CHAPTER VIII

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The aim of the study as stated earlier, was to explore the attitudes of respondents towards certain socio-political issues, the varied influences on those attitudes and the interrelationships between such related aspects of the process of political socialization, as were operative on the representatives of the student community in Nashik city, in the year 1992–93. The broad conclusions inferred from the study are as follows,

- The average prototype of the student community of Nashik city, is a respondent belonging mainly to the Upper Middle class/High class, Hindu, Brahmin/Maratha/OBC, Marathi speaking, co-educational school educated, Urban product. Such a respondent typically comes from the Nuclear family, with a relatively higher educational status of parents, who are primarily into occupations like service, agriculture, teaching and business. ‘The Low class/So called Low caste’ co-terminality is evident, as concerns the lower levels of education of parents, beginning from illiteracy onwards. The occupations as practiced by parents, reflect the influence of caste and class. The generally observed social trend, of ‘High class/High caste’ and ‘Low class/So called Low castes’, being synonymous is also observed, in the class/caste distribution of the respondents in the sample.

**Communication**

- Family as an agency of socialization is more influential, for the female respondents, irrespective of caste and class, though comparatively it is the prototype group of respondents belonging to the so called, non-conservative and progressive families, where interactions with the family are more encouraged as compared to the respondents of, other class/caste combines. Family for most respondents is important and influential from the point of view of gaining information and attitude formation.
Interaction with Peer Group is the characteristic of predominantly male respondents, probably because of higher and better opportunities for exposure, outside the traditional structure of a family. The 'Low class/so called Low caste co-terminality', is evident here and hence it may be inferred that the traditional, authoritarian structure of the family, as is generally observed in the Non Brahmin caste cluster, may prove a hindrance for effective and enhanced interpersonal communication in the family, thereby resulting in more interaction with the Peer Group. This has been amply proved via the reasons stated, for lack of communication (effective) in the families. That Brahmin respondents, would rank comparatively lower in case of Peer Group interactions, was anticipated when they projected the existence of a lower number of friends of other castes/religions and regions. The benefits of Peer Group discussion are the apparent advantages that, they get as far as, information gain and clarification of doubts is concerned, as also for development of self-confidence.

Interactions with teachers are substantially less i.e. only 50% respondents mainly belonging to the 'Low class/So called Low caste' combine/Middle class, Maratha and male respondents, have some interpersonal communication with teachers, on socio-political matters. The benefits of such interaction are synonymous, with those of Peer Group interaction. Hence it may be inferred that, the interpersonal/informal agencies of socialization namely, Family, Peer Group and Teachers in that order, are important in the process of Political Socialization of the students in Nashik city, primarily for development of the Cognitive orientation and to a lesser extent in development of the Conative orientation. Contributions to the value component, by either agency are rather negligible and marginal.

Of the Mass Media, Books, Periodicals, and Films have been largely relegated to the background, thereby substantially lessening their impact, as agencies of political socialization. Influence of Radio, is apparently more on the Cognitive orientation. Readership of the Newspapers, is largely existent, irrespective of gender differences, though the class/caste co-terminality is observed as far as the preference for a particular Newspaper, is concerned. Hence ‘Maharashtra Times’ and ‘The Times of India’ are a preference of the prototype of Nashik, while the Local Newspaper ‘Deshdoot’ is the preferred choice, predominantly of the ‘Low class/So called Low caste’ combine of respondents. Lesser degree of exposure,
due to limited and restrained opportunities, may have resulted in their predominant appearance in the Low score category of Mass Media Score. The standing of the respondents, in the Medium and High score category for the same, however does not exhibit any definitive class/caste co-terminality. Majority of the respondents, appear in the Medium Score Category, while only 19 respondents have a High Media Score. Overall, the mass media contribute more towards the cognitive development, though Newspapers to some degree are also beneficial, from the point of view of Conative orientation. Television, in spite of its projected role and efficacy as a media of education, is looked upon more as a means of entertainment, by the students of Nashik city.

Hence it may be said that the Cognitive orientation of the students, is largely influenced by the traditional, interpersonal and informal media of communication like, Family and Peer Group and by the print media like, Newspapers and the audio media namely, the Radio. The category of matter, read or listened to via the media is of importance. News, are more widely read and heard, as against the editorials or discussions which generally also report the intricate technical details in a bolder way. It is the general tendency of most, to ignore reading these, resulting in a lesser capacity to analyze issues.

