CHAPTER V

IMPACT OF POLITICAL SOCIALISATION

The student groups which are politically conscious as a result of socialisation processes, having tasted power in the form of membership in the legislative and executive bodies of the university know how to apply political pressure to attain their interests. It has also been noted how they are being made use of by political parties and other vested interests for the enhancement of their interests. What happens as a result is the disruption of the educational institutions, malfunctioning of the university and at least causing public disorder. The situation has been worsened by the mess prevailing in the social, economic and political fields. The negative consequences of the extra political consciousness of the Kerala students is dealt with in this chapter.

If the nature of student politics and the undesirable consequences which it produce are to be clearly understood a knowledge of the general conditions prevailing in the society and their relations to the university, students, teachers and other interests is necessary.
Students and the Political World

Students are naturally influenced by the political leaders and their practices because they are considered by them as men of achievements. They even try to emulate the political leaders who constantly make lengthy speeches about the need for social reconstruction and making available justice to all sections of the society. But without much delay it becomes obvious to the students that the ideals about which the politician is so much concerned are not practised by him. The world of Indian politics is characterised by widespread indiscipline, lack of ethical standards, low public morals and corruption in high places. The political leaders are known for their unruly behaviour in Parliament and in the State Legislative Assemblies. Democratic values which have been taught to the young do not find a place in day-to-day politics. Newspapers abound with the news as how democratic norms are violated with impunity. Moreover, our society does not provide much opportunities for meaningful participation in community life. The net result is that the process of political socialisation in the values of a free society is often disrupted or even stopped.

There is another sense in which the politics of the adult world adversely affects the interests of the student
community. The political parties have failed to adopt a healthy and positive attitude towards student problems. They do not allow an autonomous student movement to grow. On the other hand, they interfere unnecessarily in educational matters, exploit the students and present an exaggerated picture of student grievances. Students are encouraged by them to engage in demonstrations and agitations for narrow political gains. As a result there is the growing intrusion of the politics of the market place into the campus. Students also seek political patronage, for getting elected to university bodies or a future career in politics.

In addition to this there are sections in university who seek political patronage thus contaminating the academic atmosphere. For example, there are teachers who hope to become members of important committees of the university. The teachers and the superior administrative staff of the university look forward to political patronage for appointments and promotions. Indeed some advertisements are carefully thoughtout so as to exclude known rivals. The students oppose all these manipulations and wirepulling in the university administration and they take to strikes and demonstrations in protest. It is a plain fact that the university is primarily an institution of student concern and it is only natural then that they
oppose such malpractices. But it is also ironical that sometimes these students, because of attachment towards political parties and their leaders connive with them in the malpractices in the university.

The university becomes a political platform and the politician wants to maintain his faction in it. Like every other section of the society he too will try to extend his domain in the various colleges coming under the university. The private colleges in rural areas are an important source of political power and control for him.

Thus because of the political activities of students and the undue influence of the politicians the educational institutions and the university gets politicised. By politicisation of the university is meant in effect "subsuming educational goals to organised extra educational interests".¹ Politicisation involves the appropriation of educational structures and resources and the displacement of educational goals by organised political and community interests. In the Indian context it is a part of the larger process of politicisation of the society. When the university is politicised chances

for corruption increase and the appointments to key posts are made not on the basis of merit but extraneous considerations. In Kerala the students have time and again come out against university maladministration, attempts by the Syndicate to increase marks for influential students and financial irregularities. In these conditions the Vice Chancellor, the Pro-Vice Chancellor, the Registrar, and the Finance Officer all may seek political help and support and they may even be political appointees. The students too who maintain political interests now come out against the illegal practices and consider these important functionaries as agents of political parties. The appointing authority on its part believe that it has a moral and natural claim on the candidate so appointed to protect its interests. The danger is that the appointee is dragged into the power game of politicians. The post of the Pro-Chancellor which is normally being held by the Education Minister is also not beyond suspicion and criticism. By the very nature of his personality he becomes a person with political interests as far as the university is concerned. He will try to exert his influence in all matters of the university as and when occasions arise. In Kerala the Education Minister in the EMS Ministry of 1957 was the first to
become the Pro-Chancellor of a university and this later became a regular practice.²

Next to the officials, the Senate is the most important centre of political interest. Here there are elected members from various sources representing teachers, public associations, students, politicians, governing bodies of colleges, etc. The candidates are usually public men mostly lawyers and politicians representing various sections of the society. The fact that these men unlike teachers and students are outside the official pressures of the university deserves special note.

The Syndicate is the most powerful body of a university and its functions are executive in nature. It looks after the day-to-day administration. Here again politics plays an important role in the election or nomination of members. Among the universities of Kerala the Mahatma Gandhi University has a nominated Syndicate and does not have a student representative on it, while universities like Kerala and Calicut have student representatives in the Syndicate. It is very interesting

to note that there are Syndicate members who wield more influence than the Vice Chancellor in the affairs of the university and it is they who make official announcements in the name of the university. Whether it is election or nomination it does not make much difference as far as political interests are concerned, because the government in power is likely to nominate those members who will be loyal to it.

Besides this type of power game there are also other instances which can provide a flashpoint for student protest. The dominant political elites try to make use of the various forums of the university to institutionalise their power. This takes place in the admissions to the various courses or when the results of examinations are announced. Students who are influential get more marks, even first classes and ranks thus ensuring an advantage throughout their professional careers. Of course students who are not politically or otherwise influential also get distinctions exclusively on their own merit.

In a similar manner, the politician and the administrative authority join together to divide the spoils in the matter of employment opportunities in the university. The university is a substantial employer and very often without political influence candidates do not
succeed in getting jobs. Likewise in the supply of furniture, or scientific apparatus or books to the university and colleges, politics plays a role.

In all these deals the student community smells foulplay and all these provide occasions for students to engage in demonstrations and agitations. They demand enquiry or dismissal of the concerned official. But to their dismay nothing happens, and nobody even bothers about the complaints they raise as if these are all routine matters in university administration. What they oppose is corruption in the university. They vigorously demand decentralisation of university administration and stand for adequate representation in the various administrative bodies. But in the process the work in the university and colleges comes to a standstill and students engage in violence and vandalism.

Usually two opinions are expressed regarding student violence in Kerala. The first is that students engage in violence as a part of their political activism and in this they are helped by outside forces. The second is that students become violent not as a part of their political activities but violence is a peculiar feature of the modern day living and as such it can be found among
students too. There is a small minority of students who are disappointed and indisciplined and many of them are drug addicts and lack moral values. To overcome the feeling of despondency they take refuge in cheap novels and third rate films which highlight sex and crimes.

Student political activities become a matter of serious concern when it is adversely affected by the combinations of the various factions in the university and this will in turn produce its consequences in the academic work of the colleges and universities. Dominant factions in the university and their respective interests do not coincide always. Sometimes these factions become weak. This might cause change in alliances. As a result there will be clash of interests and new adjustments have to be made. All these processes are likely to be reflected in student political activities too.

