Strikes, agitations, bandhs, gheraos, and closure of universities have become a common feature of the educational institutions of contemporary India. These are various manifestations of student unrest. This phenomenon is not limited to any particular area but has swept the length and breadth of the country. University after university has faced the problem of student agitations. The wave of student unrest has become a source of deep concern, because it no longer represents merely youthful exuberance but has taken destructive and violent turn as is demonstrated by frequent burning and hijacking of buses, destruction of public property, attacks on police personnel, gheraos of vice-chancellors, assaults on invigilators, destruction of university buildings, resulting in serious disruptions of civic life. The capacity of students to launch an agitation and often dislocate the community life brings home the fact that the students are emerging as a power base in contemporary India. Agitations and strikes have become part of the present day national life and are not the sole province of the student community. However the enormity of student agitations is perceived by the simple fact that the incidents of student agitations within and without campuses surpass agitations by other groups in any given year.
The frequency and intensity of incidents have led to deep concern among the educationists, social scientists, legislators, and government administrators alike. A number of surveys and studies have been undertaken to investigate the causes of unrest among the students. These studies indicate a variety of causes of student unrest, chief among these being: exploitation of students by politicians for their partisan goals, crisis of values due to generation-gap, economic conditions of present day India, enormous expansion of education facilities and the resultant failure of the educational system. Putting together these causes, social scientists generally trace the roots of the student unrest in the sociological background of the student. A common feature of most of these analyses is that certain social situations operate as causative factors to the resultant agitational behaviour of students.

Students are an integral part of any society. As a body they represent a younger and emerging stratum of society. Hence they cannot be viewed in isolation. What they think and how they behave reflect the prevailing conditions in the society. The student problem and the perspectives of student unrest are intimately related to the social conditions under which students live. The phenomenon of student unrest cannot be studied unless political,
economic, cultural, sociological and educational factors are properly understood and accounted for. The present study is an attempt to examine the impact of these factors and demonstrate empirically the nexus between these factors and the student unrest.

Students have appeared into the world of politics with a certain suddenness. "They are, today, a new social force of incalculable significance". Students in different countries vary in their degree of political involvement. Indonesia, Japan, India and many Latin American countries can be cited by way of example where students' political involvement has been most forceful and effective. In Hungary, Pakistan, Korea and many other developing countries, student unrest has been closely connected with either political instability inside the country or with the threat of external aggression. In many countries, students have been in the vanguard of anti-government movement. They have been responsible for toppling governments. The list of governments which fell due to student unrest includes Venezuela (1958), Japan (1960), South Korea (1960), Turkey (1960), South Vietnam (1960), Bolivia (1964), Sudan (1964), and Indonesia. In Iran, students have played a notable role in deposing the Shah in 1979; they are strongly
identified with the Khomieni regime. By holding the staff of the American embassy in Tehran as hostages, they have stirred up an international crisis. Students in Greece have played a decisive role in bringing in a change of the government. African students have generally been strong advocates of Pan-African Unity. However, the students' movement in the West has taken a different form than that of the developing countries. Students in the Western countries have generally revolted against the Establishment. In the United States, the Free Speech movement at Berkeley in 1964 was the first demonstration of its kind leading to recognition of student power. Student radicalism has since emerged as a significant force. Students have played a dominant role in the Ban-Bomb movement, Anti-Vietnam agitations, and Civil Rights movement. In the United Kingdom students have spear-headed the Leftist movement. In France, students have been responsible for major changes in government policies. One can go on adding to the list/instances where students have played a critical role in the political process of a nation in recent years.

