

A Case Study of Student Unrest in Himachal Pradesh University

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigated student unrest in Himachal Pradesh University, its causes and suggestion for solving the problems. For the purpose of the study 82 students were selected by using purposive sampling techniques. Descriptive survey method was applied for collection of data and non parametric data analysis technique was applied for analysis of data. It was found that Major causes of students' unrest were Behavior of employees and transparency, placement services, educational problem. Most of students were in favor of Students Union election however they were not in favor of interference of political parties in the University campus. Male students were more in favour of student union election than female students. At the end study draws some conclusion, discussion and educational implications of further improvement.

Keywords: Students Unrest, Himachal Pradesh University

Education is very important for development of any country and society. The students' satisfaction and their belongingness to the system not only keep our educational system vibrant but it also works as backbone of a progressive society. There are various moments of pride as well as glory in history of education when students became a significant determining factor in deciding the fate of the nation and society. Students' union is a society of students at a college or university which organizes social events and other activities and is represented on key institutional committees which deal with students' welfare. The history of student union India is also very Bright, even during pre-independence it played important role in spreading anti British spirit.

A university is place of knowledge, reason, which promotes for the adventure of ideas and searching truth, stands for humanism, for tolerance, for reason, for and for the search for Truth. It stands for the onward march of human race towards ever-higher objectives. If the universities discharge their duties adequately then it is well with the nation and the people. These are the words of

Jawaharlal Nehru. According to Mahatma Gandhi, man is neither mere intellect, nor the gross animal body, nor the heart or soul alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all the three is required for the making of the whole man and constitutes the true economics of education. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar says, education is something which ought to be brought within the reach of everyone. He advises the students to educate, agitate and organize, have faith in themselves. All these words of great persons show the goals of education such as the all round development of a student and the promotion of democratic values and its inclusive character.

The nation is built in the classrooms so that the students have to be trained in democratic practices. They have to be given opportunities to take decisions as their own and to represent themselves. The student elections and the establishment of a students' union are some practices to make them aware of the practical functioning of democracy. Higher education should be oriented towards nation building. The constitutional values and the principles of pluralism have to be promoted in

our universities. The universities are a space for democratic dissent and debates. Students have to be trained to conduct a healthy debate and to have tolerance to the views that they are opposed to. Such an ambience can be provided where the students are getting opportunities to represent themselves in their own elections.

The ship of progress of any country floats on the hard work and dedication of the young generation and its innovative ideas and thoughts. The student community plays a vital role in every society. It has been recognized as a great force. Thus, growing unrest among students is really a matter of great concern. In recent years, in India, they have assumed alarming proportions. There are agitations, strikes, boycotts of classes etc. in colleges and universities. The recent examples of Jawaharlal University, Delhi, University of Hyderabad, IIT Madras, NIT Srinagar etc would suffice. The Himachal Pradesh University (HPU), Shimla is no exception. Universities are meant for studies and students come here for the same purpose. Then why they boycott classes, spend time in agitation in front of administrative building or university roads sacrificing their classes and studies. There must be some reasons.

Student Unrest- a state of dissatisfaction with the present condition of university functioning, facilities and welfare activities

Vidyarthi (1972) identified significant factors causing student unrest in Chhota Nagpur. Sayeed (1973) studied politicization of student unrest in Lucknow University for period 1948-1970. Wasil, (1983) tried to analyze the problems of student unrest in the light of political, social and psychological factors. Singh (2013) examined student unrest among Graduate students in relation to their gender, intelligence, adjustment and educational stream. Based on normative survey method of research it was found that no significant difference exist in the level of student unrest between male and female students. No relationships exist between student unrest and student adjustment. There was no relation between student unrest and intelligence of students and more level of unrest was found among non professional stream students than professional students

Khaleduzzaman (2014) conducted as study on Students Unrest in Higher Education Level in Bangladesh a Study on Dhaka and Rajshahi

University. The study focuses on the causes and effects of students' unrest on higher education level in Bangladesh. The study has also tried to explore the various causes of student unrest and its effects on society and individual. Based on the study it was found that parents are very much anxious about Student unrest of their wards and also suspicious about completion of Education of their wards. Student unrest also affects society so they have negative attitude towards student unrest and higher Education.