The teacher-student-politician relationship is a silently working combination which causes disturbances in the academic field in the long run. That is, there are students who seek rewards through personal loyalty and political pressure. In such a context the teacher-student relationship becomes a political equation rather than a spiritual bond as Amar Kumar Singh says while studying
about politicisation of the Ranchi University. There are teachers who have not identified with the profession and they seek an easy life. Some of them indulge in the intoxication of politics using students to gain political power. There are also instances when teachers use students as weapons against rival teachers. They fight to become members of the various committees which appoint examiners. This is the game of 'reward and punishment' practised by the teachers especially those of the Science faculties where there is practical examinations. Even agitational leaders who are indisciplined are also favoured by the teachers. The effect of all these is to generate disappointment and loss of faith in the system among the well meaning sections of the students.

Student indiscipline has occurred due to the lack of adequate facilities in colleges. The increase in the number of students demand more facilities but additional facilities have not been provided. Curious as it may seem even colleges with good facilities have also been hit by strikes and demonstrations. What follows as a lesson is that these facilities must operate within a socio-

psychological context involving independence of the colleges and universities from political or outside interference.

Political activism among the students in the state has of late extended to the school level also. The psychology involved is 'catch them young' and the students as a result become at a very early age 'a Marxian without reading Marx and a Gandhian without reading the letters and articles of Gandhiji'. In the schools the student organisations have become in a sense the recruiting agencies of the various political parties. The political parties which encourage this are afraid to refrain from such action as that opportunity would be capitalised by the other political parties.

Here again as in the colleges there is not so much of ideclogical politics, but only election based pragmatic politics. The focus of interest is the elections to the School Parliament. This is an important event for the political parties of the state because these students are tomorrow's citizens and they must not be lost to them. But it is a sad commentary that these elections are followed by violence and nihilism. The student leaders and their organisations come to the rescue of those
students who engage in undesirable activities. The authorities therefore are compelled to overlook the importance of maintaining discipline among students.

The strikes and demonstrations conducted by the student organisations which purport to protect the interests of the poor students adversely affect that very section itself because the motive behind them is political. While the rich and even middle class students can go for private tuition to make up for the lost classes, the poor cannot do so. As a result of the loss of working days for schools and colleges the standards of teaching and discipline have declined. Perhaps the greatest threat to educational activities in schools and colleges of Kerala occurs when teachers and students join hands to support each other's strikes. Students had supported the teachers strike of 1972 for direct pay and the UGC pay scales strike in 1980.

Thus it becomes clear that students do not operate in a political vacuum. They are not politically irrelevant. They can specially be effective in crisis situations. A close observation of Kerala politics reveals the fact that in addition to the strikes and demonstrations conducted for protecting student interests, students have engaged in them to bring about political pressure upon the
government in power. Students possess good communication facilities and therefore they can be easily mobilised and organised. The result is that students are drawn into some form of confrontation politics.

What is found in India is an overburdened political system and constant and speedy changes interfere with the evolution of widely accepted norms of social and political conduct. In such conditions the student community assumes significance, and the political parties knowing fully well that the students not only in number but also in organisability and mobilisability the largest politically conscious group, develop close relationship with them.

Although the student community is very much politically conscious those who are politically active form only a minority. While the politically active students dream of a political career the majority who are not that active support one or the other student organisation. Each organisation relies on demonstrations, strikes, and propaganda to build up an image before the students. But this image building is at the expense of the students who are keen on studying and getting a job. Those student leaders who dream of a political career are ready to retain their studentship even into their late twenties and after their studies they take to
fulltime politics. They find a fertile soil for their leadership to grow in adolescent rebellion, the impatience of the students with status quo and the government's inability to satisfy the rising expectations which accompany rapid changes. This condition produces an everpresent nucleus of student support for the organisational activities and the leadership game of the student leaders.

Even though students play a significant role in Kerala politics it ought to be said that they cannot be considered as agents of change in politics. In other words, they have not contributed in any substantial way to the political modernisation process or cultural evolution. This is because no unified student reform movement has ever taken place after 1947 in this state. Students very rarely engage in cultural debates and they fail to join hands to promote the common well being of their community. If at all they have come together it is to get some concession from the government in power. Their primary orientation is towards politics and in this field they are guided by the elders and they adhere to the 'traditional norms of political behaviour'.

This is not to say that the students have not felt the need to reform society and the educational field. The
point is that they do not have a blueprint or alternative programme for the purpose. What they do is to make footnotes to the party programmes regarding social and educational policies. The student initiative is weakened by the large size, class distinctions, religious differences, regional competition, leadership rivalries, etc. In such circumstances the senior politicians try to rely on student support to have a smooth going for their political careers.

The face of student politics gets distorted in the context of Kerala's coalition politics. The uncertain future of each political party especially during elections, compels all of them to count on the support of the students. While one set of students will support the government in power, the others are used by the opposition political parties to topple it. Even the forging of alliances during college and university elections are dependent upon the alliances among the major political parties. Thus one can see the student organisations following a set pattern in their political activities.

The overimpact of politics is felt in the colleges and universities through a two way linkage of the educational system -- first, with the government and second, with the major political parties through the
student organisations. The government has the power to give funds, nominating members to the legislative and executive bodies of the university and of advising the Chancellor in matters including the appointment of the Vice Chancellor. Similarly, the student organisations are all affiliated to the political parties and student political leaders are those who nurse a hope to become future political leaders of the adult world. Because of the irregular political activities of students they have become a major headache to any government. In the words of S.M. Lipset Indian students have become "a major headache for a beleaguered government". Their main activity centres around paralysing educational institutions. In this way they have managed to remain as an important pressure group in relation to the educational and political authorities.

In their zeal to cleanse the educational field administrators and social scientists have made attempts to depoliticise the university. But this is a difficult task especially when the atmosphere outside is surcharged with politics. An attempt was made to depoliticise the Benaras Hindu University in 1958. The students union was

dissolved due to continued agitations. The result was that the vacuum so created was filled by the RSS, a Hindu cultural organisation which was hitherto uninvolved in university politics at the BHU. It began spreading its influence among students and teachers. The RSS could claim that it was a cultural organisation.5

The lesson which follows is that attempts at depoliticisation of the university can create more dangerous situations. Once the student unions and student organisations are banned, communal organisations, drug mafias, or gangsters may suddenly step in and spread its tentacles on the campus.

University in a Developing Society

While an analysis is made of the overimpact of student politics in related fields it is important to understand precisely the role played by the university in a developing society. The university is the knowledge creator in a developing society and a university education is the best means for upward social mobility for the backward people. A modern university assists the production process of the society too. University education helps a person to get employment and it also

5. Ibid., p.12.
helps to train a set of future national leaders in a developing country. All these factors increase the demand for higher education among students causing friction between needs and resources.

The traditional English idea of a university provides for maximum solidarity between the teachers and the taught. The students formed a homogeneous group. It was this type of university education which was introduced in our country by the Britishers. But the ideal of university life embodied in this form of education is outdated today. This is the age of specialisation in scholarship and there is widespread social recruitment to professions that are associated with the industrial society. The university has been transformed into the 'multiversity', (to use the phrase of Clark Kerr), in a modern society which is characterised by organisational changes associated with mass higher education. 6 At the same time the university has been increasingly brought under the strains and stresses of development in countries like India.

