CHAPTER - I

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INTRODUCTION

Today, the world is in great turmoil. Not only do we see war and destruction, but also witness growing poverty and hunger, the emergence of new slavery, and the ravaging of our ecosystem. Some have defined the modern world not in terms of technological advances but in terms of the growing gap between “haves” and “have nots.” This division of the world’s population is not simply economic but also social and political – i.e., a separation of world populations between those with basic human rights and those without it. In fact, it is probably more accurate to describe today’s world not as a division between “haves” and “have not” but rather between “haves” and “disposable people.” Today’s “disposable people” are those who toil for pennies a day in sweatshops for global corporations, those who are kidnapped and trafficked in modern-day slavery and those without access to basic necessities such as fresh drinking water.

Ideas for social change come from individuals – or, more accurately, they come from individuals through discussions with others. Individuals can turn ideas into action, but truly effective action emerges from collective efforts involving large numbers of people at the grassroot level. In other words, social change hinges on the ability of individual activists to organize with others collectively. This requires not only the reaching of common goals and a common understanding of issues but also grasping the importance of forging...
new human relationships based on mutual respect and solidarity. Thus, effective activists are essentially political organizers who have devoted time to keenly develop skills in bringing people together through community education and promoting inter-personal relationships based on respect and solidarity.

A notable historical instance of collective violence occurred in 1922. When Mahatma Gandhi called off a planned demonstration of non-violence and non-cooperation because of his followers, impulsive and emotional youths, took to rock throwing in the name of their leader. Similar heightened violence was exhibited in 1942, 1947 and 1965. Collective violence is the ultimate expression of a violating tendency and behaviour when imitation or identification with any particular impulsive action speaks of the group character. Individuals who actively participate in mass violence are frequently motivated by unconscious psychological conflicts rather than purely political ones.

Historically, in times of crisis, student activism has been a crucial force for social change. Students around the world have been at the forefront of movements to promote democracy and human rights. Student movements have toppled powerful dictatorships and military giants. Student activism has often served as the conscience for nations, reminding people in times of turmoil of the founding ideals of their countries and the aspirations of all people for justice, dignity, and equality. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the world’s most repressive governments jail and often murder student activists,
close down college campuses during times of crisis, and enforce strict
guidelines about what can and cannot be taught in school systems.
Those in power understand the significance of student movements –
often more so than student activists themselves.

For decades young people have been at the forefront of social
movements and social change, making activism anything but a fad.
Rather, it is a tool for those who feel that an injustice has occurred and
decide to act against it. Although only a fraction of the young people
fall into the ‘activist’ category, those who do carry an energy that has
proven significant in achieving social change. Activists have learnt to
use the tools and processes of globalization to push for social change.
There is a belief among many activists that at no time in history has
the opportunity for change been as possible and so necessary. Young
people become activists for many reasons but often as a response to
human rights abuse, environmental degradation or simply as a way to
express their outrage at political, social, economic or environmental
injustices they have witnessed. For many young people, globalization
has meant greater awareness of these abuses through global links and
well-publicised campaigns. Where one single issue was the focus for
many activists, globalization has highlighted a multifaceted and
interconnected understanding of global processes. Activism has been
successful in both promoting progressive change and stopping
injustices. Activism has also raised awareness on many important
issues including debt relief, gender issues, the AIDS pandemic, child
labour and global warming. Other issues that have been raised but are yet to be ‘mainstreamed’ by activists include civic participation and representation in policy making. In fact, a fair portion of youth activism centers on the right of young people to participate in decision making processes on all levels, through local, national, regional and global youth councils, for an institutional platforms.

In the years since the end of World War II there are a few countries in the world which have not been subjected to revolutionary changes in parts or the whole of their internal institutional structures and in their relation with other nations. These changes have called into question the appropriateness and effectiveness of traditional guidelines to public and personal problem solving and the traditional allocations of responsibility and authority for performing that function. Inevitably this has opened up temptations and opportunities for participation in that function by groups whose participation were formerly not considered important or even legitimate. Among these groups none has been more prominent and more potentially significant for the present and the future than the youth/students.

Activism by students in the affairs of their universities and of their community is not a new phenomenon. It is as old as the universities. But the impact of the activism in public affairs, particularly in the countries undergone rapid and revolutionary political, economic, social change and modernization has reached a new intensity and significance. That has been so evident that it has
stimulated an expanded research interest on the part of the social scientists whose operational field is individual and organizational behaviour.

The objectives of these behavioural scientists have focused on varied aspects of youth/student activism and they have usually sought for guidelines to its interpretation suggested by the particular disciplines within which they have received their research training. When E. Wight Bakke turned his attention to this phenomenon in 1989, it was for two reasons. As a manpower economist, he was interested in the implications of student activism for the provision of high level manpower required in rapidly industrializing and modernizing countries. As an organizational theorist he was interested in gaining from the observation of student movements, fresh insights into the structure and dynamics of social organizations.

If one were to follow wherever the problem led, even with respect to the interpretation of youth/student activism as a group phenomenon with societal consequences, he would have to be trained at a minimum as a social psychologist, a cultural anthropologist, a sociologist, a political scientist, an institutional economist, a historian, and from time to time as a philosopher. Youth/Student activism in particular countries has been investigated by representatives of all of these disciplines. E. Wight Bakke (1989) concludes from the reports of their investigations and from personal experiences provided a framework for an overall theory of student activism. He shares his
awareness with experts in the field and would like to suggest for the consideration of such a framework, fully aware that when he steps outside of his own field of professional competence, the results may be considered naïve by those who are professionally competent in this field.

The question arises, how do student movements become so powerful? Student movements gain power not because they are composed of activist and dedicated students. Student movements draw their power through the formation of strategic alliances with other sectors of society facing oppression, such as immigrants, workers, racial minorities, women peasants and other dispossessed people in the countryside. By joining in solidarity with others, student movement gains the power necessary to transform society.

Youth/Student activism is mostly about social change and transformation. But is the focus of activists only on changing the institutions of society? No, it is not! Changing society must be done in tandem with changing oneself. Otherwise, activists within their own movements and in the new social institutions will simply replicate the same relationships of oppression. They have addressed serious problems like racism, sexism, homophobia, etc. that plague human relationships. These issues are addressed as part of our ongoing struggles to change the world. In other words, activism must be viewed as engaging in both social change and personal transformation.
simultaneously. We cannot change injustices in the world without confirming and overcoming injustices in our own practices.

Personal transformation of student activists in universities requires grappling with the question of privileges that they have as students. In all societies around the world, students who attend universities are relatively a privileged segment. After all, having the time and resources to acquire knowledge and to study and think critically about issues and problems around them. Privileged status brings a choice; how will a person use these privileges? Will the privileges be used to advance oneself economically and socially, even if it means ignoring oppression and destruction all around and perhaps even helping to perpetuate these conditions? Or will a person use privileges to confront and eliminate the conditions of oppression and destruction? Student activists are those who have seriously pondered these questions and have consciously decided to use their resources, time, and talents to confront psycho-social problems.

Although each political situation is unique and must be appreciated for its uniqueness, all organizing strategies share several things in common. First, they help people to analyze power relations in society and provide insights into how unequal relations can be changed. Second, they focus on uniting those who can be united around common goals and new human values. Third, they help people to connect specific political issues with broader issues. In other words, they enable people to understand the interconnections and
interrelatedness between issues. Fourth, they emphasize the active involvement of people in the decisions that affect their lives; in other words, they enable people to discover the power within themselves to change their lives and to change society. In short, social change is not made by individual activists who devise strategies for manipulating or acting upon others. Social change occurs when activists through interactions with others enable people collectively to find the power within themselves to become active agents making their own history.

The World history is full of tragic stories of social movements for reform and revolution that after gaining some power transformed into institutions of oppression no different from the very forces of evil that they were opposing. Why does this happen? Why do ideals for movements of social change become the basis for rationalizing new societies based on oppression?

Common explanations focus on “human nature”, such as the corrupting influences of power (i.e., “Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely”) and the degeneration of new leaders when faced with the realities of power. Similarly, some argue that oppression and exploitation are embedded in all human societies and cannot be eliminated; the best that can be done is to change the position of oppressors and oppressed, victimizers and victims. Still other explanations tend to rationalize corruption in social movements as a necessary stage in eradicating the old order. Behind all of these common answers is the belief that real social change is impossible and
that oppressed people should simply accept their conditions of exploitation because the alternatives are no better.

However, the political degeneration of activists involved in social movements for reform and revolution is hardly inevitable. Committed activists recognize that participation in movements must be accompanied by a genuine dedication in transforming their own lives, values and their aspirations. We cannot wait until “after we have gained power” to deal with issues of racism, sexism, and homophobia. We cannot decide to set up a hierarchy of oppression and address only what we consider the most important ones. We must realize that promoting a revolution in values and thinking is as critical for the process of social change as gaining power over the institutions that influence our lives.

Campus-unrest has emerged as one of the complicated problems at the academic institutions. The problem is so complex in nature that even social scientists fail to provide any suitable explanation to the existing situation in the campuses of higher education. Various thinkers have given their opinion regarding the matter in their own way and have tried to come with a probable solution as well. According to Beck and Douglasitis (1981) due to the drastic change in the outlook of the people as a result of the explosion of knowledge in our century. This has led to a transformation of old ideas and viewpoints and has shaped the mental outlook of people in a new way. While Moris (1979) describes it not only to the explosion of
knowledge but also the intervention of new knowledge which
considers the old traditional values of moral ethics and intrapersonal
relations as obstacles to the growth (especially material growth) of
human being.

