

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

Student activism is a universal phenomenon with difference in emphasis and approach. Despite its negative points it is considered as a stable form of societal movements through which students are quickening the process of change in the campus as well as out of the campus.

Student activism started in India towards the end of the 19th century. In the early 20th century, some students participated in revolutionary activities before they were encouraged by the national leaders to take part

in the freedom movement. Through the efforts of national leaders the All India Student Federation (AISF) was formed in 1936. Under the leadership of the Federation, the students took part in Quit India Movement in 1942.

Student activism of the pre-independence period was centred around the common cause of the national liberation struggle. But, during the post-independence period, students started concentrating on regional and local issues also. During this period activism spread throughout the country, but certain regions were more disturbed in comparison to others.

U.P. is one such region, where student activism started in the first decade of the present century and gathered momentum around 1920. Students of Agra, Meerut, Kanpur, Aligarh, Lucknow, Allahabad, Banaras and of many other towns, in U.P., participated vigorously in August 1942 movement. Even during the post-independence period the universities of U.P. have remained disquiet.

In the Banaras Hindu University, student activism started along with its very inception. Many major and minor events of student activism have occurred since then. There were occasions of major events in the years 1920, 30, 42, 58, 70, 71, 72, 73, 75 and 78. In the seventies frequencies of the

events have increased and except during emergency period (June 1975 - March 1977) the university was closed sine die many times causing setting up of many enquiry committees.

To study student problems and unrest, some committees (Mudaliar, 1958 and Gajendragadkar, 1968) were appointed and projects (Srivastava, 1974 and Roy, 1977) were undertaken. They pointed out that awareness among students regarding their power, 'parochialization' and 'politicization' were the important factors fomenting activism among the students. These committees mainly concentrated on some particular events and did not consider the different aspects of student activism. The disturbances that occurred during the seventies required a study which would mainly concentrate on students and answer the questions, like - how far student activism in BHU is ideology based? Who are the students who participate in the movements? What is their socio-economic status, political orientation, and academic pursuit? These are some of the points which motivated the investigator to pursue the study. In view of the above discussions the problem for the study can be stated as below :

Statement of the Problem

'A Study of Student Activism in a University'.

The term student activism means students' activities (potential and/or functional), like demonstration, processions, strikes etc. adopted by them for fulfillment of their demands.

Delimitation of the Study

The study is confined to the students of faculties/ colleges/institutes situated in the campus of the Banaras Hindu University.

Objectives of the Study

Major objectives of the study are :

1. To study the trend of students' participation in political and protest type activities among the students of BHU with respect to faculties and both the sexes.
2. To study the intensity of student activism among the students of BHU with respect to the following groups of variables :
 - (a) Personal Variables: Sex, age, and ordinal position;
 - (b) Sociological Variables: Caste, marital status, family type, rural-urban background and region;

- (c) Socio-Economic Variables: Parents' educational status, parents' economic status, and occupation;
- (d) Institutional Variables: Educational commitment, faculties, levels and duration of stay;
- (e) Students' Perception of guardians' political activities; and
- (f) Political Variables: Students' association with political parties, participation ^{in movements} at secondary level, students' participation in political and protest type activities.

Here, 'intensity of student activism' means degree of student activism measured by the activism scale.

Methodology

After the objectives were formulated, a pilot survey of BHU was undertaken with the purpose of preparing tools and drawing samples which are discussed in the following paragraphs :

Instrumentation

To realize the objectives of the study three tools were developed. They were - activism scale, questionnaire and

interview schedule.

Activism Scale

For the purpose of studying intensity of student activism, the activism scale was developed in Hindi. The assumption behind the construction of the scale was that activism, like a trait, is normally distributed among the students. The scale comprises of forty items of situational tests with three alternative responses for each item. The alternative responses of the items are put in the order from one to three as mild, moderate and violent. They are allotted scores, as 1, 2 and 3 respectively. Thus, if a student encircles all the mild responses, his total score on the scale will be 40 and if he encircles all the violent responses his total scores will be 120. The scores of the respondents will vary between 40 and 120.

For developing the scale the scientific procedure was adopted. It was tried out on a sample of 158 students. Later, on the basis of item analysis forty, out of seventy-seven items were selected. Aspect-wise distribution of the items is as follows :

<u>S.No.</u>	<u>Aspects of Student Activism</u>	<u>Number of Items</u>
1	Academic (AC)	8
2	Administrative (AD)	8
3	Police Clash (PC)	4
4	Socio-Economic and Political (SP)	10
5	Student Amenities (SA)	4
6	Student Union (SU)	6
Total:		40

Reliability of the scale computed through split half method was found to be .96. Content validity of the scale was established by expert opinion. Experimental validity of the scale was established by finding correlation between the scores obtained on the activism scale and teachers' rating of students' regarding the latter's agitational activities. The teachers were asked to rate the students in five categories according to the latter's degree of participation in protest activities. Such validity was found to be .51.