Cognition

It appears that, the students of Nashik have a comparatively enhanced Cognition about Personalities/Leaders in politics, as compared to the structures and processes. Media coverage for such personalities, as well as the frequency of discussion about them, is generally more as compared to, structures like Voluntary organizations and processes like, Census etc. This may have therefore resulted, in lower Cognition about the same. Female respondents have a relatively lesser Cognitive orientation as compared to the males. A relatively higher percentage of students, belonging to the High class/High caste combine, also have enhanced Cognitive orientation. Though the number of respondents in the High score category of Cognition score, is itself very less, their predominant appearance was largely expected, taking into consideration, the high frequency and better intensity of interpersonal communication with, a comparatively well educated Family and Peer Group, as also their exposure to Mass Media. The
previously stated point regarding the technical issues, appears to be
substantiated in this case as questions which were broadly technical/academic in
class character, garnered a huge ‘No Response’, and hence lead to a lower Cognition
score. Majority of the respondents, display a Medium level Cognitive orientation
and only 28 students have displayed a High Cognitive orientation.

Conation

- Attitudes of the respondents, regarding the various issues, generally indicate the
  influence of Cognition, Mass Media, Religious group, Caste group and Gender,
  all applicable in different degrees, for different issues.

- The average prototype of Nashik, favours the college elections but, emphatically
  without the interference of political parties.

- Nashik, as previously explained has been a stronghold for both, the BJP and
  Congress, each broadly alternating in the hold of power positions and hence, the
  dismissal of four BJP Governments in the wake of the Babri issue and the ban on
  RSS, are not favoured by a majority of the respondents.

- Attitudes towards the Kar Seva event and the probable consequences, depicted a
  strong influence of religious group and political party preference of the
  respondents, as projected by them. A certain degree of ‘cause and effect’
  relationship was also observed, in this case.

- Solutions for the Punjab and Kashmir problem, have also indicated a similar
  trend, though it seems that, a higher standing in the score groups has partially
  influenced, the sequence of choices. A major percentage of students in Nashik,
  also seem to indicate agreement with, the ban on ISS, ruthless extermination of
  terrorists from Punjab and War with Pakistan, as the probable solutions for the
  respective problems.

- Attitudes, about international events are less pronounced, as anticipated probable
  because of, the general tendency to be more interested in local or national issues
  and the relatively lesser coverage that, such issues garner either via the media or
  the interpersonal communication, thereby being relegated to the background.

- As concerns remedial measures, for social maladies, the average prototype
  believes in the path of Legislation and Education, as against
  violence/force/compulsions.
Except in the case of some attitudinal relationships, all others have indicated a similar pattern, of near equality of responses between the students in the Modal dispersion and the High score groups, about the specific Conative issue. Attitudes, being rather subjective, are not easy to measure and hence no method of scoring/scaling, was applicable to them. From the analysis, it was difficult to derive, any logical and precise linkage, between attitudes & information and attitudes & values.

**Evaluative Orientation**

- It seems that, the independent variable of Class, as such is more operative, as far as adherence or non adherence to values like, Secularism, Non Corruption, Non Alignment and New Economic Order is concerned. Caste, seems more operative in case of adherence/ non adherence to values like, Federalism and Equality.
- Commitment to Democracy as a value, is upheld more by two traditionally opposite groups i.e. the High class and the So called Low caste respondents.
- The ‘Low class / So called Low caste’ co-terminality is existent as far as adherence to values like, Secularism, Federalism and Equality is concerned. Conversely it is the High class/High caste combine of respondents, which projects adherence to the values of Non Corruption, Non Alignment and New Economic Order.
- A majority of the sample i.e. 60% respondents, have projected adherence to all the values except, the value of Secularism, wherein only around 40% display commitment to it. Hence it may be inferred that, the average prototype of Nashik, does not appear strongly committed to the value of Secularism.
- Some anticipated results like, The Non Hindus projecting strong secular tendencies, female respondents projecting, stronger commitment to the value of Equality, the ‘Low class/ So called Low caste’ combine projecting relatively weaker anti-corruption tendencies, High class respondents projecting a stronger commitment to the New Economic Order and Democracy being more upheld by the so called Lower caste respondents were also observed.
Participation

- The average prototype of Nashik, as anticipated, stands low as far as the participative orientation is concerned and the participative orientation of female respondents is, abysmally low. This observation substantiates the findings of previous studies that, only a small minority of the student population is participative and that female participation is largely negligible. Hence the modal dispersion of respondents, has appeared in the Low Score Category for participation score, while 33 respondents are the High scorers in this group.

- The Congress party is more favoured, as far as voting in election goes, while BJP is more favoured as far as intended or actual membership is concerned. This preference is largely representative of the political situation, as it then existed in Nashik. Party preference, as indicated by the respondents broadly corresponds, but it might not be truly representative, as about 40% respondents have not divulged their party preference.

