TURBULANCE IN THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

Taiyaba Nazli, Ph. D.
Assistant Professor, Department Of Education And Training, Manuu - Hyd.
E mail:--taiyabanazlimanuu@gmail.com

Abstract

Student unrest has become a prevailing problem affecting the universities of India. Universities meant to provide an environments that allows students to achieve goals promote self growth and enhance intellectual development with higher self esteem. Higher leaning institutions are expected to follow a national curriculum which influences students’ personality. Students’ strikes showcase the lack of moral values, self control poor mental health and sensibilities. Strikes and vandalism are the signs of deviant behaviour which results in unrest, loss of lives and property, etc. Consequently resulting in breaking the law, conducting demonstrations, protest, boycotts, and staff harassment. The year 2016- so far has been a tumultuous year regarding the students’ unrest in India. The factors which are responsible for students’ unrest in the institution of higher learning and its implications on academics requires immediate attention of the educational administrators. On the basis of above exposition this paper explores the factors that are responsible for students’ unrest in the institutions of higher learning in India and suggest the remedial measures to overcome the problem. According to Prem Kripal the former Education Secretary, the main reason of student unrest is the estranged relations between teachers and students.

Keywords:- Institutions of Higher Learning, Student Unrest, Factors responsible, Remedies.

Students are an integral part of our society who represent the younger generation and constitute more than 50% of Indian population presently.[U.N Report-2014] ..... It is the youth who make the history since the Vedic era till the modern times students played a significant role in national reconstruction and integration. Ibakun (1997) quoted in Adeyemi (2009). “The extent of indiscipline suggests a serious crisis which could lead to the social disintegration” Adeyemi 1999.

Student unrest has become a prevailing problem affecting the universities of India. Universities meant to provide an environments that allows students to polish their potentials and provide opportunities of self growth and intellectual development and build their self esteem. Higher leaning institutions are expected to follow a national curriculum which influences students’ personality.

Students’ strikes showcase the lack of moral values, mental health, self control and sensibilities. Strikes and vandalism are the signs of deviant behaviour which results in unrest,
loss of lives and property, etc. Consequently breaking the law, conducting demonstrations, protest, boycotts, and staff harassment. The year 2016- so far had been a tumultuous year regarding the students’ unrest in India. The factors which are responsible for students’ unrest in the institution of higher learning and its implications on academics require immediate attention of the educational administrators.

Student unrest is regarded as the demonstration made by the students leading to the destructions of lives and properties though all the students unrest activities do not result in destruction of lives and properties. According to Falua “student unrest can be explained as an unstable situation of misbehaviour, boycotts of classes and other disturbing activities”.

It is a fact that the unrest occur due to certain unfavourable conditions which students face, sometimes different cultural background, sociological and psychological factors also influence students’ behaviour. The causes of students’ unrest and agitation, as pointed out by the U.G.C, Committee in 1960 were

1. Economic causes related to fees and scholarships.
2. Demands for changing existing norms regarding admission and examination.
3. Poor functioning of colleges and universities.
4. Inadequate facilities in the campus, hostels and canteens.
5. Conflicting relations between students and teachers.
6. Student leaders being instigated by politicians.

Recent researches across the globe indicate that there are more than 50% students which is a generous estimate for the annual incidence of psychological problems are within the student populations. Most of them are suffering from anxiety, frustration, stress and depression.

Generally the factors that lead to students’ unrest and other disruptive activities include psychological, social and institutional besides autocratic styles of leaderships, peer pressure, anxiety, stress, depression, over burdening curriculum, lack of adequate facilities and resources and absence of guidance and counselling. Students’ unrest occurs in the form of riot, demonstration, protest, boycotts, and staff harassment.

**Origin of the Problem :-** Over the years the general performance of the Indian Universities is declining due to lack of required training, expertise and ability to perform up to the standards. Hence making the employability of the students difficult. “Students unrest is characterised by collective discontent, dysfunctional conditions in educational institutions for a change in the existing norms and lack of jobs. Their agitations are based on the feelings of injustice,
identified source of discontent, deprivation and collective reaction to stimuli”. Hence there may be several factors responsible for their poor performance in academic standards due to which unrest is exhibited.

The experiences of present generation are very different to that of the experience of 1960’s, 70’s or 80’s. Though institutional stressors are many, socio economic and political stress also exist along with the academic and peer pressure. Social media too exerts great pressure on the young minds which is quite evident by increasing number of students with the mental health problem. There is also a widespread agreement that the levels of stress are very high among students community.