The university system is more than a century old in India. The Indian universities were patterned on the

University of London. But they have not been unaffected by socio-economic and political happenings in the country. The freedom struggle which India had to wage stimulated political awareness in the campus and the student community actively participated in this.

The Indian University is closely tied to its society and it shares many of the characteristics and contradictions of modern Indian life. Higher education here is very much in the mainstream of our social and economic life. The conditions prevailing in the various states of India including Kerala support the idea that academic values cannot remain completely separated from the norms of the broader society. Political infighting, caste conflicts, family influence are all reflected in university life. Thus one might conclude that the contemporary university stands at the apex of the society especially in a developing society. It creates and distributes knowledge. In addition the universities have taken on a political function also. "They often serve as centres of political thought and sometimes of action, and they train those who become members of the political elite". In our times higher education is a technological

and economic resource. This is why governments invest more and more money in higher education. It is productive and promotes progress. The universities in turn have to approach the government for funds. Here is the crucial connection between higher education and politics; the university enters the political order. In the opinion of Jerome Skolnick the attempts to extend the benefits of higher education to the weaker sections produce a cultural conflict -- between the established culture and the claims of the various groups which enjoy concessional facilities, namely the minorities and the economically weak.8 This is true of a developing society like ours and it is likely to encourage students to agitate for more and more concessions. For instance, whenever attempts are made by the governments in Kerala either to increase the fees or restrict higher education to the truly meritorious, students have declared war on such governments.

Yet another feature of the modern university which causes politicisation of the field of higher education is 'fragmentation of interests'. The university today is no more a community which shares common values and common

interests. The accepted values of the university have become highly contested political issues. For example, the question of primacy between university autonomy and university accountability is a hotly debated one in political circles. The various groups in the university also have developed different bases of interests, whether it is a developed or developing country. Consequently, the university authorities are not able to deal with the internal conflicts effectively. It is also to be noted that increased specialisation which is the result of information explosion has led to professionalism in the university.

The modern trends in university life have got a bearing on student community also. In other words, the university fails to deal with student issues effectively. The students try to make use of informal pressures to exercise an influence in the affairs of the university and also over government policies concerning them. As Skolnick says "out of the agitation and activism of non academic issues, student power within academic and campus affairs has grown". The transition from elite to mass and then to universal higher education in the context of

9. Ibid., pp.138-44.
10. Ibid.
industrialisation is slowly taking place all over the world. Regardless of the political system and the level of economic development, higher education has expanded many times over everywhere. But in India the sad fact remains that if this was something unavoidable the political parties while politicising the field of higher education did not care to adopt long term policies to find solutions to educational problems. This is because education has never been a major vote catching subject. What happened was the unplanned expansion of higher education leading to stagnation and the failure of attempted reforms which became the breeding ground for politics in education. This had lend credence to the oft repeated statement that 'education seldom rises above the socio-economic and socio-political situation in which it is embedded'.

While the politician boasts of the expansion of higher education in terms of quantity he, it seems, is not so much aware of the qualitative deterioration. The overproduction of educated persons has increased the number of the educated unemployed, or rather the 'unemployables' in Kerala. It has weakened student motivation and increased student unrest and indiscipline. There is the frequent collapse of university administration and fall in educational standards in higher
education. The student youth ceases to grow under such conditions and he becomes a source of trouble.

The University administrative set up is such that it invites student agitations. There is very little communications between the students and the administrative authorities. The students have got a feeling that they are considered as a source of income by the university. The educational facilities provided to the students are not satisfactory. Classrooms are crowded and laboratory facilities are bad indeed in many colleges. The lack of adequate admissional facilities have given rise to 'teaching shops' in Kerala which are otherwise called as parallel colleges. Consequently, the number of students for whom examinations must be conducted have gone up. The Kerala University itself is conducting annually 400 examinations as reported by its Vice Chancellor. As long as the universities face financial difficulties and the present system of examinations are continued with, student agitations are also likely to continue in Kerala.

The University set up gives the politician an opportunity to interfere in the business of higher

education. The Senate and the Syndicate are administrative bodies through which he can make his presence felt.

The murky waters of university education has tempted the politician to try a chance in this area for the enhancement of his interests. Politics automatically creeps in where there are issues and conflicts. However it is after 1969 that politics has come to dominate the universities because it was then that seven political leaders were nominated to the Kerala University Syndicate by the Achutha Menon Ministry. Later students were also allotted seats in the Senate and the Syndicate. Nowhere else in India can one find this sort of a representation for all sections of the people including students on the university bodies. In the case of the Mahatma Gandhi University also the Education Minister is its Pro-Chancellor. This also makes room for political interference.

When the state of Kerala was born in 1956 there was only one university, the Travancore University which was created in 1937. There were 18 colleges under it then. In 1957 it assumed the new name of Kerala University and

it included 28 colleges and 22,254 students. By 1960's the number of colleges rose to 100 and the number of students rose to 1,02,841. In order to satisfy the increasing thirst for university education among the students the Calicut University came into being in 1968. During 1964-65 about 50 junior colleges were started and new courses were sanctioned. During the 1970's there were 128 colleges and 1,76,483 students. In 1982-83 there were 170 colleges and 2,81,882 students. Those who failed to get admission in the regular Arts and Science colleges sought admission in the parallel colleges. The Mahatma Gandhi University came into existence in 1983 and has 1,50,000 students under it. It was in 1971 that the only technical university in the state had come into being namely the Cochin University. Thus the government was compelled to do something in order to satisfy the increasing demand among students for university education. Shift system, correspondence courses, private registration all were sanctioned in a bid to satisfy the students. The net result is that Kerala has a very high rate of unemployment. Now there are about 35 lakhs of unemployed youth in the state.

The educational system has become quantitatively inadequate and qualitatively anaemic because of the contradiction between the claims of equity and
efficiency. There is on the one side demand for the education of the masses (equity) and on the other demand for education of a high standard (efficiency). The two principles of equity and efficiency acquire additional meaning when education is looked upon as a means of climbing up the social ladder.

The irrelevance of higher education to the social context is often pointed out by the educationists. They emphasise the need for training students for appropriate jobs. But those who oppose this view point towards the fact that education shall cater to the needs of national reconstruction. Educational planning at the tertiary level in independent India was thus faced with the multifaceted problem of "transforming the dysfunctional and outdated legacy inherited from the colonial past into an instrument of social change", as the report of the Association of Indian Universities says. But this was a complex task. The report continues, "The four decades after the achievement of independence, were, therefore a period of intense debate and raging controversies on the trajectory of and strategies for the proper development of higher education." Consequently,


14. Ibid.
higher education in India today is characterised by several contradictions, and these contradictions themselves pertain to the aspirations of a newly liberated set of people for changes and reforms in society. It is this "dialectics of opposite pulls" which characterises the field of higher education that creates confusion which automatically affects all parties involved in the field including students. So it follows then that where there are no adequate facilities, fall in educational standards, and increasing unemployment political parties are only partially responsible for student agitations. Such an understanding of the overall situation is necessary to discover the source of student unrest. Students generally speaking, have no common leadership or common demands. Very often it is local issues and local leadership which are responsible for student agitations.

