

A Study on Students Unrest with Special Reference to Paschim Medinipur District in West Bengal, India

Dr. Pankaj Kumar Paul

Assistant Professor & Head, Department of Education, Gourav Guin Memorial College, Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal

Introduction

Students unrest is characterised by “collective discontent, dysfunctional conditions in educational institutions and concern (of public and students) for change in existing norms”. Students ‘agitations, on the other hand, are characterised by ‘action based on the feeling of injustice, identifying source of discontent, frustration and deprivation, emergence of leadership, mobilisation for action, and collective reaction to stimuli’.

Students unrest of the many types of studies made on students, relates to student unrest. We will analyse this problem here in detail. ‘Students’ unrest’ is described as ‘disobedience to authority, disrespect to teachers and elders, deviation from norms, refusing to accept control, and rejecting socially sanctioned goals and means’.

Three situations create indiscipline among students:

- (i) Students lose interest in the goals of education and educational institution and refuse to follow its norms;
- (ii) Students accept the goals but doubt whether the institution can achieve them. They try to ‘improve’ the institution by deviating from its norms;
- (iii) Norms of institution fail to achieve goals and students want a change in norms.

The important elements of protests are:

- Action expresses grievance
- It points out conviction of injustice
- Protesters are unable to correct the condition directly by their own effort

- Action is meant to provoke ameliorative steps by the target group, and
- Protesters bank upon the combination of coercion, persuasion and discussion to move the target group.

The pre-conditions for students’ agitations are:

- ❖ Structural strain
- ❖ Identifying the source of strain

- ❖ Precipitating factor in initiative action
- ❖ Mobilisation of force for action by a leader

The important functions of student agitations are: to create collective consciousness and group solidarity, to organize students to work for new programmes and new plans, and to provide opportunities to students to express their feelings and make some impact on the course of change. Agitations could be violent or non-violent. Student agitations may be classified as: student-oriented agitations and society-oriented agitations. The former include problems at college/university level, while the latter refer to taking interest in state/country's politics and policies and programmes). Student-oriented agitations are generally discontinuous and problem-oriented rather than value-oriented. For example, students will agitate for removal of a particular vice-chancellor of a university but they will never fight for a change in the system of selecting vice-chancellors in universities in India.

Students agitations grow in four stages. These include:

- (i) The discontent stage, which is the stage of dissatisfaction and growing confusion with the existing conditions;
- (ii) The initiation stage, in which a leader emerges, the causes of discontent are identified, excitement increases, and proposals for action are debated;
- (iii) The formalization stage, in which programmes are developed, alliances are forged, and support is also sought of some crusaders;
- (iv) The public support stage in which students' trouble is viewed as public trouble.

Students' agitations may be classified as:

- (1) Persuasive agitations, in which students attempt to change the attitude of the powers that be by discussing their problems with them and making them accept their viewpoint.
- (2) Resistance agitations, in which the object is to keep the power-holders in their place.
- (3) Revolutionary agitations, which aim at bringing sudden sweeping changes in the educational or the social systems.

Five types of students have been identified in this context of students unrest:

- (1) Socially isolated, i.e., who feel alienated and cut off from the larger society;
- (2) Personally maladjusted, i.e., who have failed to find a satisfying life role, e.g, they do not have an adequate interest in studies;

- (3) Unattached to family, i.e., who lack intimate ties with their families;
- (4) Marginal's, i.e., who are not fully integrated with their caste/religious/linguistic group, and
- (5) Mobile/ migrants, i.e., who have little chance of getting integrated into the larger community.

The causes of students' unrest and agitations, as pointed out by the UGC committee in 1960, are:

- (1) Economic causes, like demands for reducing fees, increasing scholarship;
- (2) Demands for changes in existing norms pertaining to admissions, examinations and teaching;
- (3) Poor functioning of colleges/universities;
- (4) Conflicting relations between students and teachers, e.g., behaviour of teachers with girl students or student leaders, cutting classes and so on;
- (5) Inadequate facilities in the campus, e.g, inadequate hostels, poor food in hostels, lack of canteen facility, etc.; and
- (6) Student leaders being instigated by politicians.