India, dramatically, illustrates the political role of students in the developing nations. Their involvement in the political upheaval of the pre-independence era, particularly in the Civil Disobedience of the 1920's and
the Quit India movement of 1942, demonstrates their
capacity to fight for political freedom. The 1942
struggle was the apex of the student movement in India
involving, for the first time, a majority of the students.
They were the active participants in various strikes and
demonstrations and took part in sabotage activities which
harassed the British authorities. The growth of militant
student movement in the pre-independence period can be
attributed to the revolutionary atmosphere created by the
national freedom movement. The student community was small
and compact at the time and was, therefore, relatively
easy to organise. Respected national leaders like Mahatma
Gandhi and Pandit Nehru not only sought the support of the
students but encouraged the students to take active part
in the political struggle. As Shils (1968) points out,
"there was a cause- the disruption and destruction of the
authority of the British Raj". After independence the
student movement lost its raison d'etre. The attitude
of the government and educational authorities changed;
what had been patriotic duty became "student indiscipline".
In the post-independence period the student movement has
changed the campus life. The hostility which was directed
against the foreign rule now found expression in anti-
authority attitude towards the government and university
administrators. It is sometimes argued that a significant
feature of the present day student agitations is that students no longer seek long-term goals and radical reforms but are mainly concerned with correction of specific grievances. This argument, notwithstanding, the students have contributed to political upheaval in different parts of the country. Some of their movements have been so powerful and effective that the governments have been forced to change their policies. An example of a cohesive student movement may be found in the agitations in the South connected with the language policy of the sixties. The students of Tamil Nadu supported Dravida Munetra Kazhagam (DMK) in two elections. The Maharashtrian students were involved in Samyukta Maharashtra agitation in the 1950's, while in 1972, the Andhra students actively backed the separate Telangana agitation. In Orissa in 1964 and Gujrat in 1974, the students forced the chief ministers to resign. In Bihar during 1975, the students left their colleges and universities to join the Total Revolution movement of Jaya Prakash Narayan. In 1980, we see the All Assam Student Union in the forefront of the Foreign National issue, disrupting public life completely. These examples demonstrate that many of the student movements are not without causes. However, a majority of student agitations, as DiBona (1966) rightly points out are not caused by ideological
politics but by local grievances concerning college fees, examinations, faculty matters, and amenities. The nature and content of the campus agitations have led Shils (1968) to observe that the student hostility towards authority has ceased generally to bear political objective and has become sporadic, episodic, and more violent than it was earlier.

Politics seems to have affected the students in two ways, directly and indirectly. There is politicisation of the student body by party politicians; many political parties have been able to politicise a number of Indian universities. Indirectly, the political atmosphere of the country has worked against restraint and prudence among the students. A brief explanation of both the direct and indirect influences of party politics on the student body would be in order.

Many political parties have found it convenient to establish links with the student body. They have established their youth wings among the students. The oldest of the student political organisations in India is the All-India Students' Federation (AISF). This organisation has been in existence since 1936 and is under the control of the Communist Party of India (C.P.I.). The AISF has a strong hold on the students of Kerala, West Bengal and Andhra. The right wing political parties also have their student wings
Jan Sangh's student wing is known as Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad; Yuva Janata is the students wing of Janata and Lok Dal. Youth Congress and National Students Union of India are the counter-parts of the Congress party. The Congress student wings and the Jan Sangh student wing along with the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (R.S.S.) have acquired important place in some universities of Uttar Pradesh. In West Bengal, in the sixties the radical students started the Naxalite movement and served as the mouth-piece of the Marxist C.P.I.(M). They kept the universities in a state of turmoil for quite a long period. The political activities among the university students are generally centered round the students' union. Oommen (1970) points out that most of the students' union in recent years have tended to function like trade unions preserving that students' interest conflict with those of the teachers and authorities. He remarks that the student politics in India is not the politics of principle or ideology but rather the politics of factions and conflicts between personalities; "students' unions usually lead student agitations and get involved in violence". In some universities the students' union have assumed political importance because of the support accorded to them by political parties. In many universities political parties even compete in union elections through their youth organizations.
In some places the politicians have established colleges to acquire a team of dedicated students to work for their partisan ends. The opposition parties often lend their support to student agitations and sometimes incite them to such an extent that their zeal cannot be controlled without deployment of force, thus in turn aggravating the situation.