Socio-Economic Conditions

The socio-economic conditions prevailing in the state is important from the viewpoint of student political activism. Even today the socio-economic structure is rigid and it is not subjected to rapid changes. The educational institutions are set up by the various communities. Of course the government also runs schools and colleges. But the majority of the schools and
colleges belong to the Christian, Nair, Ezhava and the Muslim communities and as a result the government is not in a position to freely implement new educational reforms. The matter is best illustrated by the attempt made by the EMS Ministry of 1957 to take over the privately owned educational institutions through the Kerala Education Bill passed by the Kerala legislature and against which the private managements appealed to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court struck down the bill declaring it as unconstitutional since cultural and educational rights of minorities is a fundamental right. The whole episode culminated in the liberation struggle of 1959 which was led by the Christian and Nair (upper caste Hindu) communities and the EMS Ministry was subsequently dismissed. It was during this struggle that students were made use of by concerned "interests" in the state of Kerala for the first time.15

A University Degree is considered to be a status symbol and it is also a passport to the employment market. It is because educational facilities were denied to a large section of the people that there is great demand for university education. The educational system over the

years has given more importance to the non-technical or traditional courses. Therefore, there is a mushroom growth of Arts and Science Colleges in the state.

The government is the biggest employer and a government job is considered highly attractive. Although the basic qualification for a government job is higher secondary, a candidate with a degree has better chances of securing the same considering the fact that jobs are few and candidates are there in their lakhs.

The economically and socially backward students are given reservation in appointments in the government sector. This fact increases the demand for higher education among the backward classes. Neither leftist governments nor rightist governments have attempted to alter the situation. Perhaps this is the reason why Kerala has not witnessed as yet any agitation of the sort of anti Mandal type which was communal in content. It is interesting to note that the 50 per cent reservation for the economically and socially backward classes stipulated by the Supreme Court already exists in Kerala.

The other side of the picture is not that rosy. The rate of unemployment has been consistently growing and now
there are 34.6 million unemployed in Kerala. The economic uncertainty of the students regarding future employment has been an important reason for student indiscipline and unrest. Successive governments of Kerala have given false promises to the young men and women regarding employment and this has increased resentment among the jobless youth. Since the voting age has been reduced to 18 years student youth form a sizable votebank and the cunning politicians waste no time in giving assurances to the youth regarding their future. Th unstructured educational system has also been responsible for the increasing unemployment. Vocational education has not yet received adequate attention. Unemployment is no doubt a complex phenomenon, but no significant improvements could be expected on this front without effecting radical changes in the educational system.

But then unemployment is a national phenomenon. If the youth are in revolt against the state the root cause is economic and not political. The state has failed to provide them enough jobs after about half a century since India became free. There is widespread belief that the employment growth decelerated sharply during the eighties. This is why the youth has become of late more

restless and violent prone. But the growing disaffection of the youth began much earlier when the whole of the country is taken into account. It manifested itself for the first time in 1966 when the entire country was rocked by a spate of student demonstrations all on a sudden. Many of these violent demonstrations had to be forcibly put down by the police. This was the first time the police had to open fire on students and the country was shocked into a prolonged bout of soul searching. Finally, it was found out that as long as college education gave the youth an assurance of a job they felt secure, but in the mid nineteen sixties this security was lost. The governments at the centre and in the states preferred to sweep the problem of unemployment under the carpet than trying to solve it.\(^{17}\)

The student organisations stand primarily for the quantitative expansion of higher education, that is, more opportunities for higher education for those sections of the people which were hitherto denied admission in the educational institutions. Education will bring about employment opportunities and economic prosperity. On the other hand, the government is concerned about improving the quality of education also. Whenever such attempts

have been made to improve the quality students have opposed such moves because they fear that this would result in denying higher education to the backward classes. The socio-economic factors therefore do influence the course of student politics and the result is that the government is forced to make more and more concessions to the student community.

Student Alienation and Identity Crisis

It is when students are alienated from the expressed goals of the university that they become easily available for political activities. There are professional student leaders who can mobilise them against the university and governmental authorities. 'Alienation' is a Marxian concept and Marx developed it in his 'Economic and Philosophic Treatise' in 1844. He was concerned about the impact of Industrial Revolution on man. But later on this concept was applied to other contexts also. Students feel alienated from the educational system because of the lack of meaningful experiences for them there. The education which they receive is irrelevant to their future careers. It is also generally held that the educational system is indifferent to the problems of society.

To have a meaningful understanding of this concept in the context of student activism one must closely watch the process of social transformation going on under our very eyes. The point is that the old agrarian society has been transformed into the industrial society and in the process the old values too have been destroyed. Similarly, the joint family system also has broken down and the nuclear family has taken its place. Respect for parents and authority is not found today as in the olden days. The family has almost failed as an important socialising agency and the various groups in society have taken on this function in the new conditions. But in the process a condition of 'anomie' has been created especially for the adolescent. The situation is further complicated for him by the rising expectations. He expects more from the modern society than his counterpart who lived in the earlier years. In the words of the French sociologist Durkheim there is an 'explosion of expectations' as far as the youth are concerned. An young person has to adjust not only to the adult world, but also to the constantly shifting values in a changing environment. At the same time these norms are constantly attacked by a section of the population. Thus the student youth is faced with uncertainty leading to an identity crisis.

This identity crisis is having political significance. Students demand a change in social structures and social relations. Such demands sometimes lead them to violence and irregular behaviour. Moreover, students embrace an ideology like democracy or socialism to justify their claims.

Given the condition of the world and India in particular such value confusion is understandable. This confusion can be overcome by achieving or maintaining a particular level of social and economic stability. Of course, the students of the economically advanced countries also have faced such problems. In developing societies most of the young men are confused about their value systems. This is because the socio-economic and political realities deepen the confusion. Corruption, caste conflicts, political oppression, etc., have worsened the situation. Simultaneously, the student youth comes across new situations in his day-to-day life. In a sense more choices are available to him today, but they only increase the confusion. Politics, religion, love, sex, drugs, materialism are all issues which create new situations for the students. But all these create value problems. It is in this context that the New Education Policy of 1986 insists that values, heritage and culture
should be promoted through education. Just as the family has failed in its socialisation function, the teacher too has lost his hold over the students. He is not accepted by the students as a model who can impart values to them. In the classroom there is no meaningful dialogue between the teacher and the students. The reason for this chaotic state of teacher-student relationship lies not in the perversities of teachers and students alone but in the failure in developing a proper organisation of 'teaching-learning process'. The result is that no one succeeds in educating the present day students. In this regard R.L. Gaudino comments: "Indian student is as void of ideas and of informed curiosity as he is full of partitioned bits of information and contrived questions. He is poised without experience, factual without coherence, stuffed but not satiated, thoroughly pampered with conceits of information and stray theories yet checked in every tentative reach for independence of thought. Often self indulgent but seldom self critical, he has not been educated to a clear self analysis. He does not see himself as he is. He is unable to look clearly at his situation". On his part the teacher engages himself in private tuition or business or political activities so

that he can make an additional income or increase his influence in the public. The quality of teaching has declined and only a few are committed to the teaching profession. It is because of this that the phenomenon of 'parallel colleges' has been growing adding to the confusion in the field of higher education.