Questionnaire

Another tool developed by the investigator was the questionnaire which included the following groups of variables:

A. Personal Variables: This included variables like sex, age and ordinal position in the faculty with respect to the respondents.

B. Sociological Variables: Caste, residence during study period, marital status, family type, and region from which the students hail were covered under this group.

C. Socio-Economic Variables: This covered guardian's socio-economic status (SES) including educational status of the parents, occupational status of the guardians and annual income of the family. An other variable included in this group was the occupation of the guardian.

D. Institutional Variables: Institutional variables means variables related to educational institutions. They were educational commitment, including educational attainment, educational pursuit and interest in study. Other such variables were faculties, level and duration of stay in the university.

E. Students' Perception of Guardians' Political Activities: This included students' perception of guardian's reaction towards student activism and guardian's participation in politics.

F. Political Variables: This group consisted of three major components - (i) students' association to political

parties, (ii) students' participation in movements at secondary level and (iii) students' participation in political and protest type activities. The third component consisted of two sub-components related to various political and protest type activities. This part of the questionnaire was meant to study the trend of students participation in political and protest type activities. Further, this was used to study the intensity of student activism also.

Interview Schedule

An interview schedule was also developed to enrich and strengthen the study with respect to the said objectives. The schedule was semistructured pertaining to issues like meaning of student activism, positive and negative effects of student activism, control of student activism and future of student activism.

The reliability and validity of the questionnaire and the schedule was established by the expert opinions.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample consisted of 520 male and female students of undergraduate and post-graduate levels from the faculties of Arts, Social Sciences, Science, Technology and Law. Female

students were available only in Arts, Social Sciences and Science faculties. Incidental cum purposive technique was employed for drawing the sample. Another sample of twenty HSAs and LSAs was drawn out of the above sample.

Collection of the Data

The above tools, i.e. the questionnaire, the activism scale and the interview schedule were used for collecting the data from the above sample. The questionnaire and the scale were administered in the classroom, while the interviews were held at the convenience of the students. On the basis of their scores on the activism scale, twenty extreme cases of the HSAs and LSAs were identified and interviewed by the investigator. Besides these, some informal interviews were also held with the purpose of enriching the data.

Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

Responses obtained on the activism scale and some of the information obtained with respect to variables, like - SES, educational commitment, students' perception of guardians' political activities included in the questionnaire were scored. Political variables included in the questionnaire were used in two ways. With respect to first objective of the study, frequencies of the responses were computed and converted into

percentages. With respect to the second objective, in quantified manner they were used to find out relationship with the student activism.

Keeping in view the objectives of the study, the collected data were analysed and presented in three sections. In section A, frequencies of responses of the questions pertaining to students' participation in political and protest type activities were found and converted into percentages to study the trend of such participation among the students. This was followed by the study of intensity of student activism (section B) for which data were available from the activism scale and the questionnaire. Mean, SD, analysis of variance, t-test, and correlations were used in this section. To compare two mean student activism scores, t-test was used. For three or more group means, analysis of variance was applied and if F-ratio was found to be significant, t-test was used to find significant differences between various combinations. For finding relationship of student activism with some other variables, product moment correlations ^{coefficients} were obtained. The third (section C) consists of descriptive analysis based on the data available from the interview schedule.

As per objective two, the intensity of student activism between two groups was studied by comparison. If 't' value was found to be significant, the group having greater mean student activism score was interpreted as the group which has significantly greater intensity of student activism or consists of high student activists. The level of confidence set for testing the significance of difference has been .05.

Major Findings

Findings of the study relate to the trend of students' participation in political and protest type activities and intensity of student activism. For finding out the overall trend, data pertaining to male and female students were analysed separately and findings for both the sexes have been presented separately. The findings have been presented in percentages indicating the trend of students' participation in political and protest type activities on the one hand, and stating significant differences between the groups indicating intensity of student activism and its relationship with the variables under study on the other.

Trend of Students' Participation in
Political and Protest Type Activities

1. The majority of students, i.e. 76 percent male and 69 percent female take interest in politics in varying degrees. Eighty-eight percent Law students show interest in politics followed by Arts-Soc.Sc. (79 percent). Such interest is minimum among Technology students, i.e. only 65 percent.

