



Necessity of student politics in educational institution: A sociological survey on under graduate students in West Bengal

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Abstract

This paper reveals nature of political culture of contemporary under graduate students of West Bengal. This study is an opinion-based survey through conceptual understanding and analysis of primary data. Political culture of the student may be considered breeding ground of future political perspective. Therefore, this study helps to understand the realistic feature of present student political interest, behavior and their motivation. Considering today's political issues, the study tries to investigate the nature of political consciousness and the interest of political involvement among undergraduate students. This study also explored students view regarding necessity of campus politics and difference between student politics and general politics as well as political transparency. Major findings of the study indicate lack of consciousness and interest by the student in general or mainstream political orientation because of proper channelized influence and leadership.

Keywords: Political culture, political consciousness, general politics, student politics, political transparency

Introduction

In India and in some other new and industrializing nations, modern educational institutions have created the new political class of youth prior to, or parallel with, the emergence of other modern political classes such as the middle and working classes. In consequences, this political class and particularly its vanguard, the student, has a significant in the politics of these countries uncharacteristic of the political change process comparable in Europe and America during comparable periods of their demoralization and industrialization. Given the special significance of students in the politics of many new nations, certain questions assume importance and interest. These are whether or not their politics are like national politics and integrated with them, whether student politics are separate from, opposed to, or ahead of national politics, and what conditions promote one or another of these tendencies. The relationship of student politics to national politics can range between the poles of congruence and in congruence and student politics can be assessed with in this range by reference to orals and methods in the categories; ideological; regime; programmatic party; interest; and issue (Lipset, 1968) [6].

In recent analyses of the politics of university students in underdeveloped countries has long fortress of criticism, had united within their walls a number of young men who were never gain in all their lives to meet so many of their follows under the inspiration of a common ideal. Here, they were still young in heart and brain, and as yet unhampered by the practical concerns of life. Naturally, their interests were quite as much social as political. The universities were by their merits, as by their defects, a very focus of revolution. In this connection the most dramatic recent demonstrations of university students as the most aggressive proponents of modern values have occurred in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, India, Pakistan, Syria, Libya, Korea, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Thailand, Sudan, Iran and the other developing countries. In large measure, student political behavior is anticipatory adult political behavior particularly in developing countries, where even student demands for

better universities, teachers and other facilities are part of the struggle for national development. Consequently, student behavior will often reflect the state of adult politics, even if in a more extreme reformist fashion (Lipset, 1967) [5].

C. Wright Mills, in his more direct concern that students may be an 'immediate radical agency of change'. As, a sociologist, he urged the need 'to study these new generations of intellectuals (including university students) around the world as real live agencies of historic change' (Ibid). It is interesting to note that Max Weber in his great lecture on 'politics as a vocation' observed that youth tends to follow 'a pure ethic of absolute ends', while maturity is associated with 'an ethic of responsibility'. The advocate of the first fears that any compromise on matters of principles will endanger the 'salvation of the soul', proponent of the second fears that an unwillingness to confront the complex 'realities of life' may result in 'the goals being damaged and discredited for generations, because responsibility for consequences is lacking'. Thus, some university students are inclined to be idealistic (Ibid).

According to Aristotle, man is social as well as political being also. In India political culture among the youth or under graduate label spread widely. Youth political culture in campuses becomes a part of education very consciously in West Bengal. In recent times youth in educational institution becomes a part of political socialization process. In the 21st century, politics in educational institution remain a mainelement of everyday life. Today, student thought that being a responsible citizen of this country they have the right to protest against all kinds of social injustices. So, as a social, educated and consciousness person they can gain enough political knowledge from campus to understand the social reality. Therefore, student politics in campus become a socializing agent among youth in India and West Bengal as well.

Significance of the Study

Student movements experienced considerable influence on society in the seventies. Student movements also forced a

major change in the study of sociology as an academic discipline. Further, the rise of radical sociology was one of the fallouts of the student movement. Student politics is a sociologically constructed phenomenon. Therefore, such a sociological study is necessary to understand present undergraduate student politics in campus. The growing importance of politically aware educated youth in our social life has been widely recognized. Today, we need politically sound student community for the future progress of the nation. In the third decade of twenty first century Indian student and youth exercise disaffection at the campuses. West Bengal also experienced the student uprising in campus as well in the sixties and seventies. Student union election has now become a major headache for the state administration. Now, current student organizations are leading popular protest and agitations against certain policies of the central government like increasing the prices of petroleum products, regarding new education policy (NEP, 2020). So, a complex construction of present social issues is already seen in campuses. The present study significantly uncovers the attitudes of twenty first century educated Bengali youth and their relation with politics and society. It is important to study twenty first century Indian youths and their political behavior empirically.