All these have compelled the students to support the student organisations because they alone protect student interests and protest against authorities which deny students their rights. These organisations also apply political pressure to safeguard their interests since it is political or administrative decisions which can solve their problems. When authorities behave in an authoritarian manner or turn a deaf ear to students' genuine complaints they even take to violence.

Politics of Protest

Students knowing fully well that all their demands are not going to be met very often engages in violence. They use symbolic violence to gain the attention of the public. They even talk of 'creative violence', i.e., violence which can be productive.21 Sociologists and

psychologists believe that violence has a definite social function in changing societies. It can correct unjust situations and remove inferiority complex from man.

It was during the late 1950's that students in Kerala began engaging in violent protests. In 1959 the Sarvodaya leader Shri. Kelappan started a fast at Thirunavaya to protest against making use of students by the political parties for political purposes. But the fast could not make much impact because preparations were going on behind the curtain for a political confrontation called the 'Vimochana Samaram' at that time. From then on the students seem to have given the utmost importance to conducting agitations, and not to giving political education to the students. The politics of the Gandhian era was characterised not only by agitations but also by creative activities, it is to be recalled here.

The elections to the College Unions are also occasions for student protest. There are several organisations which are influential among the students and when one of them comes to office the others will oppose it. If the system of proportional representation were adopted such a situation might have been avoided.
Generally speaking students have adopted legitimate means to get favours from the government. But occasionally they have resorted to violent demonstrations and continued agitations, especially when the authorities failed to respond to the particular demands of the students. Very often students go unpunished. This is because the students are considered to be a privileged lot and they are also close to the quarters of power. It was in the 1960's that a group of students began advocating 'armed revolution' for social reform. This group took its origin in the Kerala Students Federation and came to be called as the Naxalbaris, with Philip M. Prasad as leader. However this group had only a few followers. Whatever it be student turbulence attained a certain respectability during this period as whatever happened in India came to be considered as part of a global phenomenon.22

When the student community is politicised what happens is that it will be compelled to do some sort of mercenary work for the various sections of the society. The best illustration is the Vimochana Samaram (Liberation Struggle) of 1959 against the Kerala government. The initiators of the movement encouraged students to participate in it and there was an opportunity for them to learn the tactics and strategies of a revolutionary

22. V.V. John, 'What is Wrong with our Students', 'Mirror', Bombay, June 1981, p.20.
movement. Since then students have very often resorted to strikes and demonstrations to get their demands approved by the government.

There are also sporadic and unorganised agitations which students engage in which are vaguely associated with their concrete demands such as examination boycotts, attempts to travel in buses without paying fares, etc. Such incidents are on the increase in recent years. The methods adopted by the students include strikes, gheraoes, demonstrations, fasts, picketting, stone throwing and even barricading the roads.

But students have not forgotten their social commitment altogether. The various student organisations had organised agitations for the supply of food grains to the state of Kerala by the Central Government in 1965 and also during 1966-67. They could bring to the attention of the Central Government the deteriorating and pathetic condition in the supply of food grains in Kerala, especially when the political parties stood helpless. In the year 1966-67, they could force the Central Government to raise the amount of ration by six ounces.23

There are occasions when student leaders make demonstrations purposefully violent. When a questionnaire was supplied to the students to seek the reasons for violence among students they responded in the following manner.

Table 14
Reasons for student violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Various Reasons</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Age factor</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Student leaders make demonstrations purposefully violent</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Over excitement</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Delay on the part of authorities</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the Table it becomes clear that 20 per cent of students believe that student leaders deliberately create violence through demonstrations. Over excitement is said to be the reason by a majority of 36 per cent. While 28 per cent believe the delayed response on the part of authorities causes violence another 16 per cent believe that the age peculiarities of the student youth account for the unruly behaviour.
There are many opinions expressed by the experts regarding the indiscipline among students. While some find fault with the political parties and political leaders, others accuse the professional student leaders who dramatise the campus situations. Similarly, there are those who say that it is the delayed and inadequate response of the authorities concerned which encourage student strikes. Still others are of the view that it is the carefree attitude of the students to life that causes violence and vandalism. But the truth lies somewhere in between. The reasons vary from campus to campus, faculty to faculty and issue to issue. Even though the reasons vary, the method and the nature of the student struggle remain the same everywhere. They attack the Vice Chancellor, political and administrative authorities, and destroy public property. What they demand is change—change in examinations, change in teaching methods, more jobs, a world which assures them security and a decent existence.

Student agitations which are nothing but forms of protests exhibit all the characteristics of mob behaviour once it starts. The average student who suffers from frustrations and grievances easily adopts an agitational approach. There are student leaders who build up tension and lead them to mob frenzy. Students thus engage in
violent destruction. Group demonstrations turn into mob hysteria and thus the entire character of the incident changes. In the words of Sushila Mehta, "Each individual student is drawn into mob frenzy by a sort of hypnotic force of mob hysteria. The precarious self control which young student has acquired with difficulty, breaks down. His behaviour is hardly controlled by his own will. The group develops, as it were, an automatic character. Each student tries to outdo the other, for it gratifies his desire to wreak a vengeance on those who seem to be the symbols of his frustration. The repressed fury of his frustration flares up into full force. The student does not feel individually responsible for his behaviour, for his actions have acquired, as it were, a group sanction". 24

The whole drama of student agitation is followed by tragic results. Innocent students are the victims very often and the ring leaders go scotfree. These leaders reap rich dividends as they get publicity, power, and greater leadership. It is in this manner that the unscrupulous professional agitators who are professional leaders too exploit a situation to their advantage. The basic issues of the agitation would ultimately remain unresolved.

24. Dr. Sushila Mehta, op. cit., p.132.
The attitude of the authorities very often aggravate the situation. They try to treat the symptoms of the disease and not to cure it. What are described as the immediate and apparent causes of student unrest are only the sparks to ignite a situation. Actually it is the socio-economic condition and the attitudes of the faculties and university authorities which have created the tense atmosphere. Attempts are sometimes made to win over the students by allowing certain concessions. But by doing so they can only postpone the agitation which might return with double force. The feeling of insecurity compels the students to engage in violent agitations. For instance, when students demand a lowering of examination standards it is because for them university education is the best guarantee of a job in a developing society like India.

Being a group which is politically conscious and having participated in university administrative bodies like the Senate and the Syndicate, the student community which maintains close links with the political leaders knows how to pull political strings and wield political clout. Student political activism becomes dangerous when they make use of undemocratic means to achieve their interests. They sometimes find it difficult to communicate with the university authorities. The modern
university is a bureaucracy and the various bodies which are formed for consultative purposes witness not consultation but confrontation. The hierarchically arranged university system does not allow free participation for the students and the authorities do not care to answer even written complaints. The point is that student interests suffer in such an atmosphere and naturally they resort to direct action.