2. Forty two percent male students and 50 percent female students favour students' participation in active politics, while 31 percent male students and 28 percent female students do not favour participation in politics. Remaining 27 percent male students and 22 percent female students are undecided.

3. Among the male students 52 percent, and among the female students 30 percent take part in active politics. Law (65 percent) and Arts-Soc.Sc. (64 percent) ^{students} take lead in this respect.

4. Fifty one percent boys and 47 percent girls have some sort of association with the political parties. Among the boys, the percentages are the highest (65 percent) in Law faculty followed by Arts-Soc.Sc. (62 percent), and the lowest

in Technology faculty (34 percent).

5. Students' association with political parties is very much influenced by the caste group to which they belong. The highest percentage (69 percent) of those associated with political parties has been found among the kurmis-Koiris and the lowest (28) among the Kayasthas-Vaishyas. The percentages among the other castes are like this - Brahmans 55 percent, Kshatriyas 51 percent, Yadavs 67 percent, and Scheduled Caste 47 percent.

6. Forty seven percent male students and 39 percent female students are at different levels of association with the political parties. Generally, the associated ones are at the preliminary level of sympathy and support. Such association is maximum (63 percent) among the Law students and minimum (32 percent) among the Technology students.

7. Association of male students with youth organization is low, only 10 percent. Out of it, four percent are associated with each of the cultural and social organizations, while only two percent to political organizations.

8. In an overwhelming majority (88 percent males and 89 percent female) students perceive, in varying degrees,

protest type methods effective for the purpose of realizing students' demands. Such perception is maximum (91 percent) among Law students followed by the Technology (90 percent) and minimum (84 percent) among the Science students.

9. Occassions when students perceive protest type methods effective are as follows - 51 percent male students and 76 percent female students for 'postponement of examinations', 40 percent males and 53 percent females for 'union elections', 43 percent males and 46 percent females for 'admission', 32 percent males and 21 percent females for 'residential facilities' and 27 percent males and 19 percent females for 'opposing police entry into the examination hall'.

10. Fifty five percent male students and 43 percent female students favour participation in public protest type activities, whereas 30 percent male students and 36 percent female students are against participation. The remaining 15 percent males and 21 percent females are undecided.

11. Out of male students, 59 percent, and out of female students, 29 percent participate in PPTA in varying degrees. Such participation among boys is maximum (68 percent) in Arts-Soc.Sc. faculty, whereas minimum (45 percent) in Technology faculty.

12. Fifty-seven percent male students and 23 percent female students have participated one time or more in PPTA. This sort of participation among boys is maximum in Law faculty (84 percent) followed by Science faculty (63 percent), whereas minimum (40 percent) in Technology faculty.

13. Fifty-eight percent male students and 26 percent female students participate in PPTA in varying degrees.

14. Among male students 72 percent and among female students 37 percent participated in one or the other type of student agitations, like - boycott of examination, reservation of seats in education and job, union elections, admission in the university, financial help, and also to protest civil rights, to oppose police excesses, to oppose price rise, to oppose corruption in the university and to support their political belief.

15. Twenty-six percent male students and 7 percent female students had already participated in student movements at their school level.

16. A very small minority of students participate in PPTA with the purpose of becoming office bearer of student

union (4 percent male students and 2 percent female students), with a will to become leader (7 percent males and 2 percent females) and for the sake of fun and pleasure (6 percent males and 7 percent females). Further 33 percent male students and 32 percent female students do not participate in agitations due to lack of time, 45 percent male students and 32 percent female students do not participate for loss in studies, 32 percent male students and 38 percent female students do not participate because they do not agree with the prevailing methods of protest and 16 percent male students and 26 percent female students do not participate due to guardians' fear.

17. Twenty-five percent male students and 8 percent female students join university to keep themselves occupied 51 percent male students and 81 percent female students join university 'to gain knowledge', 55 percent male students and 47 percent female students 'for bright career' and 41 percent male students and 44 percent female students join university with a desire to study further.

Intensity of Student Activism

Intensity of student activism has been studied with six groups of variables. The findings are as follows :

A. Personal Variables: (i) Male students show

significantly greater intensity of student activism in comparison to female students. It means boys tend to be high activists while girls tend to be low activists.

(ii) Age and student activism are not significantly related in case of male students, while they are negatively and significantly related in case of female students, which indicates that female students of lower age are more inclined towards activism in comparison to the female students of higher age.