The contemporary political conditions also have their impact on the campus life. There is a growing scepticism about capabilities of men in authority to solve the student problem. Strike and unrest are overt manifestations of inner feelings of dissatisfaction of students in the way the politicians, particularly those in power, run the country. False election promises, politics of toppling governments, factional politics in the parties, practice of defection, and poor performance of the leaders create a political atmosphere in which the student finds himself bewildered and frustrated. The students note that the persons who have assumed authority have devised a political system in which education has been given no locus-standi. Dissatisfaction with performance of those who are at the helm of affairs often produces a rebellious attitude among the students. Examples of such student revolts can be seen in Language Agitation of the South, the Foreign National issue in Assam, and the Minority Status issue of the Aligarh Muslim University.
The political involvement in the Indian education system has received notice by a number of educationists, journalists, and social scientists. Studies have demonstrated that the entire student community is not politicised. In fact, many students look at politicians with distrust. The extent to which politicisation of students has taken place varies from region to region and from university to university.

The growing economic difficulties faced by the people of India have made the student community quite concerned about their own future prospects. In spite of industrial and economic development that has taken place under various five-year plans, the general economic stress has been on the increase. The scarcity of resources and growth of population have made the situation more tense. Forty six percent of the population living below the poverty line in India constitutes a predominantly deprived population of an immense size. This situation has made the problems of students acute. According to Kabir (1958), the glaring economic and social disparities affect (the student) as powerfully as they do various other sections of society.

With the rapid increase in the number of educated youth, employment has become scarce. According to the annual report 1970-71 of the Department of Labour and Employment the number of educated applicants on the live register of employment exchanges was 2.296 million at the end of December.
1971 as against 1.822 million in previous year. Of them
1.296 million matriculates, 605,000 were undergraduates
and 394,000 were graduates and post-graduates. The 1971
census show that 579,888 persons with a first degree in
science, agriculture, arts and commerce or atleast a dip­
loma in Engineering or Medicine are estimated to be unemployed
in April 1971. These persons constituted 20 percent or
about one fifth of the estimated total stock in these cate­
gories. Nearly 39,923 scientific and technical personnel
with high qualifications (post-graduates in science, graduates
in Engineering and Medicine) were seeking employment in 1971.

A significant feature of this problem is that a
larger number of educated unemployed persons come from rural
areas and from income and caste levels below those common in
the past. Such persons aspire for urban jobs which the
present economic situation fails to provide. This, in turn,
poses for them a threat of having to return to villages.
Commenting on this situation, Gasfield (1969) notes that the
despair that so marked the Indian contemporary students need
to be understood in greater depth than simply in terms of
educated unemployment. To be sure, the expansion of higher
education without a similar expansion of jobs of college
status does indeed encourage a general sense of pessimism
about the future.” Similar views have been expressed by
Rosa (136) who remarks that when the problem of employment is added to the middle class ambitions, they produce the major anxieties which the male students face. The existence of a large number of these jobless young men is not only a sad commentary on the economic growth but also on the relevance of contemporary educational system.

Very few systematic studies have been undertaken to correlate the socio-economic background of the students, their future aspirations, and apprehensions with their rebellious activities. Nor are there many studies which analyse the wider socio-economic context of the university students. It is only recently that a few studies dealing with the socio-economic aspect of the student community have begun to appear. Researches in this direction will be valuable indeed.

The rapidly changing social order has altered many institutions of the society. Despite emphasis on egalitarian society, socio-economic disparities have increased. Such disparities have affected the emotional needs, beliefs, attitudes, and value patterns of the student. The problem of student unrest has to be studied in the light of general social environment of the country.