One of the reasons of the failure of even social scientists to give
any proper attention to the problem is that they find a kind of
dichotomy between the educational organizations and the social
system. While the social setup of our country as we believe is
democratic, it has been felt and observed that there prevails a
bureaucratic structure. This conflict has been a constant obstacle in the
way of social scientists to come with a viable solution for the
problems related to the field of student/youth activism.

If we go into genesis of this problem we will find two evident
groups. While one group is very much active and is supposed to react
sharply to any kind of hindrances that they confront while pursuing
their goals or achievements, there is another group less sensitive and
less responsive which shows hopelessness, helplessness, aloofness and
often ignorance towards activism itself. Youth/Student activism is not
a phenomenon that can be applied to the youth/students in general
manner. It has been observed that it operates in a kind of group
dynamics. This dynamics of activism is not a matter of interest and
appreciation for the common student. He rather chews a kind of
disinterestedness and if he joins the group in certain circumstances it
is not a voluntary action on his part but a pressure to which he gives in
reluctantly. A good approach could be to attempt a comparative analysis of these two groups and thus try to find out the social as well as psychological factors that distinguish one group from the other.

There have been constant efforts on the part of the Indian government to introduce strategies and planning with a view to provide equal social and economic justice to the people and to build a healthy and prosperous society. Five year Plans were introduced as early as in the fifty’s. But hopelessly the plans and strategies failed in their purpose and could not yield the desired result as a consequence of which an atmosphere of discontent prevailed in every walks of life. Youth/Student activism may be considered to be one of the forms of the expression of this common anger. This situation was quite harmful to the growth and development of not only to the student at the individual level but the academic institutions as a whole.

In the beginning the growth of educational institutions was gradual and naturally strong because they got a good period of time to establish themselves and accordingly adopt a gradually developing institutional culture. This way either the expansion or the extension of the institutions least affected their strong traditions rather enforced them. In this way they were the followers of the models of the English speaking countries where a strong institutional culture of this nature operates. But a drastic change has set in the post-independence scenario. There is boom in the field of education at the cost of healthy traditions. This tendency has greatly harmed the whole educational set
up. Another factor which has contributed towards the development of youth/student activism is that most of the academic institutions in backward areas were started purely on political consideration. They ultimately produced a political culture in place of a healthy academic culture. Youth/Student activism is part of this culture. And this culture, unfortunately, is not only confined within the walls of the campuses but is very much operative outside the campus as well. In the absence of strong and stable academic culture any code of conduct fails to produce the desired result.

Now-a-days, in academic institutions there is seldom an effort to impart knowledge and training that may help the students cultivate desired social qualities. The entire activity is exam oriented and importance is laid on the achievements in the examination. This approach has also been a cause of creating a kind of cultural vacuum among the students. Students believe that through their activism they can achieve their target that is, securing good marks. And in most cases it has been found true when the examination machinery has been badly affected by their disturbing activities.

It has been a common observation that most of the students consider colleges and universities where hostel facility is available to be a cheap and convenient lodging. There is dearth of employment and staying at the academic centers is a good option for them until find a placement. It is a fact that now there is no scope or hardly any scope for one even after the completion of post graduation course. Moreover
students belonging to a variety of culture find it sometimes quite unsuitable to adjust themselves in an atmosphere where student activism holds way. Some of the students who fail to find a job are extremely frustrated and their frustration affects a large number of students in the campus.

Historically, working collaboratively with youth was not taken as seriously given the social and developmental stereotypes attached to youth. Too often, the talents and insights by youth were and sometimes still are, overlooked by adults who consider the realm of youth-centered work to be that of “adults”. However, today, a shift has emerged in which youth are being given a platform to contribute to combating local and global inequities given the fundamental recognition that they are in essence the future.

Interestingly within educational discourse, discussion about how to educate children for their role as future citizens has negated incorporating the youths voices (Gidley & Inayatullah, 2002; van Linden & Fertman, 1998). The practice of incorporating youth and their perspectives in program designs is now burgeoning particularly within last few decades. Contemporary research indicates that the area of engaging youth is a relatively nascent approach which requires further research to determine what is effective, what is not effective, and what gaps exist. Nevertheless, the last decades has witnessed a drastic change in its approach to addressing youth issues as the benefits of utilizing and engaging with youth in activism and
participation as catalysts for social change has yielded much success
and is more widespread given its observed successes.

In Asia and in developing nations like China, Japan, Korea,
Turkey, Indonesia and Latin America, we see youth opposing the
traditionalism, the obsolete medieval social and intellectual order,
national and economic oppression under the impact of 20th
century European imperialist expansion (Ahluwalia, 1972). The sixties were
remarkable in the west again as a period of wide scale youth activism
when the new left as a movement resulted in growing involvement of
upper middle class students to change their prevailing social system
(Sethy, 1989). We may also refer to the “Hippie Movement” which
made an attempt to subvert and reserve the conventional legitimating
of western societies (Halls, 1969).

In India, after the introduction of constitutional governance and
politics of modern kind, involving popular participation, the young
people had initially kept away from politics. However, in 1980, there
were some agitations by students for conducting the Indian civil
service examination in India instead of England for better opportunity
to Indian students (Bora, 1992). We find large scale student and youth
participation in India’s struggle for freedom. Such participation was
evident during the period of Non-Cooperation Movement, Civil-
Disobedience Movement and Quit India Movement, which is regarded
by Altbach as the apex of student activism and most militant and
highly organized period of the Indian Student Movement (Altbach,
Altbach again argues that pre-independence youth activism in Bombay reflected broader trends of Indian politics under the impact of western political ideologies from Marxism to Liberalism (Altbach, 1967). While pointing out radical transformation of Indian Students Movements during post-independence period, he says that the nationalist fervor of the pre independence movement has been replaced by generally sporadic agitation aimed at remedies for specific grievances (Altbach, 1968). Some major instance of student activism of post independent India, excluding North East India, are Gujarat Student Movement from 1973-74 (Mehta, 1975), Bihar Students’ Movement for the reorganization of the educational system under the guidance and advice of Jay Prakash Narayan, Student’s anti Hindi demonstration in Madras in 1969, Mysore and Bangalore Student Movements in 1962 against occupation of Indian territory by communist China (Mehta, 1975) Bengal Students’ fight for independence and anti-tram fare rise agitation in 1962 (Ghosh 1969).

It may be stated here that in such sociopolitical movements the youth participated as activists and supporters (Baruah, 2002). It has been pointed out that youth have always played a major role in mass movements, but very occasionally do we come across real youth movement, i.e. movements which recruit the vast number of their followers and leaders from among the younger generation, and demand selective goods intended for youth segments (Fleming and Karpantscof, 2001). There, indeed, are movements of young people
which go beyond the selective goods intended for youth segments. Real youth activism which shows that North-East India has been a hot-bed of student politics with the beginning of formal education in the region (Baruah, 2002).

Wisdom lies in giving a serious pondering to the problem and trying to get to the root rather than beating about the bush. To talk of eliminating criminal activities without removing the conditions favorable to their growth is a foolish thought and holds no water. Student/youth activism is a source of many other psychological problems like indifference, isolation, alienation and frustration. When exposed to a difficult situation, a person is supposed to respond or react to it in some way. Either one may escape to it or try to cope with it. There is great possibility of two groups of students at large campuses where student activism operates. There are students who join the activist group, and those who become alienated. Both the tendencies are harmful towards the smooth functioning of any institution.

Youth Defined

The word youth is generally used interchangeably with terms such as teenager, adolescent, youth adult, and/or young person. Although youth are “defined demographically as those humans between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five” (Gidley & Inayatullah, 2002), definitions can vary globally. For example, according to the
United Nations General assembly (2006), youths are classified as “those persons falling between the ages of 15 and 24 years inclusive”.

There is a growing body of literature now emerging which is examining how children and youth makes sense and meaning of the world in which they live in. This has occurred primarily due to the fact that in discussing how youth should be educated for their citizenry role, it was noted that the voices of youth were entirely omitted. Discussion of what young children and youth believe and how they perceive the world has been neglected and consequently not incorporated in the multi-layered design of youth studies, youth activism, youth participation and so forth. Rather, it has been the voices of adults that have prevailed and contributed to the area.

Today, the focus of enquiry with children and youth is generally embedded within larger contemporary-oriented themes which centre around their micro/macro perception of the world they live in, as well as, which micro/macro world issues are of most concern to them (Bennett, Cieslik, & Miles, 2003; Gidley & Inayatullah, 2002). Within the field of education this burgeoning field is referred to as “youth futures”. (Gidley & Inayatullah, 2002; Hicks, 2004).

Psychological and sociological theorists consider youth a politically definitive period. This is a time in life for deciding about the direction of one’s future. In the process, an individual tends to take stock of him/herself and his/her society. Whereas childhood and early adolescence tends to be highly structured, the transition to
adulthood is marked by the young person’s greater self determination and independence of thought. Consequently, the political, psychological and social views of younger generations are rarely carbon copies of their parents’.