(iii) intensity of student activism does not differ significantly among male students according to their ordinal position in the family.

B. Sociological Variables: (i) Male students of various caste groups i.e. Brahman, Kshatriya, Kayastha-Vaishya, Yadav, Kurmi-Koeri and Scheduled Caste do not differ among themselves significantly with respect to student activism. The same trend is followed by female students also.

(ii) Intensity of student activism does not differ significantly among male students according to the types of residences they live in, while female students staying in hostels have significantly greater intensity of activism than their female counterparts staying with parents. It means

hostel girls tend to be high activists, while those staying with parents tend to be low activists.

(iii) Married and unmarried male and female students do not differ significantly with respect to intensity of student activism. It shows that marital status of the students is not significantly and directly associated with student activism.

(iv) Activism among male and female students is not influenced significantly by the types of families they belong to.

(v) Rural male students show significantly greater intensity of student activism in comparison to urban male students. A similar trend is noticeable in the female students also, though the difference is not significant.

(vi) Male students hailing from Eastern U.P., non-Eastern U.P. and Bihar show significantly higher intensity of activism in comparison to the male students coming from the other Indian States. The students from Eastern U.P., non-Eastern U.P. and Bihar do not differ significantly, with respect to intensity of activism. It means students hailing from the adjoining regions tend to be high activists.

C. Socio-Economic Variables: (i) With respect to male students, parents' SES is not significantly associated with student activism, whereas it is negatively and significantly related with the two aspects of student activism i.e. socio-political and student union. It means, students from lower socio-economic status of their parents tend to show greater inclination towards socio-political and union matters in comparison to those from families of high SES. Parents' educational status and parents' economic status, each in case of male students has no significant relationship with student activism, while parents' economic status is negatively and significantly related with socio-political and union aspects of student activism. It shows that students with weaker economic background tend to show more interest in the issues covering socio-political and union matters.

In case of female students, parents' SES and student activism are positively and significantly associated. It means, girls from high SES tend to be high activists. Parents' educational status has also positive and significant relationship with student activism, which indicates that female students from highly educated families tend to be high activists. Parents' economic status in case of female students has no significant relation with student activism.

(ii) Male students from agricultural families tend to be high activists, while those from service class families tend to be low activists. Students from agricultural, business and professional families do not differ significantly among themselves, and students from service, business and professional families also do not differ significantly among themselves.

D. Institutional Variables: (i) Educational commitment, in case of male students, has negative and significant relationship with student activism along with all the six aspects. It means, low achievers are more inclined towards activism. Educational attainment and interest in study, each has negative and significant relationship with student activism. Educational pursuit does not show any significant relationship with student activism. This too follows the negative trend.

In case of female students, educational commitment has no significant relationship with student activism along with its six aspects. Similarly, the three components of educational commitment, i.e. educational attainment, educational pursuit and interest in study have also not shown any significant relationship with student activism. However, only two aspects

of student activism, i.e. student amenities and student union have positive and significant relationship with educational attainment. It means, high achievers among girls are more inclined towards student welfare and union matters.

(ii) Intensity of student activism among Law male students is significantly greater in comparison to their counterparts among Science and Technology. It is also significantly greater in Arts-Soc.Sc. male students in comparison to Technology students. Intensity of student activism exists among various faculties in the following hierarchical order: Law, Arts-Soc.Sc., Science and Technology. Law and Arts-Soc.Sc., Arts-Soc.Sc. and Science, and Science and Technology, every one of the three combinations do not differ significantly among themselves with respect to student activism.

Female Science students show significantly higher intensity of student activism than their counterparts in Arts-Soc.Sc. It means Science girls tend to be high activists, while Arts-Soc.Sc. girls tend to be low activists.

(iii) Postgraduate and undergraduate male students do not differ significantly with respect to student activism,

while undergraduate female students show significantly greater intensity of student activism in comparison to their postgraduate counterparts. It indicates that undergraduate female students are significantly inclined towards activism than the postgraduate female students.

(iv) Duration of stay in the university is not significantly related with student activism in case of male as well as female students.

E. Students' Perception of Guardians' Political Activities: Students' perception of guardians' political activities and student activism with its six aspects are positively and significantly related in case of male students. Students' perception of guardians' reactions and guardians' participation in politics, each is positively and significantly related with student activism. Further, non-academic aspects of student activism tend to show higher relationship with the perception of guardians' political activities in comparison to academic and student welfare aspects. It means, the students, whose guardians are more politically conscious, do have a tendency towards activism especially in connection with non-academic matters.