Emergence of Problem

Thus it is seen that student unrest is not confined to India alone. It is a worldwide problem. They are agitations strikes, boycotts of classes etc., in schools, colleges, universities and other educational and training institutions now and then. Under the above backdrop, an attempt was made to analyse the causes of student unrest by the present study.

Objectives

1. To find out the difference in attitude of student unrest according to economic status of the respondents in the study area;
2. To find out the difference in attitude of student unrest according to gender of the respondents in the study area;
3. To find out the difference in attitude of student unrest according to locational status of the respondents in the study area;
4. To find out the difference in attitude of student unrest according to type of institution of the respondents in the study area.

Hypotheses

We have used null hypotheses for the present study. The hypotheses are

⁰H₁:To find out the difference in attitude of student unrest according to economic status of the respondents in the study area;

⁰H₂:To find out the difference in attitude of student unrest according to gender of the respondents in the study area;

⁰H₃:To find out the difference in attitude of student unrest according to locational status of the respondents in the study area;

⁰H₄:To find out the difference in attitude of student unrest according to type of institution of the respondents in the study area.

Data source

The present study is primarily empirical in nature. A self prepared questionnaire has been used to collect data from 160students in Paschim Medinipur district in 2018-2019. Multistage purposive sampling technique was used for collection of data from the selected colleges.

Variables

The present study included the following variables:

1. Economic status (APL and BPL)
2. Gender (Male and Female)
3. Area (Rural and Urban)
4. Institutional type (General Degree college & Technical college)

Table – 1: Sample Profile of the Study

SL. No	Distict	College	Boys	Girls	No. of Respondents
1	Paschim Medinipur	Institute of Science &Technology	50	40	90
2	Paschim Medinipur	Gourav Guin Memorial College	40	30	70
Total	-	-	90	70	160

Reliability

The reliability of the Questionnaire was established with the help of ‘Test-retest’ and ‘Split-half’ method on the same randomly selected 160 respondents, were used.

Table- 2: Showing the Value of Reliability Co-efficient of Split-half Method

Method of Reliability Test	Value	Level of Significance
Split-half	0.69	High
Test-retest	0.85	High

The correlation co-efficient was calculated by the product moment method. The value of ‘r’ by ‘Split-half’ and ‘Test-retest’ method were 0.69 and 0.85 respectively with a significance level of 0.01 which ensured the reliability of the Questionnaire.

Validity

The Questionnaire was analysed in terms of the nature of dimensions/sub-dimensions. A number of test items were selected against each sub-dimension of the Questionnaire. The items were adjudicated accordingly by the experts and then tried upon a small sample of respondents. After modification of some language the Questionnaire was given in final form.

Methodology of the Study

The following statistical methods which were applied in the present study are-

- i. Descriptive statistics: mean, S.D, and SED
- ii. Student’s t-test: This has been used to measure the significant difference in attitude of student unrest among the respondents with respect to some selected variables.

Analysis and Interpretations of the Study

Testing of hypotheses ($^0H_1, ^0H_2, ^0H_3, ^0H_4$):To find out the difference in attitude of students unrest according to economic status, gender, area and type of institution of the respondents in the study area

Table – 3: Showing the particulars about mean, SD and t-value according to economic status, gender, area and type of college

Measures	Economic Status		Gender		Area		Type of College	
	APL	BPL	Boys	Girls	Urban	Rural	General Degree	Technical
N	80	80	90	70	85	75	70	90
M	62.31	49.43	66.37	57.62	63.43	41.18	41.28	60.35

S.D.	6.13	5.24	7.15	4.28	6.35	3.56	4.23	5.30
SED	0.9		0.91		0.8		0.75	
t - value	14.31*		9.62*		27.81*		25.43*	

Source: Author’s calculation based on field survey 2018-2019

***Significant at .01 level**

From the above table it is clear that the mean scores and S.D of APL and BPL group, boys and girls, rural and urban area, general degree and technical college are different. The t values of the above cases are different according to economic status (i.e., 14.31), gender (i.e., 9.62), locality (i.e., 27.81) and type of college (i.e., 25.43). So the null hypotheses are rejected at 0.01 level. That means that there exists significance difference in attitude between APL and BPL group, boys and girls, rural and urban, general degree and technical college about students unrest.