Erikson (1968) captured the developmental imperatives that youth face when he described the key psychosocial tasks of these years as exploring and consolidating an identity. This entails seeking purpose, deciding on beliefs and commitments, and linking to others (in organizations, religious traditions, or social causes) who share such commitments. Developing an ideology enables youth to organize and manage the vast array of choices the world presents. Political ideologies are forming in adolescence when personal values, world views, and political attributions appear to be highly concordant (Flanagan & Tucker, 1999).

Youth may be less likely than their elders to engage in conventional politics. But they are more likely to act on their beliefs in unconventional ways through public demonstrations, acts of civil disobedience, or even more disruptive forms of political action. Social movements literature has regularly documented the inverse relationship between age and the choice of militant strategies that may pose personal risks. However, youths’ impatience and penchant for militant action has invigorated organizations and political movements.

Contemporary studies also document how mainstream community organizations are reinvigorated when youths’ perspectives
are taken seriously. Across communities in the United States, young people are assuming leadership roles in public policy consultation, community coalitions for youth development, and non-profit organizations. These models reflect a new focus on positive youth development which frames youth as assets rather than risks to their communities (Sherrod et.al., 2005). They also necessitate a new partnering style between the youth and adults in the organization. It is also noteworthy that several contemporary models of job and life skills training incorporate civic engagement as an integral element of training. Programs such as Youth Build, Youth Challenge, and Youth corps combine education, job skills training, and volunteer service. Consequently, youth have first-hand experience of the contributions they can make and the ways their training can be put to use.

The biggest increase in youth civic engagement has occurred as a consequence of the institutionalization of community service/service learning in secondary and post-secondary education. Similar trends in community engagement have occurred in colleges and universities where creative experiments in public scholarship and service learning emphasize the reciprocity between learning in the classroom and the community.

The purpose of this discussion is to highlight some of the key practices to employ when engaging with youth in youth activism to ensure that an effective mode of practice is employed as well as to
ensure that the programs developed and initiatives undertaken are conceptually and practically equipped with the youth at the forefront.

**Activism**

There is no widely accepted single definition of activism, as evidenced by the broad range of terms used by scholars across disciplines to capture issue-specific definitions such as civic engagement, citizenship, political engagement, community service, volunteerism, etc. This ambiguity in the definition of activism may be due to discipline-specific uses of the term or as Youniss & Levine (2009) describe in their book on engaging young people in civic life, the ambiguity in the definition of activism across time may be due to the need subsequent generations have “to forge a definition that fits its history because younger and older generations view the society differently”.

Although many definitions of activism exist, most definitions emphasize intentional actions aimed at bringing about social change. Foster-Fishman, Cantillon, Pierce, and Van Egeren (2007) defined activism as “the actions of individual residents intended to express their concerns about specific problems to groups or key decisionmakers such as local politicians or neighborhood leaders”. Specific actions vary but may include letter writing campaigns, lobbying, attending meetings, boycotts, strikes, marches, rallies, protests, and hunger strikes (Bamed-Smith, 2007). The target of such
action also varies but usually includes key decision makers such as neighborhood, corporate, or political leaders (Foster-Fishman et al., 2007).

Some activists work inside the system while others operate from the outside. Activists who operate within the system are part of the existing system. These activists may be part of a political campaign or policy team who attempt to persuade people to vote for certain candidates or pass specific legislation. Their efforts typically involve interacting with the media, writing articles for newspapers, holding town-hall meetings, and using leaflets and fliers (Schwebel, 2005). Activists who operate outside of the system are not part of the system they are trying to change. As such, they often employ more unconventional techniques such as demonstrations, picketing, and rallies, all of which are designed to get the attention of key decision makers, demonstrate the extent of public displeasure, and assent their power. To involve as many people as possible, activists working outside the system may also spend a great deal of time building a base of supporters, using techniques such as letters to the editor, Internet blogs, door-to-door campaigns, music, literature, and street theater (Schwebel, 2005).

Individuals may also get involved in discrete acts of activism, even if they do not define themselves as activists or engage in activism on a regular basis. Examples of discrete acts of activism include party activism, voting, sending emails to government websites, attending
town hall or neighborhood meetings, or signing a petition (Banaji, 2008; Gurak & Logie, 2003).

Individuals may also choose to participate in protests or demonstrations. Protests occur when people who have common interests or concerns gather together either in a physical location or meet via some other medium such as the internet to display their displeasure or advocate for a specific change to social or corporate policy (Gurak & Logie, 2003). While the extent of time, effort, and commitment varies widely, each of the above examples reflects an intentional effort to bring about social change and can therefore be defined as activism.

For the purposes of this study, activism or activist behaviors refer to the various forms of student activism. The definition of activism used for this study does not imply that activism is restricted to realms (Youth/Student activism). It does not mean that the other forms of activism are unimportant, rather a focus is only established for the sake of clarity and measurement. Moreover, Youth/Student activism represent the dominant types of activism that have been at the center of research.

**Youth/Student Activism**

Youth /student activism has no doubt emerged as a major problem in the higher academic institutions and has always posed a challenge to the social scientists. It is not so that it is a recent problem.
The phenomena came into existence with the beginning of modern school system (Hurbert, 1967). There were efforts on the parts of the social scientists to keep the problem under control and to keep it to its manageable limits (Koel, 1980). Initially it was characterized as a school problem (Keniston, 1970) but after independence its force become more and more recognizable and it spread its influence in the academic institutions in the form of student protests, collective dissent and anti-social group behaviour. Different terms were given to it like student unrest, student dissatisfaction and student protest as a means to understand its nature and characteristics. All these terms carry in them the assumption that students are basically highly reactive to the social forces which try to curtail their freedom. In institutions where they feel themselves under certain restraint and unwanted pressure they tend to rebel, one can see the youth/student activism as a kind of reaction by the youth/students in the form of protest and as a means to give vent to their accumulated frustration. Students at this stage are in a position to oppose the outdated and arbitrary standards of behaviour.

Youth/student activism gains momentum in a situation where the student has a feeling that no democratic atmosphere prevails in the institution in which he/she is pursuing a course. Education at the higher level is not merely an exposure to the advanced standard of information rather it incorporates a procedure of training which imparts such awareness and creates a particular state of mind in the students that they are reformed and come out with well developed
personalities. And if this goal seems to be threatened by any force operating from inside or outside the campus the student feels betrayed and as a result shows inclination towards undesirable behaviour as an alternative method to prove his worth and achieve his target.

One of the causes that promote the tendency of student activism is in certain cases, the bureaucratic attitude of the authorities. When student face some problem they approach the authorities for the same. Some times the authorities do not give the due response to the students and neglect them. This creates a kind of reaction in them which surfaces in the form of student reaction. They put their demands before the administrators and manifest their dissatisfaction through going on demonstration and strikes etc. The result is great damage to the smooth functioning of the institution.

Among the activist group there are two types of students. One type of students is those who join the activist group with a reformative zeal. They carry with them not merely an impulse to reject the authority and accepted standard but also have an urge to establish something new in place of the old. The other group has got a negative approach. The students belonging to this group are dissatisfied with the existing standards and values. They are keen to disrupt and destroy them but do not have a vision to establish something new in their place. Such type of students are the real trouble makers because negation and cynicism merely reject existing values and are not interested in the establishment or promotion of any new ideas. The
former groups are also known as the right-oriented and left respectively. The later group, that is, the left oriented group is supported by the political parties and gets strength from outside the campus. In other words it is operated by the agencies outside the campus. This political interference through the activist group is quite harmful to the health of the academic institutions. In such a condition the student/youth activism is politically motivated and the students are least concerned with the problems related to their intellectual welfare. They are rather used by the politician for their vested interests. This phenomenon is dangerous because it is a kind of revolution against the structure of the institution and more of society, against any sort of unilateral authority on or off the campus. It is not so that this problem is without any impulse or reason. There is a justification to this problem. It could be attributed to a kind of intellectual eagerness which lies behind this attitude of revolt. The students try to obtain political power through the influence of the politicians who are thought to be wielding the utmost power in the society. This leads the students also to follow them as models more so when they are involved with them.

Now in the light of the aforementioned things and discussion of the problem one can make an attempt to define the student/youth activism as the behaviour of those youths and students who are usually taking part in protesting and challenging the authorities and in organizing disruptive group activities on and off the campus. The
activities of these students, often the violent activities create disturbance in the campus affecting the smooth functioning of the system. Therefore, any kind of disturbance caused in the smooth functioning of an educational institution due to the activities of the students can be put under student/youth activism.

**Youth/Student Activism and Allied Terms**

There are a number of terms applied to Student Activism to characterize its essence like-student indiscipline, student protest, student rebelliousness, student politics, student movement, student unrest, student problem, student turmoil, student ferment, student power, etc. irrespective of the various terms, the problem in its basic nature is that its implications remain the same. The problem finds its manifestation through a number of behavioral actions like-violence, clashes with the police, gheraoing the Vice Chancellor, man handling the teachers and authorities, hijacking of buses, burning and damaging of public property, strikes and demonstrations, etc.

These sorts of activities are harmful to the society, educational institutions and the students themselves. So for developing a better understanding of the term of youth/student activism, it would be rather worthwhile to analyse and clarify the allied terms, which has been mentioned above, for these terms have been used by psychologists, sociologists and educationists from time to time for the social behaviour of students. These terms are more or less similar to activism
in form and nature, hence their descriptions would be helpful in understanding the term “youth/student activism” as well.