(ii) In case of female students, their perception of guardians' political activities and student activism are positively and significantly related. Perception of guardians' participation in politics is also positively and significantly related with student activism, whereas perception of guardians' reaction is not significantly associated with student activism, though the trend is positive. Some of the non-academic and academic aspects of student activism have positive and significant relation with students' perception of guardians' political activities, while student amenities and students' union do not show any significant relation with the students' perception of guardians' political activities. It means, female students, whose guardians are more politically conscious, have greater activist tendency towards the academic and some of the non-academic aspects but lesser towards student amenities and student union.

F. Political Variables: (i) Male students associated with political parties like the Janta, the Congress (I) and the Communists show significantly greater intensity of activism in comparison to non-associated students and students associated with the Congress party. Further, students associated with the Communist parties show still greater intensity of student activism than those

students who are either associated with the Janta or with the Congress (I), while the students associated with Janta and the Congress (I) do not differ significantly. Likewise students associated with the Congress party and those non-associated with any party also do not differ significantly among themselves. Thus, among the associated groups, students attached with Communist parties show highest degree of activism while those attached with the Congress party show the lowest degree of activism.

Female students associated with different political parties do not show any significant difference, though they follow the trend shown by the male students.

(ii) Participation in student movements at secondary level and student activism have positive and significant relationship in case of male students. All the six aspects of student activism are also positively and significantly related to student participation in movements at secondary level. It shows that those male students who participate in movements at secondary level tend to be high activists at university level. In case of female students, participation in movements at the secondary level and student activism do not show any significant relationship,

though they show the similar trend as noticeable in the male students.

(iii) Students participation in political and protest type activities with its two components and student activism with its six aspects are positively and significantly related in case of male as well as female students. Male students show greater concern to student union, administrative and socio-political aspects and less to academic, student amenities and police clash; while female students show greater concern with socio-political, academic, administrative and student amenities. On the whole, politically conscious students tend to be high activists and have greater inclination towards socio-political and administrative matters.

Significance of HSAs and LSAs

HSAs have formed some image of student activism. They differ among themselves according to their association with political organizations. They also differ in their expectations from student leaders as well as student community.

HSAs and LSAs both realize that student activism is the product of existing socio-economic and political situations, hence it is not easily controllable.

LSAs are worried over the negative results of student activism and feel the urgency of getting it controlled, through peaceful means. They do not prefer repressive methods to be employed for the purpose. However, they do not hold students alone responsible for the state of affairs.

HSA's are in favour of encouraging activism to quicken the process of change. They feel it rather impossible to control student activism in the existing situations. They appreciate the positive aspects of student activism and overlook the negative ones, but they also seem to be worried over its negative aspects and misdirection.

Suggestions for Further Study

Student activism is a problem which is very much related to the existing societal forces. For its comprehensive understanding, there is need of conducting researches on regional and national levels. The assessment of the impact of student activism in terms of magnitude of academic and economic loss is also very important. It is also important to study the pattern of responses the authorities have developed under such circumstances. This will help to show

how far their responses are meaningful in handling the situation. Some studies are also required on the community level to weigh the awareness of the loss of public property due to student activism. The specific research areas may be mentioned as follows :

1. Student activism and its impact on the academic life of the students and the institutions.
2. Administrators' behaviour with regard to students' protest in the campuses.
3. The impact of student activism on the administration and the finances of the institutions.
4. To survey community awareness regarding loss of public property due to student activism.
5. To survey the causes and factors of student activism in colleges and universities of India.

Conclusion

The study shows that though students have wide interest in political and protest type activities, they have rather a little

socio-political awareness. Actually in such activities they mainly concentrate on their immediate gain, which is most important for them. The high student activists are the rural male students from agricultural families of the adjoining regions mainly in the faculties of Arts, Social Sciences and Law and sometimes in Science faculty also. Most of them join the university for want of any occupation. Generally, their overstay in the campus is due to unemployment. They have weak educational commitment. They associate with party-politics, generally on caste basis, at its initial level with the sole hope of using it as a means to achieve some personal gains.

In brief, student activism is very much related with socio-economic and political situations wedded with the belief in the effectiveness of protest type methods on the part of students. All these make the students develop 'grabbing attitude' i.e. snatching of opportunities and benefits, while they care least for the facilities available for their studies. However, keeping in view the present socio-political situations, the activism among students has not reached a point of no return, provided the society adopts positive methods to handle the situation.