Literature Review

In the present study researcher discussed previously published articles and journals related to the topic. According to Rudolph, Susanne and Ahmed (1971) [7], the emergence of youth as a new political class is a consequence of the creation and prolongation of youth as a distinctive life- stage with its attendant cultures and social arrangements. This has been made possible by the relatively rapid buildup of the educational system. And it has all been supported mainly by the requirements and rewards of industrial economics for literate, knowledgeable and skilled labor forces working away from home and family, and also the aspiration that democratic citizens should be informed and responsible.

Lipset (1967) [5] in an analysis of the behavior of Indian students which seeks to account for differences among universities indicates that the colleges with better trained and more devoted staffs experience relatively few incidents of student indiscipline. The students most likely to be involved in such activities appear to come from the arts faculties of institutions and departments of low standing. He also pointed out the location of a university in or near a capital encourages political activity because national political organizations and personalities are more on the mind of students and are also more available as the foci of thought, agitation and demonstration. Students are more accessible to political agitators. Thus, it was that Bengal; and particularly Kolkata, became the first centre of student political agitation in India. He vividly explained the lack of financial support or opportunity for employment clearly generates student dissatisfaction in India. Student poverty fosters and intensities which frequently focuses on questions of fees, hotel and food charges etc. participation in politics is an alternative to other forms of extracurricular activity. He finds in Asia in fact reveal considerable political conservatism among university students. He continuing that in India disproportionate backing for the more leftist tendencies among the university educated.

Banerjee (2003) [1] studied student radicalism as a sociological construct and its association with eight relevant variables, namely, rural-urban background, gender, caste, type of discipline studied, economic status, political activism, alienation, and generation gap. He prepared hypotheses on student radicalism which tested on a randomly drawn sample of Calcutta University students. Chattopadhyay (2009) [3] studied the impact of cultural globalization on the student movement in West Bengal. He rightly observed that no in-depth study of social movements can be done without taking into account the student movement. In a globalized world, the students are the most vulnerable to cultural influences. Election in various student bodies is keeping pace with the overall political orientation to change. He rightly concludes that the student movements are marred by violence and they “get robbed of their traditional mission of positive contribution to society”.

Objective of the Study

The present paper tries to investigate the nature of political consciousness of the student firstly. Secondly, this paper tries to reveal student pattern of interest in political involvement. Thirdly, this paper tries to explore student opinion regarding student politics and general politics as well as political transparency.

Methodology

Methodology is an important part of every social research. In the present study quantitative research method is used for primary data collection and analysis. In the present study, purposive convenient sampling method technique have used for data collection from respondent by using the interview schedule with non-random sampling tool on the basis of semi-structure questionnaire through face to face interview. It has been taken only one small section of sample from the vast student population for the study of very general and very particular social phenomenon. Therefore, the sample size of the study is total 50 students from University of Kalyani including three different streams. Student age, sex and family income are remained main variables of the study.

Data Analysis

The present study reached to conclusion through tabular presentation of primary data as follows:

Table 1: Respondent age specific distribution of gender

Age Group (Years)	Male	Female	Total
17-20	17 (38%)	11 (22%)	28 (56%)
21 and Above	18 (36%)	04 (08%)	22 (44%)
Total	35 (70%)	15 (30%)	50 (100%)

In the above table it is shown that both age group male students (70%) are highly dominated in campus politics than female students.

Table 2: Gender specific distribution of respondent family income

Monthly Family Income (Rs.)	Male	Female	Total
10,000/-	19 (38%)	02 (04%)	21 (42%)
10,001-20,000/-	09 (18%)	02 (04%)	11 (22%)
20,001-30,000/-	04 (08%)	01 (02%)	05 (10%)
30,001-40,000/-	03 (06%)	10 (20%)	13 (26%)
Total	35 (70%)	15 (30%)	50 (100%)

In the above table it is shown that majority students (42%) belong to poor income class group who have political awareness than higher income class.