Table- 4: Showing Multiple ‘R’ along with Some Relevant Measures

Multiple R	0.621
R ²	0.385
Adjusted R ²	0.387
SE	0.652
F-Statistic	198.426

Table – 5: Showing Binary Logit Regression Analysis for Students Unrest

SU = C₀ + C₁*X₁ + C₂* X₂ + C₃*X₃ + C₄*X₄ + C₅*X₅ + C*₆ X₆				
Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	Z-S tatic c	P-value
C	13.314513	3.421560	5.521344	0.0000
X₁	0.005216	0.003215	3.231562	0.0000*
X₂	- 0.361324	0.241356	- 5.371421	0.0000*
X₃	- 0.214526	0.521462	- 0.361324	0.5120**
X₄	0.412564	0.523146	0.367312	0.6312**

X_5	0.241562	0.236821	3.351325	0.0000*
X_6	0.314231	0.263142	3.472314	0.0000*

N.B. – i) Dependent Variable = Student Unrest (SU)

ii) Total number of observations = 160

iii) X_1 = Economic Problems; X_2 = Existing Norms of Institution; X_3 = Teachers behaviour; X_4 = Inadequate facilities; X_5 = Political Interference; X_6 = Malfunctioning of Institution

iv) * significant; ** insignificant

v) Source: Author’s calculation based on field survey, 2018-19

It is clear from table - 4 and 5 that all the values of the variables are positively associated with student unrest with the exception of two – existing norms of institution and teachers behaviour. Again, two variables suffer from the problem of insignificance i.e., teachers behaviour and inadequate facilities of the colleges. This implies that the higher the economic problems, inadequate facilities, political Interference and malfunctioning of institution, the higher will be the level of unrest of students and vice versa. Furthermore, student unrest will be less if the existing norms of Institution and teachers behaviour are good.

Conclusions and Policy Suggestions

After analysing the present study, it is concluded that there arises several reasons of student unrest in West Bengal and it differs in nature according to gender, economic status, location and type of institution. Besides these, student unrest depends on several other factors out of these some of the factors suffer from the problem of insignificance as per statistical test.

The measures suggested for controlling students’ agitations are:

- (1) Proper channelizing of students’ enthusiasm through guidance.
- (2) Solving problem not/or them but with them; i.e., associating students with decision-making bodies.
- (3) Removing minor irritants without unnecessary delay.
- (4) Prescribing a code of conduct for political parties: refraining from instigating students to agitate on small issues.
- (5) Framing rules regarding police intervention in educational institutions.
- (6) Inclusion of moral values in syllabus
- (7) Principal-students meeting

References

- Ahuja, Ram (2016). *Social Problems in India*, Rawat Publications, New Delhi.
- Best, J. W., Kahn, J.V.(2012). *Research in Education*. New Delhi: PHI Learning Private Limited.
- Brown, P. and Scase, R. 1994. *Higher education and corporate realities: Class culture and the decline of graduate careers*. London: University College London Press.
- Channaveer R.M., 2010. "unrest," *Journal, Research Centre for Social Sciences, Mumbai, India*, vol. 6(2), pages 149-159, April.
- Best, J. W., Kahn, J.V.(2012). *Research in Education*. New Delhi: PHI Learning Private Limited.
- Kothary, D.S. 1966. *Report of education commission (1964-66): Education and national development*, Ministry of Education. Govt. of India, pp. 289-296.
- Ray, A.B. 1977. *Student and Politics in India*. New Delhi; Manohar publication, pp.1-14.
- Sayeed, S.M. 1978. *Politicalization of the student leaders: a study of leaders of Lucknow University union from 1948-1970 (Ph.D.thesis)*. Dept. of Political science, Lucknow University.
- Singh, B. 2013. *A study of student unrest among graduate students in relation to their gender, intelligence, adjustment and educational stream*. *Int. J. Edu. Psychological Res. (IJEPR)*, 2(1): 40-46.
- Vashist, K.K. *School Organization and Problems of Indian Education*, International Publishing house Meerut. Pg. no. 283-289.