- Membership of Political youth organizations, though quite less, is representative of the traditional class/caste composition; except for some deviance in the RSS membership, where SC/ST and OBC respondents have appeared predominant, as against Brahmin respondents. The party preference i.e. for BJP, Congress and Shiv Sena also indicates similar trends. The BJP clientele emerges from Upper Middle/High class/Middle class and Brahmin/OBC respondents; While Congress supporters hail from the Low class/Middle class and Non Hindu/Maratha and SC/ST respondents. The Shiv Sena supporters are mainly the Low class, SC/ST and Maratha respondents. Participation in such youth wings and voluntary organizations etc., is mainly beneficial to the respondents from the point of view of confidence gain. This observation is synonymous to the conclusions as observed from Dr. Y. B. Damle's study (Refer to study No.3, pp 27, Chapter I).

- Though Brahmin respondents, rank significantly higher in other score groups, in case of Participation score, they lag behind. Conversely, SC/ST and Maratha respondents who rank relatively lower in other score groups, rank very high in the Participation score, thereby projecting an enhanced Participative orientation. Familial influence on Participative orientation is quite less, while the major
influence seems to be that of Ideology, Leaders and Events. Benefits of Participation are similar in nature, to the one's observed earlier. It was rather surprising to note that, value formation does not seem to be a major benefit, even for those members or intended members of RSS and BJP etc., whose ideological strength is largely presumed.

General Observations

□ It was observed that, there is a change in the traditional position of the SC/ST's, as was existent until a few years ago. From the responses of the SC/ST respondents in the sample it may be inferred that, the SC/ST caste cluster, with respect to the Educational, Cognitive, Evaluative, Conative and Participative aspect, is gradually and slowly emerging from the background position, to a more dominant one. This is a welcome change and may be attributed to factors like, Dilution of traditional barriers, enhanced and advanced opportunities for education, social mobility and the new awareness brought about in them, by the Spurt in Dalit Movements.

□ The modal dispersion in case of scores, occurs in the Medium score category, thereby indicating that, the average prototype of Nashik students, is neither too low nor too high, as far as the various aspects of the process of political socialization like Communicative, Cognitive and Evaluative are concerned; but quite lacking as far as the existence of a Medium level Participative orientation, is concerned.

□ It was observed throughout the expanse of this study that, the general tendency of the respondents was to accept one of the stated alternatives and in very few cases, have they resorted to the use of 'Any Other', as a choice. This is one of the dilemmas and limitation of Social science empirical studies, wherein open ended questions for all the issues and aspects are not statistically feasible. If all the questions were framed as open ended ones, then there could have probably been a difference in the nature of responses and their order. But yet it was heartening to note that, the students have indicated and differentiated between the priority orders.

□ It also observed that the percentage of 'No Response' had increased substantially wherever and whenever justification of a particular stand was expected, probably due to a lesser analytical capacity.
As stated earlier, the process of political socialization is rather complex and it is the simultaneous operation of a multitude of factors, which makes the individual, what he is at any given point of time. A factorial analysis, wherein the impact of a singular isolated agency can be discerned, is rather difficult in these studies, as they deal with the responses of an individual, which may not always be consistent and constant. Hence the conclusions are mainly in the form of broad generalizations as against concrete observations, except in some cases like, agencies of influence etc. Yet the interrelationship, whereby the impact of any one factor or many factors, on a particular aspect is rather difficult to determine, as was observed in case of the Conative orientation. Though the overall percentage of response, is quite high, the element of significant ‘No Response’ in some few cases, has further hindered the cause, though in studies of this nature it is expected to some extent.

Like all empirical social science studies, the present study also has its own drawbacks and shortcomings, which could have been avoided to some degree, had the below given points been considered.

- A cross sectional analysis of Evaluative and Conative orientation should have been attempted in order to endeavour to determine, as precisely as possible, the interrelationship between the two.
- A faculty wise analysis could have been attempted, to discern the differences if any.
- Influence of college on all the orientations of the process of socialization should have been tested.
- Direct questions regarding the influences of parental education and occupation, on the choice of the respondent’s education and occupation, as also some questions to determine precisely, the co-terminality of parental education and interpersonal communication in the family, could have been incorporated in the questionnaire.

In spite of the drawbacks some very valid and useful methods and occurrences like, a large spontaneous response, an exhaustive questionnaire, the method of applying the class/caste/sex i.e. the PCS variable to other dependent variables thereby giving some significant results, the method of deriving the Per capita income to determine
the socio economic class of respondent, a highly representative and statistically satisfactory sample may be highlighted as the key achievements of this study.

In case of studies of this nature which are limited by the constraints of space and time, there is a constant need of pursuing further research with successive longitudinal and latitudinal studies. The possibility of particularistic studies with reference to the above is immense. Further and future research, could concentrate on the in depth investigative study of the efficacy of media and its influence on the different social clusters; special intensive studies of the entire aspects of political socialization, a specialized study of the end product of the process of political socialization with reference to groups like caste, religious and income groups, could also be attempted. A study of deviant behaviour i.e. of those who deviate from the normal hypothetical assumptions, in order to explore the reasons and causes for such deviant behaviour, may in all likelihood prove to be very substantial, relevant and significant.