**Student Movement:** It is always difficult to define what is meant by student movement, for student communities have tended to be rather unorganized and spontaneous in their political activities. Student movements may stem from well-organized groups, or they may arise spontaneously as a result of a particular issue. Movements may take a coherent organization form, although this is not always the case. Thus, the term “movement” is used rather broadly since the scope and variety of student political participation makes a more rigorous delineation difficult to apply in specific situations.

**Student Agitation:** It is represented by the instance of mob behaviour. A mob behaviour has often been defined as a tumultuous crowd liable to indulge in acts of lawlessness and outrage (Oxford University Dictionary, 1953). Brown (1954) distinguished four types of crowds displaying a distinct type of behaviour – aggressive (lynching, rioting, terrorising), escape (panic), acquisitive and expressive.

The most common form of student agitation is an instance which students place specific demands upon college or university authorities, and go for strikes, demonstrations etc. Student agitation has often involved destruction of private and university property. Agitation is related to the depth of the frustration felt by students.
Destructive actions may be a way for them to express their frustrations and rejection of the status quo.

**Student Protest:** The term “protest” is defined as “any organized activity involving members of the campus community and occurring in or around the campus for the purpose of expressing public disapproval or to bring about change in some policy, practice or event”. Student grievances which are isolated and infrequent grow into protest actions, and slowly start assuming the character of a movement.

**Student Rebelliousness:** The rebelliousness of students has always been ascribed to the generation gap. What is especially characteristic of modern age is an attitude of negation and cynicism rather than rebelliousness. Rebelliousness carries with it not merely the impulse to reject authority and accepted standards but also the urge to establish something new in place of the old. Negation and cynicism, on the other hand, merely reject existing values and are not interested in the establishment or promotion of any new ideas. This is, perhaps, the most distressing aspect of the problem of youth unrest in the contemporary world.

**Student Turmoil:** It is an outcome of disruptive activities of the students on the campuses of colleges and the universities making these campuses often unquiet. Angry processions, hunger strikes, walk-outs from examination halls, destruction of furniture, windows, doors and
even buildings, clashes between students and police, and similar other violent and chaotic activities can be included in this fold.

**Students Dissatisfaction:** Dissatisfaction or discontentment emerges among the students due to lack of essential facilities (teaching, learning and living) in the colleges and universities. It, sometimes, also arises due to undemocratic functioning of these institutions and bureaucratic attitude of the faculty members and the authorities. Dissatisfaction gives birth to rebellious behaviour of the students, which is expressed through many undesirable activities.

**Student Indiscipline:** The term discipline in an institutional context refers to conduct which is in line with expectations of the institution, which means behaviour must comply with written rules of the University as shown in the prospectus. Generally, the University expects good behaviour from its students. This implies that behavior must not only be morally acceptable, it should be lawful, and its lawfulness is tested by compliance with applicable rules. “Indiscipline” has been defined; as any student action which does not meet with the approval of government or educational officials. Actions, ranging from violent demonstrations, protesting an examination or a fee increase to peaceful meetings and petitions, have been called “Indiscipline” (Altbach, 1968).

**Students Unrest:** Student unrest is an expression of revolt or dissatisfaction with existing system. It may also be viewed as an aggravation of some needs or problems felt by the students or
accumulated reactions of frustration. “By and large attention is focused on such expressions of student unrest as rebelliousness, and rowdyism. When we refer to rebelliousness and boisterousness on the part of students, we have to distinguish between rebelliousness as an expression of rejection of arbitrary rules and social standards and rebelliousness due to psychological morbidity. Unruly behavior of students, as it is observed today, may be an expression of their strong resentment against the outdated and arbitrary standards of behaviour. (Bhalla, 1975). The term “student unrest” is also operationalised as the tense and alienated behaviour of student groups resulting in the acts of occasional violence. Sharma(1971) expressing his views on student unrest made it clear that in its essential characteristics youth unrest is an acknowledgeable social phenomenon. First, it connotes maladjustment of educated youth as a group with the society they live. Second, because this maladjustment finds expression always at group levels in various forms. Third, because it seems explicable with reference to the inner dynamics of social organization. Finally, because it may cause immeasurable damage to social solidarity, if not resolved in time.

**Predictors of Youth Activism**

Youth get involved in activism for a variety of reasons. The following important key predictors of activism that have been consistently identified in the literature.
(a) Personal impact

Many students become activists as a result of self-interest, personal experience, or the personal impact that an issue has had on their lives or the lives of those closest to them (Alinsky, 1971; Daloz, Keen, Keen & Parks, 1996; Pearce & Larson, 2006). The more robust one’s affinity with the movement, the more robust is one’s involvement in the movement (Passy & Giugni, 2001). For many, personal experiences of injustice or a sense of personal deprivation leads to dissatisfaction or disenchantment with current policies and social norms (Gurak & Logie, 2003; Mummendey, Kessler, Klink & Mielke, 1999; Simon et al., 1998; Teske, 1997). For many students, it is only when they are directly affected by a change in policy that they decide there is a need for them to act (Loeb, 1994).

Individuals may also take action on behalf of a group of people with whom they identify (van Zomeren & Iver, 2009). Social Identity Theory predicts that individuals who strongly identify with members of a group that is maltreated are more likely to participate in activism to improve conditions for the group (J. Nelson et al, 2008; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Simon et al, 1998; Weerd & Klandermans, 1999). Action may be particularly likely when consciousness-raising activities lead to a sense of shared disadvantage and an understanding of the systemic nature of oppression (van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008; Yuval Davis, 1997), prompting individuals to fight
harder for justice on behalf of the group (van Zomeren et al., 2008; van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer & Leach, 2004) or work to spare others from experiencing what they themselves have gone through (Ardizzone, 2007).

(b) Personal responsibility

Although the likelihood of activism may be enhanced when individuals are personally affected by the problem, personal experiences of injustice may not be a prerequisite for action. For some people, repeated exposure to those who are experiencing difficulties or a growing sense of social injustice may lead to activism on the behalf of others (Duncan & Stewart, 2007; Frijda, 1986; Hallahan, 2001). Many theorists have suggested that moral values and a sense of social responsibility are at the heart of activism (Schwebel, 2005). They believe that the spiritual fulfillment that they receive from participating in activist activities is necessary for engaging in activist activities (Teske, 1997). When a person’s perception of what is unjust, unfair, or illegitimate is violated, people may be inspired to engage in activism (van Stekelenburg, Klandermans, & van Dijk, 2009). Even if they do not believe that their actions will make a difference, a sense of moral outrage may make some people feel morally obliged to participate in activism (Finkel, Muller, & Opp, 1989; Loeb, 1994; van Stekelenburg et al., 2009). For some activists, these moral values derive from strongly held religious or spiritual
beliefs that extend beyond concern for oneself to include concern for something outside of oneself (Teske, 1997). For others, it is the belief in the common good and a desire to achieve social justice, protect others, and help ensure the survival of the entire human race which drives their actions (Ardizzone, 2007; Teske, 1997). When such individuals realize that there is a disconnect between their values and what is actually occurring, they become more motivated to engage in action to remedy the situation (Heath, 1997).

(c) Efficacy

Efficacy refers to the ability to effect change. Efficacy can occur at the individual level (i.e., personal efficacy) or the group level (i.e., collective efficacy) (Bandura, 2001). Each of these forms of efficacy are described below.

(i) Personal efficacy. Personal efficacy may be defined as an individual’s ability to control, influence, and change a specific problem (Schulz, 2004; van Zomeren et.al., 2008). A central component of personal efficacy appears to be the perception of both personal and interpersonal control (Laird, 2003; Loeb, 1994) over goals and outcomes that they wish to achieve (Bandura, 2001).

Applied to social activism, the belief in one’s own effectiveness and ability to bring about desired outcomes appears to be a crucial predictor of willingness to become involved in a cause (Almond & Verba, 1963, Bandura, 2001; Passy & Giugni, 2001; van Zomeren et.al, 2008; Verba & Nie, 1972), particularly when the cause requires
involvement in power-oriented protests (van Stekelenburg et al., 2009). Indeed, students who become involved with politics on campus have a stronger belief in their ability to influence decisions made on campus and also have more confidence in their ability to act politically (Schulz, 2004). Such individuals have a strong belief in their ability to change both social and political events (Pinkleton & Austin, 2004) and score low on measures of political apathy (Pinkleton & Austin, 2004).

Conversely, people who feel alienated from the political process and powerless to change their situation (Ardizzone, 2007) often evidence low rates of civic involvement and activism (Yuval-Davis, 1997). If people believe that they do not have the power to change a bad situation, then the people will not even think about the situation. They are more likely to just ignore it or pretend that the situation doesn’t exist (Alinsky, 1971). When people feel incapable of affecting large social structures such as the state or other institutions, they are less likely to get involved in activist activities or believe that their participation would have any effect (Pinkleton & Austin, 2004; Shanahan & Ward, 1995).

Many students have no interest in politics and have a tendency to believe that the events are out of their control (Loeb, 1994). Students used to get involved after becoming disillusioned with authority, now disillusionment leads to apathy, depression, and a decrease in feelings of social responsibility (Ardizzone, 2007). Students are now more prone to give up on an issue than attempt to
fight it. When one is bombarded with consequently, the students feel that they lack the ability to change the environmental situations of the institutions, they begin to lose confidence in their ability to investigate unconventional choices and to think critically about the dominant views which pervade society (Gardner, 2005).