The political activities of students assume dangerous proportions in yet another context also. That is, with reference to their attitudes and aspirations. Students generally hold progressive ideas and they are free from the structural constraints pertaining to family, caste, class, religion, etc., and have imbibed positive values in respect of equality, justice, and concern for the poor. They subscribe to democratic and egalitarian values. In the colleges and the universities, students from different backgrounds freely mix. But the positive values which are acquired by them are sadly missing in the society. This they realise without much delay to their surprise. They cannot find social justice which they have been seeking so far. This then is the basis of the dilemma which most of the students face. Slowly they understand that jobs are secured not on the basis of merit alone, but through political patronage too.
They are forced to compromise their idealism and many become rebels. In other words, confusion and disappointment abound and they fall a prey to the conspiracy of the society. Thus confusion is the breeding ground for the politics of protest.

Student Indiscipline

No other issue has received so much of attention as that of student indiscipline in the educational life of India in recent years. Many reasons have been cited for the unrest and indiscipline. The underlying causes for student unrest are said to be (1) lack of proper academic atmosphere, (2) absence of respect for authority -- parental, educational, governmental, (3) ideological frustration, and (4) political interference. The status of university teaching has declined after independence and the traditional respect for the teacher is lost on the campus today. Similarly, classes are large and teaching loads are heavy. Another important reason pointed out for student indiscipline is the lack of maturity of the average college student. This is especially true of Kerala. By the age of 15 a student reaches the college after completing his school years. More freedom is

available to him in the college, especially for those who live in the hostels and naturally he involves in political activities. Again the authoritarian character of education is one of the reasons for indiscipline. The Education Commission (1964-66) enquiring into the problem of student unrest expressed concern over ugly strikes, violence, demonstrations, walk out from classrooms and examination halls, ticketless travel, clashes with police, burning of buses and cinema houses and sometimes even manhandling of teachers.

Examinations have been a prime cause of student indiscipline. Students have very often expressed their displeasure over difficult examinations and they have compelled authorities to lower standards in valuation or reschedule the examinations. But even after all these 'favours' the rate of student failure continues to be alarming. The universities of Kerala are usually referred to as 'degree factories' because quality of education is sacrificed for churning out the maximum number of degree holders. In other words, emphasis is on quantity and not on quality. This over emphasis on quantity has also led to commercialisation of higher education in Kerala. It has been pointed out, "the starting of a new college is good industry but bad education". (Prof. V.R. Pillai, high level committee on education)
and employment appointed in 1982 to help the Planning Board.) The examinations which should aim at the qualitative improvement of the students have degenerated into an evil and a gamble. The widespread malpractices and outright corruption have destroyed the credibility and reliability of the universities in the State. It will fit the present situation to say that there is no system of education, but only a system of examination.

The newspapers of Kerala had given the lead in exposing the 'marks scandal' of the Kerala University consequent upon which widespread student agitations followed. Money could buy marklists and even admission to professional courses like Medicine and Engineering. The government had to finally agree to a judicial enquiry to probe the examination irregularities.

The present examination system suits student interest also. They clamour for more chances to appear for the same examination, and for more liberal valuation. A populist political psychology then surrenders before the pressure of students, for, they are the newly acquired vote banks. Complaints of malpractices involving both teachers and students are not uncommon. Tutorials, parallel colleges, private tuition, note writers all thrive on this evil of rotten examination system. It is ironical that such an
examination system which does not aim at the qualitative improvement of students is still preferred by them. They prefer the annual examination system and oppose internal assessment. When examinations are conducted only at the end of the year they will get more time to play politics in the campus. The internal assessment system may compel them to attend more classes and write more examinations.

The problem of student indiscipline is acute and it has become a nuisance to the public at large. Newspapers very regularly write editorials pointing out the need to end student indiscipline and violence. According to a leading Malayalam Daily 'student organisations which are the feeder organisations of political parties conduct agitations on issues which have no relevance to the educational field and students who have no inkling for such agitations are also dragged into them. The more dangerous aspect is that it is outside forces which give leadership to these strikes and demonstrations. This is the result of deliberate planning. 26

The Chairman of the University Grants Commission invited social scientists in 1969 to discuss the growing phenomenon of student unrest. In their opinion the

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heavy weight of educational expansion and the growing aspirations of the youth were leading them to a new path.\textsuperscript{27} The student movement is seeking a wholesome identity of its own and student power is an integral part of youth power all over the world.

A book published by the Ministry of Education in 1954 identifies the causes of student unrest mainly as the destruction of old values and the failure to create a new set of values.\textsuperscript{28}

There is a correlation between student indiscipline and the responsiveness of the political and administrative institutions. In his study of student politics in the Chilean University Myron Glazer says: "The quality and amount of student political involvement seem to reflect the responsiveness of political institutions and the strength of the various groups representing major interests. The more rigid the institutions and the weaker the established interest groups, the greater is the students' political involvement".\textsuperscript{29} So when political

\textsuperscript{27} S. Saraswathi, \textit{Youth in India}, Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi, 1988, pp.325-27.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., p.325.

\textsuperscript{29} Myron Glazer, 'Student Politics in a Chilean University' in S.M. Lipset and Philip G. Altbach, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.432-48.
institutions fail or a vacuum in public leadership occurs
student leaders assume prominence. The changes that have
occurred in our universities is piecemeal and even
contradictory. The education available in our universities
is inadequate to meet today's needs. In a similar way it
can be said that the facilities enjoyed by the
students are also inadequate.

In other words, students feel more frustrated and
insecure today than ever. Even the newly started faculties
fail to satisfy the students. Higher education continues
to reflect sterile scholasticism. The steadily expanding
student body, hence makes an attempt to solve its own
problems. The students organise and exert pressure on the
government and express displeasure with the social and
political systems which perpetuate injustice and
inequality. They challenge the policy of the government
and the rigidity of the university administration. The
student organisations thus spearhead agitations for
forcing the government to relent on educational policies.
The student leaders in the meantime come closer to certain
political leaders. It is a plain fact that student
organisations and their leaders too shall share the blame
for the stagnation in the field of higher education; they
are against all sorts of educational reforms.
### Student Activism -- November 1970 - February 1972

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Number of Incidents</th>
<th>Percentage of Incidents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Kerala</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>640</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

30. Om Datta Tripathi, quoted in S. Saraswathi, op. cit., p. 33
In the country as a whole student unrest is said to have reached its peak in 1972 when there were 4200 incidents most of which were provoked by issues other than academic. Although student indiscipline has occurred all over India, southern India has been witnessing comparatively less of it. The analysis of incidents made by a scholar for the period extending from November 1970 to February 1972 revealed the fact that over 60 per cent of them occurred in northern India. In Kerala it was only 3.4 per cent as is shown in the Table.