Social change has been accelerated by scientific and technological advances at the global level. Notable
changes have occurred throughout the world, particularly after the Second World War. Concepts, images, and symbols of culture have undergone ceaseless, ever-quicker transformation. Old values have been discarded. New patterns of behaviour are emerging. The emerging generation has reached the adulthood through a different mental universe. The gap between the new generation and its predecessors is constantly widening. Such generational gaps have always existed in the past but today this gap moves faster. In India, the Western ideology, Western type of education, and Western form of government are affecting every institution of society. With the rapid industrial development and urbanization, Indian family system is gradually altering. Away from their homes and hearth, people have changed. The moral restraint that remained intact for ages has been discarded. The trend from tradition to modernity is evident. Religion, to a large extent, has lost its traditional social control. Caste system in the modern India has brought new problems in the form of caste rivalries and often serious caste riots. In such an environment the youth seems to oscillate between the high idealistic ambitions and the unsavoury realities of society. Breaking away from family bonds and religious belief and practices, students appear to have liberated themselves from the traditional control over their behaviour. Family ties appear to be superceded by friendship bonds. Accompanying these changes are stresses and anxieties.
Cormack (1961) has studied the problem of student unrest in the light of social disintegration taking place in India. She postulates that much of the problem of student indiscipline is related to the arrival of adolescence in modern India. There seems to be erosion of authority of traditional social agencies, especially among rural youth who are drawn in large numbers to urban universities. To majority of the rural youth, the university life is a new experience. Liberal and free atmosphere that prevails in the university is in sharp contrast to the family environment of many a student. Their integration in the urban ethos is slower. The problem of adjustment to the campus life is more acute in students from families with no previous traditions of education. Sometimes, false hopes generated in their minds make them more restless and discontented. The average Indian student is neither traditionalist nor rebellious. Political, economic, and social situations in which he finds himself makes him a frustrated nihilist.

Many situations of the student indiscipline are a bye-product of the educational setting that serves as the stage on which the drama of student unrest is mostly performed. The enormous increase in the number of educational institutions in the post-independence period, without taking into
consideration the socio-economic needs of the local communities, has created many problems. There has been a tremendous quantitative expansion of education both in terms of student enrolment and the number of institutions.

The enrolment in universities and colleges has increased eight-fold. The number of universities has increased from 20 to 108 and the number of arts, science and commerce colleges has increased from 400 to 3,362. This quantitative expansion has accentuated the problem of educated unemployed, especially in the area of humanities and social sciences.

University education, which during the British time was limited to the elite class, has to face the enormous mass of the student community drawn from every stratum of society. The British pattern of education in the modern India seems to be irrelevant. It was grafted arbitrarily on the Indian culture. It did not develop as natural expression of Indian life. Commenting on the educational system, Altbach (1969) observes: "Education System itself is a cause of deep frustration for many students, professors and other associated with the universities. The status of university teaching has also declined since independence. And traditional respect for the 'guru' has virtually disappeared."
The education system is not very much research-oriented and fails to develop scholarly attitudes among the students. The function of the university education is no longer considered to be the development of their character by the students. The emphasis is on job opportunities, more particularly in government and semi-government organisations. The whole purpose of higher education has been altering gradually, so that a degree is regarded as a normal channel to careers.

There has been a deterioration in the quality of the teachers and their teaching methods. Classes are overcrowded. There is no academic correspondence between the teacher and the anonymous mass of the students in class rooms. Library and laboratory facilities are extremely meagre. Added to this are petty politics among the teaching staff. Caste, religious, and regional affinities among teachers have led to group infighting. In such a situation, the student has lost faith in his teachers, and often looks at them with mistrust. Teachers are not responsive to the needs of the students. The result has been a growing gap in understanding between teachers and students.

The system of evaluating the academic abilities is the traditional system of annual examinations. Following
the British tradition, the universities administer externally prepared examinations. The system has come under increasing criticism from educationists, but it continues to operate and has been one of the main causes of student indiscipline. The youth does not like the authoritarian atmosphere of the university and the hostel life. He wants to assert more and more his right to participate in the administration of the university and wants to become an equal partner in the decision-making process.