(ii) Political efficacy. The belief in the ability to effect political change, in particular, has been referred to as political efficacy. Political efficacy refers to a person’s perceived ability to influence and participate in political processes. Political efficacy includes the belief that one is capable of involvement in the political arena, knowing how to influence the political system, and the ability to recognize that collective action is an effective way to elicit change (Passy & Giugni, 2001; Rudkin, 2003; Watanabe & Milburn, 1988). The more individuals think, learn, and discuss political issues, the more political efficacy they will feel (Min, 2007); the more political efficacy individuals’ feel, the better able they will be to actively participate in democratic society and engage in political action (Passy & Guigni, 2001; Schulz, 2004; Watanabe & Milburn, 1988).

(iii) Collective efficacy. While some student activist activities involve solitary action (e.g., writing a letter to the editor), others involve collective action where many individuals work together to bring about desired results (e.g., rallies, strikes, demonstrations) (Bandura, 2001; Weerd & Klandermans, 1999; Wright & Tropp, 2002). Efficacy theories predict that people will choose collective
activism over individual activism when they believe that people must work together to achieve what they can’t do on their own (Bandura, 2001).

Collective efficacy refers to the belief that people who belong to a community have the ability to change and control important things within their communities and that their actions will lead to positive meaningful change within their communities (Perkins & Long, 2002; Price & Behrens, 2003). For many activists, collective efficacy is more important than individual efficacy. It is not enough for individual group members to feel that they can personally affect change; they must also feel that the group as a whole is organized and effective enough to achieve its goals. Indeed, Bandura (1997, 2000) has argued that collective efficacy is not a combination of the efficacy beliefs of individuals, but rather a group level property, influencing how people manage their resources, their plans, how much effort they put into group processes, and the type of future that they perceive. Applied to the concept of collective activism, theories about collective efficacy suggest that people who believe in the ability of the group to achieve its goals will be more likely to join the group and devote substantial personal resources towards making the group successful. These efforts will in turn increase the group’s sense of efficacy as members of a group observe the effectiveness of the group and how other members of the group work together (Bandura, 2000; Tasa, Taggar, & Seijits, 2007).
In this way, participation in collective action can itself lead to an increase in the perception of the group’s efficacy (Finkel & Muller, 1998) which in turn can encourage more people to join (Foster-Fishman et al, 2007).

Taken together, the review of above mentioned literature suggests that personal, political, and collective efficacy all work together to influence the likelihood of involvement in youth activism. But efficacy alone may not be enough to motivate involvement. Social norms and influences may also affect the likelihood of involvement.

(d) Social influences

Students with whom they socially interact help create and reinforce one’s perception of the importance of political participation (Passy & Giugni, 2001). For some, having politically active parents helps create an environment where political involvement and activism is emphasized. Such families tend to emphasize community responsibility and independent though (Loeb, 1994). These parents teach their children that you have to “Stand up for what you believe in” and “That it is not enough to believe injustice, you have to do something” (Teske, 1997, p. 114). Parents who are activists teach their children to evaluate others’ ethics, to confront institutions and authorities when they are not upfront with the public, and struggle
with what they can do to transform society into what they think it should be (Loeb, 1994).

The effect of having politically active parents is evidenced by multiple generations in one family being politically active (Coming & Myers, 2002). People who have been exposed to social activism from a young age evidence more awareness of injustice, perhaps as a result of ongoing exposure to political discussions, attendance at activist events, and participation in community service activities (Ardizzone, 2007; Teske, 1997; Thompson, 2001; Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003).

Having parents who are supportive of activist behaviors encourages their children to participate (McAdam & Paulsen, 1993). Engaging in political discussions in the home is also related to enhanced feelings of political efficacy and civic knowledge (Schulz, 2004), thereby increasing the likelihood of continued political engagement across the lifespan. In this way social norms supporting activism may enhance the likelihood that individuals will get involved with activism themselves (Lapinski & Rimal, 2005).

On the other hand, children who grow up in politically apathetic homes are less likely to engage in activist activities later in life. Children who grow up in politically apathetic homes learn to be either cynical or ignorant about politics (Lipset, 1971). Parents may be hesitant to sign petitions or to support a controversial issue and then warn their children not to get involved in politics both on and off of
campus (Lipset, 1971). As a result, children are hesitant to get involved and often lack political and self-efficacy for social change, even when they perceive a need for such change (Loeb, 1994). Indeed, individuals who do not come from activist backgrounds feel inadequate in that they do not have enough knowledge to get started in activist activities (Thompson, 2001).

Youth may become engaged in activist activities in order to spend time with their friends or even make new friends (Pearce & Larson, 2006). Even for individuals who do not currently engage in any type of activist activity, having a friend who engaged in the activities increased their willingness to participate (Adler, Schwartz, & Kuskowski, 2007). Being surrounded by family, friends, and acquaintances then serves to reinforce the value of involvement (McAdam & Paulsen, 1993; Passy & Giugni, 2001).

Social norms supporting activism and social change may be particularly prominent on college campuses (Lipset, 1972). Young people often advocate for change both within their communities and around the globe (Yahalem & Martin, 2007).

Social norms that support activism can also enhance the development of social networks on campus or in the community that can expand and support activist efforts. When large swaths of the community are involved in activist efforts, it is much easier to recruit and assemble large groups of people for specific events and raise awareness about the social issue in question. Such social networks
may also help, provide resources and serve as a conduit between individuals and the larger group (Passy & Giugni, 2001).

Indeed, many college students are unaware of policies that affect them, are ambivalent about the need for social change, and apathetic when it comes to actually engaging in civic life or social change efforts on campus or the larger community (Lipset, 1971; Loeb, 1994). This leads some students to express outright hostility towards students who do engage in activism, using terms such as “losers”, “unprofessional” and “moronic” (Loeb, 1994). Such pervasive student apathy and hostility hampers social change efforts, particularly when campus culture is divisive and lacks cohesion (Gardner, 2005; Loeb, 1994).

(e) Activist identity

Despite social norms and beliefs that look down upon activists, defining them as exceptional, odd, unusual, or extremist (Schwebel, 2005; Teske, 1997), many individuals actively take on the mantle of activist. Not surprisingly, individuals who take on the social identity of activist are more likely to participate in social movements (Kelly & Brelinger, 1995; Simon et.al., 1998; van Zomeren et.al, 2008). Indeed, social identity has been found to predict activist behaviors (van Zomeren et.al, 2008) above and beyond other predictors (Kelly, 1993).
This personal identity may be enhanced by experiences of group belonging, group acceptance, and shared identity (Schwebel, 2005; Simon & Klandersmans, 2001) this may come about in several ways.

Indeed, the desire to feel bonded to members of one’s in-group may lead some individuals to join social movements working to benefit the group (Simon et al., 1998). Through their involvement in an identified social movement, individuals may define themselves and be defined by others as a member of an important group who is working collectively to solve important problems (Tajfel, 1981; Yuval-Davis, 1997). Members of activist groups offer friendship, emotional support, a shoulder to cry on, and create a sense of accountability; these friendships are also often very intense (Teske, 1997). As a result, students who become involved in activist groups may be more likely to take on an activist identity and engage in group-level activities to effect change (Loeb, 1994; Yuval-Davis, 1998).

Preference for change. Activism involves people attempting to change the way society operates, but change often elicits negative or even ambivalent reactions from others (Diekman & Goodfriend, 2007). Societies all over the world punish thoughts and ideas that could jeopardize the status quo, using religious, economic, social, political and legal avenues to combat ideas which jeopardize the interests of the more powerful members of society (Alinsky, 1989). Those in power may also claim that those who are working toward change are immoral, deceptive and unpatriotic in an effort to discredit
activists and dissuade others from joining the social change movement (Alinsky, 1989). Individuals who do not believe these pervasive messages may be more likely to affiliate with activist groups.

Availabilty of resources. In order to participate in activist activities one must have personal availability or have the time to devote to the action (McAdam, 1988). Participation often involves many costs such as attending meetings, speaking in public settings, debating, arguing, and bring in conflict (Teske, 1997). When students have the time to spare to become involved in such activities (Passy & Giugni, 2001) consequently. They perceive the positive aspects of activism. Young people have many other obligations that take up much of their time such as working, going to school, and spending time with friends (Pinkleton & Austin, 2004). Students who choose to participate in activism must continually balance personal and political commitments (Loeb, 1994).

Benefits of Youth Activism

Although the literature remains inconsistent in how various activist behaviors may be categorized, behaviors in both typologies represent individual or collective efforts at creating change in various socio-environmental levels. Regardless of how scholars characterize activist behaviors, the potential benefits of activism are agreed upon across disciplines.
Levine and Youniss (2009) have described how youth activism is beneficial to the institutions and communities in which they participate. Settings such as schools, non-profit organizations, neighborhoods, and government function better when the assets of active youth are utilized. The findings of a multi-site evaluation of an Atlanta youth internship program, the Summer Youth Fellows Program, confirms the positive effect youth can have on non-profit organizations and neighborhoods in which they are active (Armstrong & House, 2007; Guessous, Armstrong, House, & Prescott-Adams, 2006), while the historical results of student activism in the U.S. Civil Rights and Feminist movements are evidence of how youth activism can benefit governmental and other institutional systems. Flanagan and Van Horn (2003) posit that active youth participation results in a strengthened community spirit and increased mutual respect between youth and adults which leads to improvements in the functioning of these settings. Alternatively, Kahne & Middaugh (2009) offer an explanation rooted in systems change by arguing that youth activism enhances political equity in that individuals who are politically active receive more attention from the government.