In a study of Kerala University 1974 Jacob Aikara says that the most important cause for student indiscipline is the ideological orientation among the students. Different theories on student indiscipline have been given by scholars, administrators and law enforcing authorities. They repeatedly refer to the intergeneration gap, the psychology of the first generation learners from rural areas, identity crisis among students, and heterogeneity of student population. But pragmatists stress on the shortcomings in the physical facilities in universities, increasing politicisation of students and campus issues, and the failure of the

31. Ibid., p.332.
educational system to ensure employment at the end of the courses. Student agitations turn violent due to police action very often. It has been noted that violence is increasing among students. In August 1981, the Rajya Sabha expressed concern over increasing lawlessness and political interference in the university campuses in the country. The Lok Sabha also discussed the issue of student unrest in 1982. The National Police Commission even recommended the setting up of a separate protection force for residential universities to combat student unrest.  

The problem of student unrest is a widely discussed issue in our country. Many causes have been cited for the turbulence in the student community. In the opinion of U. Shukla the following are the reasons -- (1) student unrest has started with student participation in the Non-cooperation Movement. After independence was won, the student unions were at a loss regarding the causes to be taken up in order to keep themselves active in the limelight. So they indulged in all kinds of frivolous activities (2) political parties began taking an active part in student unions and this paved the way for the politicisation of the student community, (3) students

32. Ibid., pp.333-34.
suffer from a sense of directionless. They do not know what activities to organise, how to enrich themselves intellectually and culturally. (4) Students suffer from economic insecurity. They are not sure whether they will get a job, (5) lack of ideological content in education. Education does not care to develop the spirit of service and sacrifice. Knowledge is for service to society and this fact must be recognised. (6) The education imparted in our country is not creative. It does not encourage discoveries. (7) Nepotism in public life has been undermining the morale of the youth. 33

Unrest in the rank of the youth has developed as a serious global problem and universities all over the world have been exposed to forces of disruption, aggression and violence. As a result the normal functioning of the universities has become impossible. The hallucination of politics and the exploitation of the youth by selfish politicians for their own ends and by anarchical forces has already caused immense harm to society. All these point towards the fact that the quick removal of widespread unrest among students is absolutely necessary if human society is to be saved from being plunged into a welter of anarchy.

Educationists have advocated a rational and sympathetic approach to this problem. The Radhakrishnan Commission observed: "The true sanction of discipline lies in the development of the social conscience of the undergraduate body as a whole rather than in punitive measures or precautionary vigilance. As in society so in the university laws are observed because they are approved by reason rather than because they are imposed by force. Indiscipline should be terminated by the good sense of the students". Educational experts have laid emphasis on greater student welfare activities in educational institutions related to health, residence, food, sports, games, social service activities and the growth of moral values.

Adequate arrangements must be made for the growth of a corporate life in the university campus and this alone can help them to rise above narrowness and parochialism. Institutions of higher education are not merely places of instruction. They are communities. To eradicate indiscipline and promote the social life of universities and colleges a vision beyond the four corners of the classroom is necessary. Provision should be made, as

soon as possible for residence of the students within or in the vicinity of the university area, for gymnasia, common rooms and other facilities for reading, recreation, games and sports. Such arrangements would facilitate training for the ideal of fellowship for students. The Kothari Commission recommended that some form of social and national service should be made an integral part of education at all stages. Similarly the University Grants Commission has recommended the formation of teacher-student councils to function as coordination bodies for the solution of students' problems.\(^{35}\)

It is true that society cannot remain static and there must be quick and rational response to the changes and demands in the society by individuals and institutions. But there are certain fundamental values of eternal significance which no society can discard and if they are discarded the society itself will have to pay a heavy price through confusion and anarchy. Modernisation of education is important but the cultivation of essential moral and spiritual values is also necessary. Development of the spirit of fellowship among all associated with a university is of paramount significance. If moral values can be rehabilitated and all connected with university

\(^{35}\) Ibid., p.97.
education become duty conscious, many of the anomalies would disappear. There must be fair coordination between knowledge and character, between science and ethics, and between idealism and action. The universities are not factories. They must be fountains of inspiration for noble actions performed with a spirit of selfless dedication. The development of this attitude is important for the elimination of unholy forces from our educational institutions. In other words, serious and sincere attempts must be made to develop formative and creative qualities in young men and women who are the architects of the future.

Some remedies for student unrest must go beyond the education system because it is not campus issues which cause strikes and demonstrations always. The Education Commission (1964-66) had made it clear when it said that whatever else education may or may not aim at doing, it should at least strive to help young men and women to learn and practice civilised norms and behaviour and commit themselves honestly to social values of significance.\(^\text{36}\) An analysis made by Philip Altbach of some 280 student strikes and demonstrations which took place in 1964 in India give some indication of student

\(^{36}\) S. Saraswathi, op. cit., p.326.
unrest in the country. According to his analysis 100 strikes were stimulated by demands relating to examinations and the administration of educational institutions, and sixty were protests against police and other public authorities, and miscellaneous causes accounted for the rest. After 1970 with the exception of the Emergency period almost every year closure of one or the other university sine die for varying periods -- one to three months -- has become a regular feature.

The analysis made by educationists, sociologists, psychologists and political scientists of the phenomenon of student unrest expose several situational and environmental factors in the academic institutions. Thus student protest is an expression not only against any particular incident that may provoke the youth, but against systems, institutions, the style of management, physical conditions etc., which means that the causes are innumerable. Local, campus, broad, and ideological are the issues which very often cause strikes and demonstrations. Again, dealing with student unrest as a problem of tension in youth,

37. Ibid., p.326.
Sri. Chandra points out that home atmosphere, parental care, nature of associates, economic conditions of the family and influence of political parties, indifference of parties, defective teaching methods are the causes.\textsuperscript{38}

On the basis of the situation in four universities in 1969 -- Dibrugarh, Nagpur, Poona and Sardar Patel University -- Prayag Mehta found economic condition as the major reason for indiscipline and next to it educational and administrative reasons in equal measure. He gives lower importance to the role of political parties.\textsuperscript{39} Again, material and social deprivation emerged as the principal factors and not political interference, in a study of the situation in the University of Patna in 1971 by Sudha Rani.\textsuperscript{40}

The emergence of rival political groups has affected student organisations. Student forces are utilised by political parties in violent mass agitations. It has become necessary for every political party to have its student wing apart from the youth wing for generating political awareness among the students. All these student

\textsuperscript{38}. Ibid., pp.327-29. For a detailed analysis of student agitations See Ch.9, 'Crime and Revolt by Youth'.

\textsuperscript{39}. Ibid., p.329.

\textsuperscript{40}. Ibid.
organisations, in spite of their claim to have independent status, do receive funds from their parent political parties.