Besides these, there are also various other factors which influence students’ individual and collective behaviour. The year 2016- so far has been a tumultuous year regarding the students’ unrest in India. It is being noticed that there is a crisis in the leading Indian universities which raises pertinent questions about the students’ unrest and the role of universities in promoting learning, research, cultural activities etc.

Universities are meant to provide an environments that allows students to achieve their goals to bring up their potentials by providing the opportunities of self growth, intellectual development which builds their self esteem. Higher leaning institutions are expected to follow a national curriculum. Student’s unrest has led to the serious and alarming situations. In the recent times, the nation observed a few shocking incidents in the campuses which were noteworthy and worrisome.

**Review of the related research:**

The international status of students’ unrest is presented below to emphasize the gravity of the situation. Almost all the countries of the world (big or small) face students’ discontentment and unrest.

**International Status :-**

1. **Hong Kong Protest:- City University of Hong Kong** - students staged “sit-in” during 2014. This year students were disobedient indulging in mobile street protest, internet activism, hunger strikes, hacking etc. In order to fulfil their demands.

2. **Shamir College** students located in Chicago, Illinois U.S -2010 protested against threatened changes to the school’s governance.

3. **Tufts University** located in Medford, Massachusetts 2010, U.S-demonstrated for disinvestment of fossil fuels.
4. **Canada- Montreal.** – **2012,** protested against Bill 78.

5. **Malaysia – 2012,** In Kuala Lumpur, student activists camped out at Independence Square and marched against government loan programs.


**Review of the Related Literature:**

7. “Factors Influencing Students Unrest in Institutions of Higher Learning and its Implications on the Academic Performance of Students in University of OYO, Akwaibom State – Negeria- [2015] a study done by Mr. Davis K.U, Ms. Ekwere G.E. and U.U.Uyana,which was a survey research. The study discovered that breaking rules and regulations, lack of social amenities, students’ involvement in cultism are the major and serious factors causing unrest. The other factors responsible were periodic strikes by staff, disruption of academics programmes.

8. Institutional Factors Influencing Students Unrest in Secondary Schools in Nairobi North District, Kenya by Fgatabu [2012]. This study identified the factors influencing students’ unrest and was guided by the theory of conflict by Karl Marx. Descriptive survey method was used to establish institutional factors. The study revealed that the causes of unrest includes poor school administration, parents lack of concern, bad company, strict rules, poor diets, poor student teacher relationship, dysfunctional families, drugs, abuse etc.

9. Some Explanation On Students Unrest-(2011) by Laolu Ewesami - Student unrest as conceived in Adeyemi (2009) implies the rampage made by students in pressing their demands on certain issues with university authorities. There are also cases of unrest in polytechnics, colleges of education and even in the high schools. Ex:- Cases of students unrests were reported in the polytechnic of Ibadan in 1995 which led to the closure of the school. In 2008, there was student crisis in Kenya boarding high school manifesting “A natural student rebellion against the outmoded system and school authorities.

**National Status and Review :-**

1. In “A Study of Students Unrest and Student Welfare Activities in University of Gujarat State” Desai Hemangini (1989) found that (a) 65% of the students are interested in solving their problems with the help of systematic negotiations.(b) 29% of the students believe that action oriented activities (processions, shouting slogans, strikes etc) should be undertaken to
solve their problems. (c) 15% of the students believe in solving their problems through destructive activities ex: harassment of teachers / administrators, abuse, gheraos etc.

2. Sema (1983) studied The Problems of the University Students at the Baroda University – sample was of 165 students. The findings showed that Academic problems, socio economic system are often responsible for students unrest compared to the professional stream.

_The noteworthy students’ agitations in India between 1983 and 1990 were:_ Gujarat agitation in 1985 on reservation issue, anti-reservation agitation by students in Madhya Pradesh in 1985, Assam agitation in 1983-84 on the issue of refugees from East Bengal, and anti-Mandal agitation in 1990 in different states in the country, and most recent almost a decade long Telangana agitation for a separate state of Telangana.

**Importance in the Context of Current Status:**

_Student Unrest_ :- A number of studies done on student’ unrest generally state that students’ indiscipline is described as disobedience to the authorities ’disrespect towards teachers, deviation from norms, uncontrollable and sometimes unruly behaviour. It is also characterised by collective discontents and a demand for the change in the existing norms.” It sometimes lead to protests which activates efforts to change social order.