Aside from the benefit to the social and political contexts activists engage in, there is growing evidence that engagement in activist behaviors also results in a range of individual benefits that includes identity development, reductions in problem behaviors, and the promotion of positive development. Literature from
developmental psychology demonstrates how engaging in activism helps to shape the political identity of adolescents. Research on political development is revealing that youth’s understanding of the political aspects of society is based on their participation in civic and political activities and that these experiences play a key role in helping them define their political stances in adulthood (Flanagan & Tucker, 1999; Yates & Youniss, 1998; Youniss & Yates, 1997). What emerges specifically from political and civic activism experiences is a greater understanding of the political world and this understanding (i.e., social analysis) is linked to the identity development of adolescents and also to their future activism as adults (Yates & Youniss, 1998; Flanagan & Gallay, 1995).

Beyond identity formation, engagement in activism also promotes healthy and successful development for adolescents (Hart & Kirshner, 2009; Pancer, Pratt, Hunsbeger, & Alisar, 2007). Healthy development includes reductions in problem behaviors and the promotion of positive development. Youth who are involved in civic and political activism have been shown to be less likely to engage in risk behaviors such as drug and alcohol use (Barber et al, 2001; Eccles & Barber, 1999), risky sexual behavior (Kirby, 1999, 2002), truancy and school dropout (Flanagan & Van Horn, 2003; Janosz et.al., 1997), and criminal activity (Mahoney, 2000). At the same time, additional research is revealing how engagement in activism is related to positive developmental outcomes for adolescents. For instance, existing
research has positively and significantly linked civic and political engagement to improved scholastic performance (Davila & Mora, 2007; Barber, Eccles, & Stone, 2001), enhanced self-esteem (Pancer et.al., 2007; Smith, 1999; Maton, 1990), and improved personal relationships (Maton, 1990).

Considering past studies that demonstrate how participation in activist behaviors can have positive developmental effects on youth (Hart & Kirshner, 2009; Pancer, Pratt, Hunsbeger & Alisar, 2007), and in light of more recent studies that demonstrate how an active citizenship leads to positive social outcomes such as the strengthening of responsive and accountable governments and the development of inclusive and cohesive societies (Gaventa & Barrett, 2010), the significance of youth activism cannot be emphasized enough. The benefit of youth activism to both the individual and society is clear and above mentioned descriptions lend to the knowledgebase of how best to promote activism in young people. Given the persistence of poverty, the ever-widening gap between the rich and poor, and the increasing polarization of political ideologies, the potential for youth to improve society through service and activism is one that should not be taken lightly, but rather actively pursued and promoted.

**Theoretical Orientation**

Youth activism is a major topic within the academic discipline of psychology. Psychologists focus on how individual characteristics
may interact with the social environment of educational institutions to produce an activistic behaviour. However, rather than focus on the biological basis of activism, psychologists focus on how mental processes impact individual propensities for activism. Psychologists are often interested in the association between learning, intelligence and personality with activistic aggressive behaviour. In this section of the report, we briefly review some of the major psychological perspectives that have attempted to explain activistic and violent behaviour. These perspectives include the psychodynamic perspective, behavioural theory, cognitive theory and personality theory. We will also explore the possible relationship between mental illness and violence.

The Psychodynamic Perspective

The psychodynamic perspective is largely based on the ground breaking ideas of Sigmund Freud. Freud thought that human behaviour, including violent activistic behaviour, was the product of “unconscious” forces operating within a person’s mind. Freud also felt that early childhood experiences had a profound impact on adolescent and adult behaviour. Freud, believed that conflicts that occur at various psychosexual stages of development might impact an individual’s ability to operate normally as an adult (Bartol, 2002). For Freud, activism and violence was thus a basic (id-based) human impulse that is repressed in well-adjusted people who have
experienced a normal childhood. However, if the aggressive impulse is not controlled or is repressed to an unusual degree, some aggression can “leak out” of the unconscious and a person can engage in random acts of activism. Freud referred to this as “displaced aggression” (Englander, 2007; Bartol 2002).

The most significant criticism of the psychoanalytic perspective is that it is based on information derived from therapists’ subjective interpretations of interviews with a very small numbers of patients (see Englander, 2007). In other words, the theory has not yet been subject to rigorous scientific verification.

**Behavioural Theories**

Behaviour theory maintains that all human behaviour – including violent and activistic behaviour – is learned through interaction with the social environment. Behaviourists argue that people are not born with a violent disposition. Rather, they learn to think and act violently as a result of their day-to-day experiences (Bandura, 1977). These experiences, proponents of the behaviourist tradition maintain, might include observing friends or family being rewarded for activistic behaviour or even observing the glorification of activism in the media. Studies of family life show that aggressive children often model the violent behaviours of their parents. Studies have also found that people who live in violent communities learn to model the aggressive behaviour of their neighbours (Bartol, 2002).
Behavioural theorists have argued that the following four factors help to produce activism and violence: 1) a stressful event or stimulus – like a threat, challenge or assault – that heightens arousal; 2) aggressive skills or techniques learned through observing others; 3) a belief that aggression or activism will be socially rewarded (by, for example, reducing frustration, enhancing self-esteem, providing material goods or earning the praise of other people); and 4) a value system that condones activism acts within certain social contexts. Early empirical tests of these four principles were promising (Bartol, 2002). As a result, behavioural theory directly contributed to the development of social learning theories of deviance (differential association theory, sub-cultural theory, neutralization theory, etc.)

Cognitive Development and Activism

Cognitive theorists focus on how people perceive their social environment and learn to solve problems. The moral and intellectual development perspective is the branch of cognitive theory that is most associated with the study of crime and violence. Piaget (1932) was one of the first psychologists to argue that people’s reasoning abilities develop in an orderly and logical fashion. He argued that, during the first stage of development (the sensor-motor stage), children respond to their social environment in a simple fashion by focusing their attention on interesting objects and developing their motor skills. By the final stage of the development (the formal operations stage),
children have developed into mature adults who are capable of complex reasoning and abstract thought.

Kohlberg (1969) applied the concept of moral development to the study of activist criminal behaviour. He argued that all people travel through six different stages of moral development. At the first stage, people only obey the law because they are afraid of punishment. By the sixth stage, however, people obey the laws because it is an assumed obligation and because they believe in the universal principles of justice, equity, and respect for others. In his research, Kohlberg found that activist violent youth were significantly lower in their moral development than non-violent youth – even after controlling for social background (Kohlberg et al., 1973). Since his pioneering efforts, studies have consistently found that people who obey the law simply to avoid punishment are more likely to commit acts of violence than are people who recognize and sympathize with the fundamental rights of others. Higher levels of moral reasoning, on the other hand are associated with acts of altruism, generosity and non-violence (Veneziano and Veneziano, 1992). In sum, the weight of the evidence suggests that people with lower levels of moral reasoning will engage in crime and activism when they think they can get away with it. On the other hand, even when presented with the opportunity, people with higher levels of moral reasoning will refrain from violent and activist behaviour because they think it is not fair.
Another area of cognitive theory that has received considerable attention from activism and violence researchers involves the study of information processing. Psychological research suggests that when people make decisions, they engage in a series of complex thought processes. First they encode and interpret the information or stimuli they are presumed with, then they search for a proper response or appropriate action, and finally, they act on their decision (Dodge, 1986). According to information processing theorists, violent individuals may be using information incorrectly when they make their decisions. Violence-prone youth, may see people as more threatening or aggressive than they actually are. This may cause some youth to react with violence at the slightest provocation. According to this perspective, aggressive children are more vigilant and suspicious than normal youth are; a factor that greatly increases their likelihood of engaging in violent behaviour.

**Personality and Activism**

The psychological concept of “personality” has been defined as stable patterns of behaviour, thoughts or actions that distinguish one person from another. A number of psychologists have argued that certain personality types are more prone to activistic and violent behaviour. The Gluecks (Glueck and Guleck, 1950) identified a number of personality traits that they felt were associated with violence, including self-assertiveness, defiance, extroversion, narcissism and
suspicion. More recently, researchers have linked violent behaviours to traits such as hostility, egoism, self-centredness, jealousy, and indifference to or lack of empathy for others. Activists and Criminals have also been found to lack ambition and perseverance, to have difficulty controlling their tempers and other impulses, and to be more likely than conventional people are to hold unconventional beliefs (Atkins, 2007; Capara et.al. 2007; Costello and Dunaway 2003; Johnson et.al., 2000; Sutherland and Shepard, 2002; Miller and Lynam, 2001).

The Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) and the Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) have frequently been used to assess the personality characteristics of young people. The use of these scales has consistently produced a statistically significant relationship between certain personality characteristics and activistic behaviour. Adolescents who are prone to activism and violence typically respond to frustrating events or situations with strong negative emotions. They often feel stressed, anxious and irritable in the face of adverse social conditions. Psychological testing also suggests that crime-prone youth are also impulsive, paranoid, aggressive, hostile, and quick to take action against perceived threats (Avshalom et.al., 1994).