Scope of the study

From the foregoing discussion it emerges that the problem of student unrest is closely linked with political, economic, socio-cultural, psychological and educational factors. There are few studies which have attempted the problem from a multi-dimensional angle. The present study aims at a systematic analysis of various social dimensions in relation to the problem of student unrest. The study has been designed to correlate empirically the social variables with the restive behaviour of the students. The data for the study has been drawn from a sample of students of the Aligarh Muslim University. However the results of the study have been interpreted in the light of studies conducted in other parts of the country to give a cohesive picture of the problem on an all India basis.
It would be appropriate at this point to clarify the conceptual frame of reference of the term "unrest". In sociological literature the term "unrest" as such has not been defined. Its current use in the context of student behaviour, is synonymous with student agitation, student movement, student demonstration, student revolt, student activism, and so on. Altbech (1968) makes no difference between student indiscipline and student unrest. He points out that the term "indiscipline" has been variously defined and is often used to describe any student action which does not meet the approval of government or educational officials. 33 Ross (1968), however, makes a difference between formal and informal indiscipline. Individual acts of students are informal indiscipline to her, and formal indiscipline is an organized student activity which she describes as student unrest. Shaw (1968) makes a clear distinction between indiscipline and unrest. Indiscipline, according to him is a pejorative term which should be employed to describe only those actions not accepted as legitimate. "Discontent" and "unrest", according to Shaw, are descriptive terms which are used to denote the atmosphere existing in most student communities in India. Indiscipline is a symptom of discontent; it is in no way synonymous with it. 35 According to the dictionary meaning, unrest denotes 'disturbed
conditions'. Sociologically speaking, unrest is a state of wide-spread discontentment on account of several social factors. Unrest thus refers to a state of mind rather than the behaviour itself. But in the current literature on student problem, student unrest is described as a behaviour which is not only objectionable but often highly dangerous and damaging to the societal interests. We have, therefore, followed the current practice to use the term unrest in the context of agitational behaviour of students in an organised capacity.

Hypotheses

In the light of the various studies on student unrest, we have formulated the following tentative null hypotheses which we plan to test statistically; the associated sociological variables are listed within parentheses:

1. Involvement in party politics/the student is not a factor affecting the present malaise of student unrest. (political involvement)

2. Union activities do not encourage student unrest. (union activities)

3. The economic status of a student's family is not a contributing factor to the student unrest. (economic status of the family)
4. The fulfilment of a student's aspirations by his present education does not effect his restive behaviour. (fulfilment of ambition by education)

5. A student's restive or non-restive behaviour is independent of the fact that he is a Muslim or not; also it is independent whether he is from a Hindi-speaking region or not. (religious identity; linguistic identity)

6. Regular observance of religious duties and practices by students do not effect their agitational behaviour. (religious observance)

7. Students coming from homes with a strict religious atmosphere do not get involved in agitations. (strict religious atmosphere in the home)

8. Whether a student comes from a single family or not has no effect on student unrest. (household structure)

9. Participation in family decision-making by student does not effect student unrest. (participation in family decision making)

10. Conflicts with parents do not contribute to a student's restive behaviour. (conflict with parents)

11. Docile behaviour in the family does not take an aggressive form in the institutional setting. (docile behaviour at home)
12. Parents' education is not a factor contributing to student unrest. (parents' education)

13. A student's rural background is not a factor in student unrest. (rural background)

14. The distance between students and teachers as perceived by students does not lead to discontent and unrest. (distance between students and teachers)

15. The current academic evaluations including examinations are factors not affecting student unrest. (academic evaluations)

16. Total internal assessment of examinations would not contribute to student activism. (total internal academic assessment)

17. Semester system is not one of the factors for unrest among the students. (semester system)

18. Satisfaction with hostel life is not a factor in students' restive behaviour. (satisfaction with hostel life)

19. Satisfaction with hostel amenities is not a factor in student activism. (satisfaction with hostel amenities)

20. Authoritarian attitude of hall and university administration is not a factor in student unrest. (authoritarian attitude of administration)
21. Regular study habits do not affect student activism. (regular study habits)

22. Discipline (sciences and non-sciences) is not a factor in student unrest. (discipline: sciences and non-sciences)

23. Adolescence does not affect student activism. (adolescence)

24. Students with average duration of stay in universities are not prone to participate in agitations. (duration of stay at university)

25. Student participation in the university affairs is not a factor in student activism (student participation in university affairs)

The present study is divided into five chapters, of which the first introduces the manifold social dimensions of the student unrest. Chapter 2 is devoted to the consideration of theoretical bases of the present study incorporating in it all such theory and assumptions which help us in understanding the sociological aspect of the problem. Chapter 3 deals with the method of investigation and the tools employed to measure the extent of unrest among the
students. Chapter 4 analyses various hypotheses laid down in Chapter 1. Chapter 5 gives discussions, interpretations of, and conclusions from the results of the present study. In order to give a cohesive picture of the problem at hand, Chapter 5 is divided into four sections, each dealing with various social dimensions of student unrest.
Notes and References


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