Table 3: Age specific distribution of student opinion regarding necessity of student politics in educational institution

Age Group (Years)	Necessary	Not Necessary	Total
17-20	17(34%)	11(22%)	28(56%)
21 and Above	07(14%)	15(30%)	22(44%)
Total	24(48%)	26(52%)	50(100%)

In the above table it is shown that 48% respondents thought that student politics is necessary in the educational institution.

Table 4: Age specific distribution of student opinion regarding necessity of political consciousness student as future leader of the country

Age Group (Years)	Necessary	Not Necessary	Total
17-20	25(50%)	03(6%)	28(56%)
21 and Above	20(40%)	02(4%)	22(44%)
Total	45(90%)	05(10%)	50(100%)

In the above table it is shown that 90% students thought that politically conscious student could lead the country in future.

Table 5: Age specific distribution of student opinion regarding their interest in main stream general politics

Age Group (Years)	Interested	Not Interested	Total
17-20	21(42%)	07(14%)	28(56%)
21 and Above	14(28%)	08(16%)	22(44%)
Total	35(70%)	15(30%)	50(100%)

In the above table it is shown that 70% respondents have been interested in general politics.

Table 6: Age specific distribution of opinion regarding political consciousness among the student

Age Group (Years)	Known	Unknown	Total
17-20	13(26%)	14(28%)	27(54%)
21 and Above	11(22%)	12(24%)	23(46%)
Total	24(48%)	26(52%)	50(100%)

In the above table it is shown that 48% students are well known about nature of general politics.

Table 7: Age specific distribution of student opinion regarding student politics Vs general politics

Age Group (Years)	Aware	Not Aware	Total
17-20	25(50%)	03(6%)	28(56%)
21 and Above	13(26%)	09(18%)	22(44%)
Total	38(76%)	12(24%)	50(100%)

In the above table it is shown that 76% students are aware and understand the difference between student politics and main stream general politics.

Table 8: Age specific distribution of student opinion regarding student politics and main trend politics should separated

Age Group (Years)	Separated	Associated	Total
17-20	25(50%)	02(4%)	27(54%)
21 and Above	22(44%)	01(2%)	23(46%)
Total	47(94%)	03(6%)	50(100%)

In the above table it is shown that the both age group of student considered that student politics and main trend politics should be separated.

Conclusion

Politics is an important element in society. Politics is correlated with human life. Today politics become an aspect of everyday life. The primary stage of mainstream politics based on student politics. It is wrong to consider student politics in short event of students. Every country needs political conscious youth for future progress of the nation. So, the present study researcher conducted field work among the under graduate students of higher educational institution from West Bengal. This small scale study undertaken based on 50 samples from University students. In the study student opinion are analyzed through frequency distribution.

Student opinion regarding interest in political activities an uneven distribution has been noticed among the respondents where 48% of students were interested in politics and rest of the 52% did not interested in campus politics. Therefore, it can be said that there is a balanced between political and apolitical activity of the University students in West Bengal. So, students remained politically sound in the campus. However, a trend of alienation from political orientation has also been noticed among students significantly. Student opinion regarding the nature of political awareness also negatively distributed between different age group of students. It is noticed that 48% students were aware about politics and rest 52% students provided negative opinion. In conclusion it can be said that University students are not, however, merely prospective members of the elites of their countries. Particularly in the underdeveloped countries; undergraduate students do not just prepare themselves for future roles in public life; they play a significant part in the political life of their countries even during their student life. The intensity of the University students' political activity is in some sense a measure of the failure of the higher educational institution as an academic community. Therefore, finding of the study indicates lack of consciousness and interest by the student in general political orientation because of proper channelized influence and leadership.

Limitation of the Study

The empirical results of the present study remain confined to University of Kalyani. Though this is a major limitation of the study, it provides, in micro level facts about the political attitudes and behavior of a section of educated youth, which cannot be generalized or compare to the wider society. Another important limitation of the study is the selection of sample. Due to various constraints, researcher chosen purposive convenient sampling method for collecting samples instead of random sampling which seems to more appropriate in this kind of study. As a result, researcher cannot rule out bias in selection of respondents. This fact will have to be taken into account while examining the findings and conclusions of this study. Due to time limit researcher not able to explore the residential background of student representative that could provide more input in such research.

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