There is considerable debate about the causal direction of the personality-activism association. On the one hand, some scholars have argued that there is a direct causal link between certain
personality traits and activistic behaviour. However, other maintains that personality characteristics interact with other factors to produce activism and violence. For example, defiant, impulsive youth often have less-than-stellar educational and work histories. Poor education and employment histories subsequently block opportunities for economic success. These blocked opportunities, in turn, lead to frustration, deprivation, and ultimately, violent activity (Miller and Lynam, 2001).

**Psychopathy and Activism**

Research suggests that some serious violent offenders may have a serious personality defect commonly known as psychopathy, sociopathy or anti-social personality disorder. Psychopaths are impulsive, have low levels of guilt and frequently violate the rights of others. They have been described as egocentric, manipulative, cold-hearted, forceful, and incapable of feeling anxiety or remorse over their violent actions. Psychopaths are also said to be able to justify their actions to themselves so that they always appear to be reasonable and justified.

Considering these negative personality traits, it is perhaps not surprising that recent studies show that psychopaths are significantly more prone to violence and activisitic behaviours compared with the normal population. However, psychopaths are particularly over-represented among chronic offenders. Indeed, it is estimated that up
to 80 per cent of chronic activists offenders exhibit psychopathic personalities. In sum, research suggests that psychopaths have a significantly higher likelihood of violence than others do. However, experts also stress that not all psychopaths become violent. In fact, the majority of people convicted of violent crimes in Canada and the US do not have a psychopathic personality (Edens et.al., 2001; Lykken, 1996).

Psychologists think that a number of early childhood factors might contribute to the development of a psychopathic or sociopathic personality. These factors include having an emotionally unstable parent, parental rejection, lack of love during childhood and inconsistent discipline. Young children – in the first three years of life – who do not have the opportunity to emotionally bond with their mothers, experience a sudden separation from their mothers, or see changes in their mother figures are at particularly high risk of developing a psychopathic personality.

**Mental Illness and Activism**

A recent survey of more than 6,000 respondents from 14 countries found that approximately ten percent of the adult population suffers from some form of mental illness – ranging from depression to schizophrenia. Rates of mental illness may be even higher among youth. The most common disorders among youth include depression, substance abuse and conduct disorder (Osenblatt, 2001). Research
also suggests that mental health issues may put young people at risk of engaging in violent behaviour. Monohan (2000) noted that “no matter how many social and demographic factors are statistically taken into account, there appears to be a greater than chance relationship between mental disorder and violent behaviour. Mental disorder is a statistically significant risk factor for the occurrence of violence”.

Research suggests that depression, a relatively common disorder among youth, may be related to aggression (Englander, 2007). Interestingly, a number of studies have found that while minor depression is related to an increased probability of minor criminality, major bipolar depression is not at all related to serious violent behaviour. Indeed, major depression a severe disorder may permit someone to form intent and act out in a activistic violent manner (Modestin et.al., 1997). Similarly, some experts have suggested that youth suffering from affective disorders are actually more likely to withdraw and harm themselves than to act violently towards others (Hillbrand, 1994).

Additional research suggests that particular types of mental illness – including schizophrenia – are more associated with violent behaviour than others are (Lescheid, 2007). Studies have also found that up to 75 of juvenile murderers suffer from some form of mental illness – including psychopathy and schizophrenia (Rosner, 1979; Sorrells, 1977). In sum, research gives tentative support for the idea
that mental disturbance or illness may be a root or underlying cause of violent behaviour. It is extremely important to note, however, that some scholars suggest that this relationship may be spurious. In other words, the same social conditions that produce violent behaviour — including parental neglect, child abuse, violent victimization, racism, peer pressure and poverty — may also cause mental illness (Durant et.al., 2007; Leischied, 2007).

**Substance Abuse and Activism**

Substance abuse — including alcoholism — has now been formally recognized as a mental illness. Research has also established that there is a strong positive correlation between levels of substance abuse and violence. It is hypothesized that alcohol and drugs can impact violence in three ways. First of all, alcohol and drugs may have psychopharmacological effects that impair cognition and subsequently increase the likelihood of aggressive behaviour. Many have argued, for example, that the physiological impact of substance use serves to reduce social inhibitions and thus frees or enables people to act on their violent impulses. Others, however, have argued that this “disinhibition effect” is culturally specific. Anthropologists have shown, for example that the social effects of alcohol vary dramatically from country to country.
Need and Significance of the Study

Academic institutions are the property of our society. An educational campus is a unit of our society and it is formed by a group of people with the objective of achieving some socially desired goal within a time frame. According to Black, (1981) “An educational campus is a highly interactive social unit, where hierarchies, roles and responsibilities are well defined. It is a social group deliberately formed to achieve certain socially desirable objectives. The time limit of achieving the objectives for every group is also well determined.” If such a precious social unit is damaged or there are disturbances in the process of achieving the set goals, the society will be the sufferer. It would be huge loss if calculated in economic terms. Dewen (1980) says that if the growth of an educational institution is hampered through interruption or disturbances created by activist students in such a situation a humble institution containing 500 members, will sustain a loss of approximately 25,00,000 lakh rupees. The loss under question is not limited to the campus itself but it produces an adverse effect on the neighbouring societies. Once the reputation of an institution is tainted or damaged, it causes a number of problems. There is high risk of student strength going down to the lowest possible level. Educational activity itself loses its fervor and respectability of the teacher community is also impaired to a greater degree. Any kind of disturbance or interference in normal institutional activity generates problems at large scale the consequences of which
are long lasting and dangerous. These interruptions or interferences are basically dependent on activist tendencies of the students. The study undertaken at hand will reveal activist behaviour generating areas and also try to probe those psycho-social characteristics which strengthen and reinforce the activist behaviour.

The present study aims to provide a useful framework to understand the broad spectrum of the activist behaviors in general and youth/student activism in particular.

To establish a civic agenda for higher learning institutions, Ehrlich (2000) provides a definition of activism in an effort to promote civic engagement opportunities within colleges and universities. Activism as civic engagement “means working to make a difference in the civic life of our community. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and nonpolitical processes”. The problem as Ehrlich notes is that contemporary American universities tend to emphasize the nonpolitical processes and political activism is not encouraged. In attempting to reconcile whether student activism can be a part of the civic agenda of the 21st century. Ehrlich echoes the frustration of strictly political activists (i.e., justice oriented) in the college environment. He believes that a less political civic agenda that excludes true student activism will only serve to ‘domesticate’ student impulses for justice and promote conventional volunteer and service activities. Ehrlich challenges conventional notions of civic engagement and activism by asking “If
the civic agenda does not involve social change, what is the point of it?"

A thorough review of the literature concerning youth/student activism reveals that most of the studies have been conducted from political and sociological point of views. There appears to be a gap in knowledge exists around examining the relationship of youth activism with the varying levels of reaction to frustration, personal stress and some important personality factors.

Statement of the Problem

It has been found that, since time immemorial, in times of crisis youth activism has played a crucial role in social change. Students/youths around the world have been at the forefront of movement to promote democracy and human rights. Youth movements have toppled powerful dictatorships and even military regime. Youth movements have ended wars. Important institutions that are a vibrant part of our campus today play an important role in youth activism. Many of the original ideas advanced by youth/student activists for educational reforms have now become the part and parcel of the system. Therefore, youth/student activism is about social change and transformation. But is the focus of activities only on changing the institutions or society? No, it is not. Change in society must come in tandem with changing ourself.
The question arises, how do youth/student movements, become so powerful? Student movements draw their power through the formation of strategic alliances with other sectors of society facing oppression, such as immigrants, workers, racial minorities, women and peasants and other dispossessed people in the countryside. By joining in solidarity with others, students movement gain the power necessary to transform society. Unfortunately, youth activism has not received adequate attention from social scientists, who are involved in analyzing the contemporary organizational structures. They summarise that these are conflicts and contradictions between social system and organizational working within them. Educational institutions imparting education to the youths offer an example of this conflict. Because of that social scientists and educationalists, who had been pre-occupied with the understanding the phenomenon of youth activism have failed to yield any viable and convincing explanations. There is no gain saying that there is variance in the genesis of turmoil, but the forms and expressions of it are almost similar. It clearly shows that the youths are developing personality traits, responsive and sensitive enough to react sharply at the expectation of facing any hindrance in their achievement of the goals they feel desirable. It shows that the content, the character and expression of desirable behaviour is gradually loosing its social force and gaining strength in small group dynamics. Some times activism by itself may generate dysfunctional consequences to the institution as a whole.
Wisdom lies in giving a serious pondering to the problem and trying to get to the root rather than beating about the bush. To talk eliminating criminal activities without removing the conditions favorable to their growth is a foolish thought and holds no water. Youth activism is a source of many other psychological problems like indifference, isolation, alienation and frustration. When exposed to a difficult situation, a person is supposed to respond or react to it in some way. But the question needs to be answered whether activism emerges because of some psychological forces in the personality of the youths with activist tendencies or some social factors are responsible towards the growth of activist tendencies. We also need to find out the typical psychological characteristics of youth activists. What are the factors that stop them from indulging and what are the factors that make some youths to indulge in activism?