National Education Policy [1986] focussed on the issues of norm less institutions, careless teachers, diplomatic and un social elements in the education system. Campus unrest in the country is not new, there have been unrest in Kolkata University, Presidency College, Colleges of Delhi, recently in UoH and JNU. These incidents indicate that there are certain influencing factors which create such situations.

Right now India is struggling with rising indiscipline among the students community which has assumed a frightening magnitude. The frequency of exposure of frustration and reluctance is nothing but a manifestation of universal dissatisfaction and disapproval of conditions. This has become dangerous threat to our traditional values and national entity.

Why are students in India resorting to the acts of violence needs to be understood. We observe closure of colleges and universities frequently, gheraos of Principals and beating of teachers, shut downs, class bycotts have truly become an unhappy state of affairs. The reason behind this unrest is a manifestation of frustration, grievances and anxiety of the students. The inability of the authorities to resolve the issues result in the indulgence of violent expression, strikes and demonstrations.
Usually students complain about increasing tuition fee, they can’t afford. They are also unhappy about ill equipped libraries, improper admission facilities, tough competition in certain courses, vague admission policies, insufficient and incompetent faculty, poor standard of education and not so well teacher-student relationships.

The research studies conducted on student unrest generally reveals that students’ indiscipline” is considered as a ‘disobedience to authority, disrespect to teachers and elders, deviation from norms, refusing to accept control, and rejecting socially sanctioned goals and means’. We need to understand the underlying factors which create indiscipline among them, some of them could be.... to create collective consciousness and group solidarity, to organise 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 action.

**Stages of students’ agitation are ....**

(a) **The discontent stage** is a stage of dissatisfaction and confusion with the existing conditions.

(b) **The initiation stage**, is when a leader emerges, the causes of discontent are identified, strong feelings surfaces and future activities are planned;

(c) **The formalisation stage**, in which programmes are framed, alliances are forged, and support is sought from other sources.

(d) **The public support stage**, where students’ problems are considered as public’s problem.

**Students’ agitations may be classified as:**

(1) Persuasive agitations, where students attempt to change the attitude of the authorities through discussions and presentation of their viewpoint.

(2) Resistance agitations occur with an objective to keep the powerful in their place.

(3) Revolutionary agitations aim at bringing sudden and drastic changes in the educational or the social systems.

**Student agitators are identified as:**

(1) Socially isolated who feel alienated and cut off from the larger society,

(2) Personally maladjusted, who have failed to find a satisfying life role and do not have clear cut goals or have lost interest in studies;

(3) Detached with family, stressed and frustrated.

(4) Marginalised on the basis of caste, creed, religion, region and socially deprived who are kept away from the main stream society.
(5) Migrants with a little chance of getting mingled into the native community.

B.V. Shah (1968) had conducted a study on the students of university in Gujarat. He classified students on the basis of their social status and individual abilities into four groups to identify in disciplined students,

(1) High status- high ability (2) Low status - low ability (3) Low status- high ability, and
(4) High status - low ability. He observed that more unrest is found among the students of second and fourth categories.

Therefore it is understood that the present circumstances in Indian universities is characterised by an overall discontentment and restlessness, dysfunctional conditions and a concern for change in the existing norms. Students’ agitations are on rise due to the prevailing feelings of social injustice, deprivation, control over the budding leadership, mobilisation of action against them, and denial of freedom of speech. In recent times social exclusion has come out to be the major reason of students’ unrest in the country. They had been very vocal and open about it through out, there has been a series of incidents which exhibit the social isolation causing agony and pain among the student community across the country. The cases of attempted suicide reported by the media points out a higher level of anxiety and frustration among them.

**Conclusion and Suggestions:**

The detailed review and discussion above reveal the reasons, causes and influencing factors (psycho-social, socio-economical) which evokes the students’ unrest in the institutions of higher learning. The paper may help the teachers, educational administrations and authorities to understand the underlying factors. The suggested remedial measures will surely enhance the understanding regarding the feelings and grievances of the student community at large that may help to curb their unrest.

The **suggestions to control the students’ agitations and restore the peace in the institutions of higher learning are as follows:**

* Proper guidance and counselling of students’ enthusiasm through guidance.
* Solving their problems involving them in the decision-making process.
* Concentrating upon the minor issues also without unnecessary delay.
* Prescribing a code of conduct for political parties, disallowing them to enter into the arenas of universities to ignite agitation on small issues.
* Framing rules regarding police intervention in educational institutions.
* Ensuring social justice, allowing freedom of expression.
* Developing democratic attitude and respect for individual opinion in the universities.
* Creating supportive environment for the research scholars