

Protest movements and Students

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Abstract:-

The research paper is basically define the role of students in protest movements in India. Various movements became part of every system but the role of students is crucial in every system. In pre independence India, many students joined the non-cooperation movement, Quit India movement began by the Congress against the British and boycott the schools and colleges. Here the ideological background and arguments of students were supported by Congress. But after Independence, the nature of student protest is changed dramatically. After independence, Congress declared that there is no need of student movements but students carry their protests for gain the power to change their some aspects of life. This changed scenario after the independence of India is major setback for protest movements of students.

Introduction

Political study in India is largely focuses on political institutions such as executive, legislature, judiciary, parties and elections. The study of the masses and their aspirations, their demands and their way to put demands is largely ignored by political theorists. The demand in a particular way can be interpreted as illegal or rejected by those who are in power but the same action may became a movement in masses after a particular time. This is the format of the participation of people outside the above political institutions. The term "Protest movement" is concerned with the emancipation of exploited class. It is non- institutionalized collective actions which take the forms of protests, strikes, riots, gheraos etc. But these actions are not social movements. Rajni Kothari described these actions as 'Direct-actions'. It starts from protests or agitations but develop after course of time. So the agitations, protests, strikes are part of movements and not a

movement in itself. Political system and education system both influence each other in variety of ways. Like, education clearly define the role of politics and on the other side, Politics attempts to decide the educational system. It is the process by which the structure of the education is made by politics. This is the big concern that why our political institutions are under the influence of politics and feel helpless to be immune from the forces of politicization. It is not just only a political influence. Politicization refers to the misuse of the educational structures and resources. On the other side, political influence is just the relationship between the educational and political systems. It includes the political skills and strategies to ensure public decisions and to the needs and interests of particular educational institutions.

What is Protest Movement?

Protest is basically disapproval of something. It is very specific in nature and starts from a particular issue. When a situation is arisen, that cannot be tolerated in a society, then protest arises as a group action towards a reform. The aim of a protest is to bring desirable change in different fields. Social movements do not have monopoly on protests. Other actors such as political parties, pressure groups, organizations, students, also used the method of protest. Sometimes they make alliance with social movements. However, protest has been considered only as a form of action. It may be peaceful, innovative or radical also.

In representative democracy, the decisions of the government can be challenged by people and opposition. People put pressure on government not only through voting, but through other means of participation and this is their constitutional right also. They adopt various forms of action that challenged the established regime or norms. Apart from traditional methods, they follow rival methods like signing petitions, lawful demonstrations, boycotts, blocking traffic, sit-ins, strikes etc. These methods put more pressure than traditional methods. Traditional methods also include in it like following and discussing established modes of politics with others, attending political meetings, working for political parties, contacting officials etc. These rival methods sometimes labeled as anti-development or anti-democratic by governments through their propaganda servers.

Each protest movement has find procedures which are appropriate for realizing its internal aims. Protest actions must creating sense of collective identity. It is important condition for action towards a common goal. This solidarity is seems sometime in labor movements, farmer

movements and student movements. But it is not always true that actions that build up internal solidarity, always serve to create support outside the movement. Protest leaders must ignore extreme actions, if they want to win support of whole public. But when protest going to direct action like damage to public property or create problems for general people, then the protests criticized by public as too radical. Studies show that, more the non-violent actions like petitioning, more the possibility of support of public. So, these protests may be unproductive.

Next important thing is the relation between protest and media. In 21st century, every protest became strong or weak through media. Media plays an important role for the effectiveness of protest. They are basically three in number such as newspaper, TV and social media. Therefore the success of protest is undoubtedly related to amount of media attention it receives. Under the pressure of governments on media in this decade, the media does not behave as a fourth pillar of democracy. To obtain media's attention, it is important to involve a greater part of people in protest and protest must be innovative then past protests. Even despite the support of people, media does not cover the protests and misguided its audience for their own benefits.

Role of students in Protest movements

Students were the major players in various protests in India. Student politics is simple term, but having diverse meanings. It includes student attitudes and orientations, student political behavior and manifestation of power, activities of students, methods of organization and campus electoral behavior and the relationship of student political activity with educational and political systems. In broader terms one can say that student politics has two major areas in which it works that are, in the campus and outside the campus. Sometimes, issues in campuses disrupt the outside issues. But, it is quite possible to distinguish between the matters affecting academic or campus and the matters which have social significance. In the campus, the politics of students revolves around the students unions. These unions give a chance to students to get participation in the working of democratic process. Everything in the campus, which is undemocratic in nature, is the issue of student politics. But the trouble starts when the students participate in broader societal issues which are related to political system. It has forced the government to review its policies.

Students have gained valuable training in ideology and political methods. In almost all of the developing countries, the students constitute a main source of trained activities and an important tool toward the process of modernization. They have gained valuable political and social

knowledge in colleges and universities. However, student activism has important institutional variations. There is a less political activity in most technological institutions. There are lots of causes for this variation. Engineering and science students have not been active politically due to their academic burden. Their focus is only on technology and natural science, not on social sciences. As a result, students have rare chance to take part in reviewing the policies of government and university administration. On the other sides, most of the students in student unions are from Arts backgrounds and strong advocates of change the status quo, and socio-economic reform to make society on equal values due to their academic fields and economic fields.

Students played a key role in the struggle of independence. Nationalist student movement had a single goal i.e. independence for India. But after the 1947, most of the student agitations have not been directly political. Pre-independence period was a period of movements, where ruling government Congress and students worked in co-operation. There are three major changes in protest movements of Indian students after 1947. First, after independence, there was more emphasis put on science and technical education and almost ignore the value of social sciences. In these streams students have less time to participate in protest movements because of their academic workloads. Students in social sciences are more concerned with political and intellectual issues. Second, in comparison to colonial rule, there is more stability of political institutions and this stability has reduced the impact of students in politics. Third, availability of higher education to the big segment of population and increasing number of students from diverse backgrounds made the mobilization of students more difficult than the nationalistic struggle.

In 1970's, student movements in Gujrat and Bihar started a new phase of student engagement in India. The student movement upset the state and brought down the congress government. This was the first time in Indian history that the issues like rising prices, black market, corruption in higher public institutions and unemployment were raising. These movements proved that the students can initiate and sustain mass action on a wide scale. It is important to remember that, the student activism controlled by only a small percentage of the total student body. In all universities of India, there is sharp divide between the politically-oriented activists and the carrier-oriented students. Before 1960's, the student activists are come from middle class and are academic achievers. But today, the rural students beginning in most of

the universities is more politically-oriented. Every period of time, student agitations and movements are reflections of those who are led these political struggles. So, at present time, student agitations is related more to politically or socially backward classes whether we take the example of Jawaharlal University or the case of Rohit Vemula in Hyderabad University. At present time, a wide gap seems to be created for separating present day India from the pre-independence India. It is the politicization that creates this gap. According to Rajni Kothari, "If modernization is the central tendency of our times, then it is politicization that provides its driving force. It is noted that politicization of society is necessary after independence. It was necessary to modernize the society which was based on hierarchy, caste, religion etc. In pre-independence era, society was apolitical. It was the need of time to politicize the people for reforming of society. Moreover, for promoting the political culture, politicization was desirable for proper political socialization of people. Even the politicization of society, was used for the deep interests of political parties. It is just a method to enter the people in election setup. This politicization was the major shift after independence.

So, the Indian students become more organized after independence through their tactics of leadership, politicization and with ideological commitment. They are playing more vital role to transform the society and particularly the education system. Even through the bad influence of media they are more politically exploited then pre media period but particularly the social media makes their protest more democratic.

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