A review of the literature indicates that studies abound on student/youth activism in western countries, but there is paucity of such studies in India. One fails to find any study in India that has directly investigated youth activism in relation to personality factors, personal stress and reaction to frustration. Therefore, to bridge this gap in knowledge the researcher took it as an opportunity and designed the present study to investigate youth activism among college students in relation to certain relevant and causative variables e.g. personality factors, personal stress and reaction to frustration. Keeping the above mentioned facts in mind the problem of the present study is stated as – “A psycho-analysis of youth activism in relation to some personality factors, personal stress and reaction to frustration.”
Objective of the Study

On the basis of the statement of the problem, the present study aimed at achieving the following objectives.

1- To see the effect of some prime Personality Factors (Neuroticism & Extraversion) on Youth Activism.

2- To see the effect of different levels of Personal Stress on Youth Activism.

3- To see the effect of different levels of Reaction to Frustration on Youth Activism.

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were formulated for the present study.

1- Youth Activism will be a function of multiple factors.

2- Personality factors will have differential effect on Youth Activism.

3- Personal Stress will have differential effect on Youth Activism.

4- Reaction to Frustration (Level of RF) will have differential effect on Youth Activism.

5- Culture (Area of residence i.e. urban & rural) will have differential effect on Youth Activism.
Variables Studied

The following variables were employed in the present research.

Independent Variables

1- Personality Factors
   (a) Neuroticism
   (b) Extraversion

2- Personal Stress
   (a) High Personal Stress
   (b) Average Personal Stress
   (c) Low Personal Stress

3- Reaction to Frustration
   (a) High Reaction to Frustration
   (b) Average Reaction to Frustration
   (c) Low Reaction to Frustration

Dependent Variable

Scores on Student Activism Scale

Operational definition of variables

Neuroticism :

It is a fundamental Personality trait in the study of Psychology. Neuroticism is a long-term tendency to be in a negative emotional state. People with neuroticism tend to have more depressed moods – they suffer from feelings of guilt, envy, anger and anxiety, more
frequently and more severely than other individuals. Neuroticism is the state of being neurotic.

Those who score highly on neuroticism tend to be particularly sensitive to environmental stress and respond poorly to it. They may perceive every day, run-of-the-mill situations as menacing and major; trivial frustration are problematic and may lead to despair.

An individual with neuroticism is typically self-conscious and shy. There is a tendency to internalize phobias and other neuroses, such as panic disorders, aggression, negativity and depression. Though the individual is still in touch with reality.

When talking about neuroticism, it is common to read about high, medium or low scores. People with low scores are more emotionally stable and manage to deal with stress more successfully than those with high scores. Individuals with low scores are usually even-tempered, calm and less likely to become upset and tense, compared to people with high scores.

**Extraversion**

It is “the act, state or habit being predominately concerned with and obtaining gratification from what is outside the “self”. An extrovert is someone who likes to be social and whose interests mostly lie with things beyond him/herself, such as other people and the physical environment. Extroverts are not as concerned with themselves and thus do not focus much on their own thoughts or
feelings. Extraverted people are often emotional, impulsive (doing something suddenly based on an urge), confident about themselves in social situations, and are involved in the lives of others. Extrovert-comes from the Latin word “extra” meaning “outside of”, and the Latin word “vertere” meaning “to turn”. Put the two words together and we get “to turn outside of”. An extrovert is someone who likes to be social and whose interests mostly lie with things beyond him/herself, such as other people and the physical environment.

Most people believe that an extrovert is a person who is friendly and outgoing. While that may be true, that is not the true meaning of extroversion. Basically, an extrovert is a person who is energized by being around other people. This is the opposite of an introvert who is energized by being alone.

Extroverts tend to “fade” when alone and can easily become bored without other people around. When given the chance, an extrovert will talk with someone else rather than sit alone and think. In fact, extroverts tend to think as they speak, unlike introverts who are far more likely to think before they speak.

**Personal Stress**

Stress is an inevitable part of human life. Bulk of studies have been conducted on this topic in Psychology and medical sciences. Stress may be defined as - “An adverse reaction people have to
excessive pressures or other types of demands placed upon them. It arises when they worry they cannot cope”.

This definition does not however take into account the concept of perception. As different people perceive the same event in different ways this is extremely important. It is not usually the event which causes us problems but our perception of the event. For example, some people will see an event such as public speaking as extremely stressful while others will see it as a challenge.

Stress may also be defined as – “A reaction which occurs when the perceived demands of a situation exceeds our ability to cope”.

We therefore can cause our own stress by the way we perceive a situation. The way we see life, our perceptions may affect our receptivity to stress. We also cause our stress by our own behaviour.

It is well known that we all thrive on a certain amount of pressure and in fact, we all need some pressure to do our best. However, if this pressure becomes excessive it can be counterproductive and lead to stress. At first, we may just be irritable, snappy, unable to think clearly, and make a few silly mistakes. However, if the pressure continues and we fail to do anything about it our performance drops. We may develop physical symptoms or mental symptoms such as anxiety and eventually depression.

There are varieties of sources of stress. Pestonjee (1992) has outlined three important sectors of life from which stress may arise: Job and organization, social sector and intrapsychic sector. Brown
(1984) has listed five categories of sources of stress, customary life events, unexpected life events, progressive, accumulating situational events, personality qualities, value dependent traits. Likewise, Taylor (1995) has concluded that there are three major antecedent sources of stressful behavior: stressful life events, stress in workplace and families. Personal stress do arise from personal events of lie of an individual. So personal stress may be defined as stress the sources of which are related to personal life events of an individual; that are likely to produce stress in a person.

**Reaction to Frustration**

Frustration is one of the most dominating factor influencing the individual behavior. Many of the outstanding achievements in human, social and individual history have sprung out of deeply frustrating situations or backgrounds.

*Frustration* is an emotional reaction and a state of emotional stress characterized by confusion, annoyance and anger. Interruption to goal seeking behavior causes frustration. Technically, it is a type of stress which occurs when one’s efforts, remains unfulfilled, dissatisfied either by obstacle or by absent of appropriate goal. Stress beyond a minimal level threatens the well being of the organism. This threat forces the individual to be some things to cope the stress, which is called “Reaction to frustration”.

The reactions to frustration are also known as Defense Mechanisms. These defense mechanisms are so called as they try to defend individuals from the psychological effects of a blocked goal. When an individual get frustrated, he become tensed and irritable. He experiences an uneasy feeling in their stomach and also show various other reactions of frustration.

Following are the various types of reactions to frustration :-

1. **Withdrawal** : Behaviours such as asking for a transfer or quitting a job.

2. **Fixation** : An individual blames others for his problems, without knowing complete facts.

3. **Aggression** : Acting in a threatening manner.

4. **Regression** : Behaving in an immature and childish manner and may self-pity (to feel sorry for oneself).

5. **Physical Disorders** : Physical ailments such as fever, upset stomach, vomiting, etc.

6. **Apathy** : Becoming irresponsive and disinterested work and individuals.

**Youth Activism**

The term has been variously defined. For instance, wikipedia defines it as, “when youth voice is engaged in community organizing for social change”. This is particularly relevant to the present discussion: Youth activism therefore take place according to the given
definition. When young people are involved in planning researching teaching, evaluating, decision-making social working, advocating and leading action on environmental issues, social justice, human rights campaign, supporting or opposing issues like abortion, anti-racism, and ethnic cleansing, etc. all with particular reference to bringing about a social change. Students have been observed by many researcher’s to be at the forefront of youth activism especially through student unionism.

Youth Activism is also defined as a work done by youths to effect political, economic, or social change. It has often focused on making changes in schools such as increasing student influences over curriculum or improving educational funding. Hence, Youth Activism is when the youth voice is engaged in community organizing for social change, such as environmental movements, social justice organizations, and anti war protest etc.

**Delimitations of the Study**

Human behaviour is a complex phenomenon. Therefore, researches in the social sciences is a difficult task because it deals with human behaviour. Since individuals differ in feelings, drives and motivations, it is difficult to arrive at generalizations with certainty that is possible in describing aspects of inanimate objects. However, discovering principles of human behaviour is not impossible, though it is difficult. The present study therefore, cannot be free from delimitations.
The first delimitation of the study is the nature of the problem of the present study. The problem selected for study is related with youth/student activism among male college students of eastern U.P. and its relationship with personality factors, personal stress and reaction to frustration was not an easy task to measure.

The study was confined to a sample of male college students of Azamgarh, Varanasi and Jaunpur district and restricted to only 1000 students. Female students are not included in the sample on the sole assumption that they have negligible participation in activistic behaviour.

Male students studying at college level were the participants for this study. It was not possible to include in the study, the students belonging to primary, Junior high school, High school and Intermediate. Male college students of Azamgarh, Varanasi and Jaunpur district comprised the population for the study.

Another limitation was the availability of suitable tools to measure the different variables among male college students. Tools were selected from the available ones. Although their usefulness had been ascertained it cannot be said with certainty that the results obtained were without any possibility of error.

All possible necessary steps were taken to make the study objective and scientific, however, the study could not be an exception to errors and personal biases of human judgments as Guilford (1954) remarked; “While forced to have much confidence in quantitative
human judgments, we must be alert to the weaknesses involved and to the many sources of personal biases in those judgments”.

The study has been conducted with above mentioned delimitations and constraints. Keeping above limitations in view, any generalizations may be made. It is true in this case as it is usual in all the social sciences.