The neglect of non student youth has also been a contributory factor to student unrest. Most of them being unemployed are tempted to join riots. When political issues are involved they spring into action. The conditions prevailing in the social and economic fields are provoking enough for them to support student agitations which are expressions of protest. In the opinion of a senior journalist: "On no one does our stagnant corrupt system bear down harder than the young. Slow growth has meant an even slower growth of jobs. More than 30 million young people are unemployed of whom half have a secondary school education and around two to three million are university graduates. A quarter of the educated youth between 18 and 25 are pounding the pavements in a desperate search for work. Most lower their sights after a time and accept whatever work is available transferring the pressure of joblessness to the semieducated, some take to crime, others to drink". He continues: "But more and more are taking to politics of an extremely violent kind filled with rage against a society that puts them through 10 to 16 years of education by holding out promises of a secure future."
and then drops them into the trash bin, they seek their revenge by overturning the system that has victimised them.\textsuperscript{41} It is therefore clear that our education system does not cater to the needs of the young.

The increase in the enrolment of students over the last so many years has brought along with it several problems also. The politically conscious students adopt political means to find solutions to these problems and in doing so they challenge administrative and law enforcing authorities. From the year 1960-61 to 1990-91 the growth of student population has been from 6.45 lakhs to 44.3 lakhs in India. In 1995 it is expected to reach 60 lakhs.\textsuperscript{42} India has now the third largest higher educational network in the world. Enrolment in Indian higher education accounts for about 43 per cent of the total enrolment in the developing countries. Every eighth student enrolled in higher education on the globe is an Indian.

There are three major problems which can be considered as the consequences of enlarged enrolment.


\textsuperscript{42} Documentation on Education, No.1, June, 1993, New Delhi, p.8, published by All India Association for Christian Higher Education.
They are (a) inability of the university system to respond to the change which are the concomitants of expansion, (b) education came to be looked upon as a profit making industry, and (c) the problem of social injustice caused by the increasing cost of higher education.43

No doubt higher education has been expanding in India without any regard for quality in response to indiscriminate social demands and political pressures. The struggle was between quality and equality. It is an undisputed fact that higher education was denied to a large section of the Indian population. Hence the craze for higher education among those sections of the people to whom it was denied, especially when education helps an individual's upward social mobility. But then the real question that confronts the state is whether higher education is a privilege of all. What has happened in our country is that quality has been sacrificed for the sake of quantity. There has been a mushroom growth of colleges and universities leading to crisis in the higher education system.

A deep understanding of the social and economic cross currents will enable a person to have a realistic

understanding of the phenomenon of 'politicisation of the student community' in our country. The students believe that social changes can be brought about only by means of political power, and students being an important section of the society shall involve themselves in politics.  

The above description makes it abundantly clear how social, economic and political factors operate simultaneously to bring the educational process under strain, paving the way for the politicisation of the student community. There are general causes as well as immediate causes for student unrest and protest. They assume political significance under favourable conditions. The disappearance of an integrated university community and the absence of vigorous intellectual activity coupled with the evil designs of the short sighted scheming politician have worsened the crisis in the educational field. The politically conscious students instead of championing student interests have been participating in the schemes and plans being prepared by the political parties to attain their narrow political interests. The overimpact

of political socialisation is felt in the following manner in the educational field especially, and in the society at large in Kerala.

Firstly, student politics has led to a large number of agitations on the campus and violence has been an important feature of such agitations. As a result of these agitations and demonstrations the educational process has been disrupted. The aims and purposes of many of them are doubtful because their purpose is not to protect student interests but to perpetuate party politics on the campus. These agitations are the means by which the educational process is brought under strain so that politics can creep in.

Secondly, the political activities of the students have encouraged criminals on the campus. Criminals and antisocial forces help student organisations to win the college union elections by terrorising the rivals. Elections breed violent clashes too and this is an opportunity for the antisocial elements to come to the campus. Many students have suffered injuries and several others have lost their lives in campus violence. Here also the parent political parties and their feeder organisations help the student leaders with men and money to win the physical contest.
Thirdly, the educational institutions have become the recruiting centres, and the student organisations the recruiting agents of political parties though not directly. These organisations conduct propaganda work for the various political parties and they try to promote affiliation to the party among students.

Fourthly, the overdose of politics has hit educational reforms too. The students oppose any type of qualitative improvement in education. They stand not for quality but education for more and more people. Thus they have reacted against the concept of autonomous colleges, a scheme introduced by the UGC, and delinking of the Pre-degree course from colleges.

Fifthly, student politics has resulted in the neglect of studies by the students. This is something peculiar to Kerala. Students agitate over issues which do not have any relevance for them. For anything and everything they accuse the government and excuse themselves. The student strikes and demonstrations have provided with an excuse for many teachers for not taking classes regularly. The attitude of such teachers and the guidance being given by the teacher-politician to the student leaders, both have rendered classroom teaching ineffective.
Sixthly, the rivalries among the various student organisations have prevented a total student movement in Kerala. When one student union gives the call for a strike the others will oppose it or they will remain passive. Each organisation tries its best to find out issues over which they can agitate by mobilising students. When a student organisation leads a march against the authorities it is considered to be the best available method to gain political influence among the students. But the fact that this will give a political leverage to that organisation compels the others to somehow oppose such strikes and thereby diminish the mobilising potential of that organisation. In the case of Kerala political factionalism has been a great barrier to a total student movement. The SFI and the KSU are the leading organisations with immense influence over the students. Their ideologies are different and their parent political parties lead the two political fronts, the Left Democratic Front and the United Democratic Front, thus compelling one to oppose the other.

Seventhly, higher education in Kerala has succumbed to social demands and political pressures because of the political activism of students. There has been going on the unplanned expansion of higher education without any regard for improvement in quality. The student community considers higher education to be a right of their's just
as elementary education is. Educationists and social scientists oppose this view of the students and they say that what is meant by equality is 'equality of opportunity and not uniformity of standards' in higher education. Higher education shall be restricted on the basis of merit, they feel. 45

Eighthly, the political parties have been successfully exploiting the students to do mercenary work for them. They have politicised the student community so that they can be made use of in critical situations. The fact that student youth leaders have been given party tickets to contest Assembly and District Council elections do not provide an excuse for this. Time and again false promises have been given to the students and youth regarding employment opportunities.

The above analysis makes it amply clear that the overimpact of political socialisation of the student community has been felt in the educational field as well as in the larger society. The politically active students have disrupted the educational work, challenged the examination system, destroyed public property and even caused public disorder. This is the negative aspect of

political socialisation or the adverse effect of politicisation.

It will be wrong to highlight only the agitational role of students. They have been doing some constructive work also. The only thing is that such constructive activities generally do not attract public attention. Over the years the National Service Scheme (NSS) has attracted considerable attention of the public by doing some good work like adopting a village or villages by a college or university and trying to work for the upliftment of the people there. The NSS volunteers have also been engaged in blood donation and programmes like adult education. The organisation could effectively mobilise the students for many campaigns. In Kerala sixteen camps were organised by 1800 students belonging to four universities taking part in tree plantation, laying of two roads, fire protection, forest conservation, soil conservation and construction of contour bunds in areas predominantly occupied by Harijans and in discussions on ecology, social forestry and wild life.

Thus, student youth power is recognised by society today. But its power is being used by various agencies for selfish reasons very often. The political consciousness and civic sense of the student youth shall enable them to remain a valuable asset to nation building.