and Sinha (1974) in their studies are equivocal about the fact that 'student activism' is a "function of alienation among students" (Sinha and Sinha, 1974). Sinha (1972) and Patra (1973) found significant and positive correlation between the measures of alienation and measures of student activism, political party affiliation and political participation. Considering the theoretical position taken in such studies the
measures that were employed to tackle the issue of alienation stand contradictory. For instance, Sinha (1972) on the one hand, takes the theoretical position of Seeman in conceptualising alienation on the other hand, while developing measures of alienation i.e. while selecting the scale items, she departs from the theoretical position quite a lot. The scale although based upon Seeman's (1959) meaning variant, i.e. Powerlessness, meaninglessness etc. the scale items measure more of the objectively perceived campus practices than the subjective state of individually perceived and felt alienation. To measure student activism, Sinha (1972) employed ten important problems as agreed upon by the students of Patna University for eliciting their preference for various degrees of activism 'in order to get the grievance redressed'. Attached to each problem there were five alternatives ranging from submitting an application to gherao the authority. Later studies (Patra, 1973, Patra, 1974) using her measure came out with same set of conclusions. The way of concept activism was treated in these studies gives one the impression that a complex and multidimensional concept like activism,
that too in the context of alienation, has been treated very much superficially.

Several psychological studies by Davids and Murray (1965) Kenisten (1968) reveal an overwhelming apolitical stance of alienated youth. The feeling of alienation inoculate the alienated youth against involvement in "long range activist endeavours like "plan and execute demonstration or marches". The theoretical fusion of alienation and activism for some authors might have come from the contradictory findings on student activists. A major source of controversy centres around the basic motivation of youthful activists and dissenters. In the view of some observers, activism and dissent particularly student activism, were basically self destructive and socially harmful - more a manifestation of personal maladjustment than a mature response to social pathology (Bronfenbrener 1974, Bailey, 1970). According to this consideration "activists were basically immature, insecure, undisciplined deeply troubled" young people who are "fixated at the stage of temper tantrum". Contrary to the above exposition, another group of social scientists revealed that the political activists were intelligent, mature and socially effective (Pittel, 1971; Bay, 1970;
Keniston, 1967, 1968; Mantell, 1974; Sampson, 1970). Moreover, each country has its own particular type of student activism which springs from the political social and educational realities of the country. The student activism in developed societies takes place in a context very different from that in the developing countries.

The applicability of findings from Western Countries

Most of the empirical research on student alienation seems to be limited to the analysis of samples from developed societies. The cross cultural studies conducted in seventies, although very few in number (Tomeh, 1974) testifies the fact that the socio-cultural variation and social psychological differences between developing and developed societies are crucial factors in the consideration of alienation. In fact right from Hegel to Contemporary thesis, directly or indirectly acknowledge that socio-cultural factors of a given society are linked with conditions of widespread alienation.

Traditionally the Indian society has been characterised by its religious moral system, strong family ties and bonds, approved cultural authoritarianism and paternalism closely guarded sex and a deep sense of
in-group loyalties. But the way of life is rapidly challenged by the development of modern scientific inventions, higher education, mass communication and the decline in social and geographical isolation. As a result, the old order is becoming no longer tenable and there appears to be conflict in adjustment. In India, like any other developing countries, the youth must experience severe strain in the process of adjustment. The resources available have not been sufficient to meet the expectation and adjust with relative comfort.

In India the rapid expansion of the educational system has not been matched by the growth in the kinds of skilled jobs suitable for University graduates and the problem of unemployment haunts most. Very often, Indian student finds himself in an ambivalent relationship to their families and the traditional norms of society. In most cases, the family is able to hold the allegiance of the student, but sometimes not without dispute. The intellectual conflicts between modern concept of society and personal life - less stress on restrictions, decreased emphasis on the family and more traditional norms are sometimes strong.
In contrast, the industrially developed societies already managed to pass through the above stages of experience. While the sporadic and widespread campus activism characterized in India the manifestation of youth revolt in '60s, in United States hippy sub-culture became an important aspect of modern youth culture rejecting the false values of modern industrial society.

The conditions that are basic to the understanding of alienation in an industrially developed society are different from the conditions in a transitional society like India. Indeed, this restricts the applicability of findings obtained from sample of students from industrially developed society on Indian student population.

Considering the existing gap in knowledge about student alienation in cross cultural perspective and the limited and conflicting nature of Indian empirical studies, it became imperative to start from the very identification of alienated students by employing a measure based on the findings of the intensive psychological and psychoanalytical studies conducted on alienated students. The intention was that, the identification of
alienated students would facilitate the understanding of its socio-psychological correlates, behavioural consequences etc.

**Pilot Phase of the Study**

In the pilot phase of the study an alienation measure was developed and basing upon the response of the students to the scale items a cluster analysis was performed. This yielded nine highly intercorrelated dimensions underlying alienation. To understand the psychosocial status of the concept a battery of tests viz. Alienation scale, Anomy Scale, I.P.A.T. Anxiety scale, Maudeley Personality Inventory, Social participation index, Mobility commitment scale, were administered to a sample of 140 students of Jawaharlal Nehru University. Information with regard to respondents socio-economic status, type of schooling he had, rural/urban background etc. were also obtained. The two criterion groups namely, \( \xi_1 \) (Low-scores = low alienated students) and \( \xi_3 \) (High-scores = High alienated students) were chosen on the measure of alienation. The mean difference of these two extreme groups (High alienated and low alienated students) with regard to different psychosocial variables viz. Anomy, Anxiety, socio-economic
status, introversion, social participation, mobility commitment were computed.

Of all the variables, the 't' test showed significant difference on the variable of anomie, mobility commitment ($P < .05$), anxiety and introversion ($P < .01$). The mean scores suggested that high alienated students came from low S.E.S. families and were introverts and were highly anxious. These students did have more mobility commitments than their non-alienated counterparts. When alienation scores were interpreted in terms of rural/urban background, sex and type of schooling, it was seen that alienated students largely came from rural background who had finished their schooling in a private or government school. Inter-correlation between different psycho-social variables and anomie and alienation suggested that anomie is significantly related with anxiety, introversion, social participation, alienation and mobility commitment. Students with high anxiety, introversion and low social participation perceived the campus to be more anomic. Alienation was significantly and inversely related to socio-economic status ($P < .01$), and social participation ($P .01$).
The Focus of the Present Study

The basic thrust of the present study is to provide a perspective and research based knowledge of the alienated students and the behavioural consequences of alienation. While studying various aspects of alienation an attempt has been made to touch upon empirically the controversy over important issues which divide alienation theorist and researchers. To be more specific the focus of the present study is to (i) understand the behavioural manifestation of alienated students such as (a) the study behaviour (b) the commitment for upward mobility (c) the inclination for social participation. (II) Understand to what extent is alienation differently related to the various sociogenic conditions i.e., which group of students manifest higher or lower alienation, such as (a) the type of schooling (b) the extent of parental training (c) the socio-economic status (III) determine the extent of alienation from society as a result of societal level course and from university as a result of organisational course. (IV) Find out the psycho-social correlates of a selected group of student activists.
With these objectives in view, a research study was undertaken at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. It can be regarded as an atypical Indian University patterned after Sussex and Australia National University. Its student intake distinguished history and image as a super centre of learning with overdose of politicization and experimentation make it an appropriate setting to study the theme of alienation which beset many universities today.