Rationale of the Study

Quality in higher education is very much essential so that accepted objectives can be achieved. The University Authorities recognize the students' Union Government as a relevant arm of the central Administration of the University, although it is not compulsory that all students should participate fully in Students' Union activities. Students play a vital role in deciding the direction of national policy on progress and development. When government takes any decision that is not in favor general welfare, then students union opposes the government policy and makes pressure to change the course of action. In India Students' union has played very important role in national freedom movement and after independence students have given direction to national politics many times. So students' unions' horizon of work is not limited to only university or college campus, its sphere of attention is very vast.

Himachal Pradesh University is one of leading institution of higher education in the Himachal Pradesh which has contributed for national and international development. From last some year University authority has stopped university student union election. It is evident that no study has been conducted on issues related to student Unrest and its suggestion. This study draws an attention on causes of Student Unrest among students of HPU as well as their perception on student politics and suggestion for improvement.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the causes of student unrest among students of HPU.
2. To study the perception of students regarding student politics in the campus.

- To study the suggestions of students regarding campus politics and student unrest.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

According to objectives of the study descriptive survey method was used. However mix research design was used for analysis of the evidences.

Sample and sampling procedure-for the purpose of study convenient sampling method has been applied and the students studying in the library were selected for the study. Total 100 samples were selected and questionnaire was given with proper instruction and out of which 82 were found viable for the purpose of the study. Out of 82, 50 were hostellers and 32 were day scholars; 42 were boys and 40 girls.

Tool used: Following tools have been used by the researchers for data collection.

Self-made 'Causes of Student Unrest Scale' (छात्र असंतोष कारण मापनी) – This scale is consist of 11 items. Item no 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 & 10 are positive and 4, 6, 8, 9 & 11 are negative.

Questionnaire on Student politics in the University विश्वविद्यालय में छात्र राजनीति प्रश्नावली - This is consist of 5 items of which item 1, 2 & 3 are objective choice and item 4 and 5 are descriptive.

Delimitation

This study will be delimited on following consideration:

- In present study sample HPU Shimla is chosen as case.
- Study is based on students' perception only.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study investigated student unrest in Himachal Pradesh University, its causes and suggestion for solving the problems. For the purpose of the study 82 students were selected by using purposive sampling techniques. Descriptive survey method was applied for collection of data and non parametric data analysis technique was applied for analysis of data.

Causes of student unrest among students of HPU

Interpretation: The table represents the view points of students on their issues. 75.60% of the respondents have opinion that the behavior of university employees and the lack of transparency are the reasons for students' unrest. Educational problems are another major cause of unrest. 65.85% of respondents think that the evaluation process is a cause of unrest. Lack of personality development

Table 1: Causes of Student Unrest in HPU

Table 1 Students perception about Causes of Student Unrest	Statement	Important Cause of Unrest (%)	General Cause of Unrest (%)	Less Important Cause of Unrest (%)
1	Educational problems	65.85	24.39	9.75
2	Administrative work	21.95	34.14	43.40
3	Educational evaluation	65.85	24.39	09.75
4	Students' representation	9.75	36.58	53.65
5	Behavior of employees and transparency	75.60	12.19	12.19
6	University facilities and students' welfare	21.95	21.95	56.09
7	Personality development and placement services	60.97	21.95	17.07
8	Co-curricular activities	19.51	31.70	48.78
9	Hostel facilities	29.26	39.02	31.70
10	Library facility	58.53	26.82	14.63
11	Infrastructure facilities	29.26	31.70	39.02

and career placement are issues which causes the dissatisfaction of students. Library facilities are also a cause of unrest. Regarding the other infrastructural facilities, the students had not a single opinion that 29.26% of them think that it is a major cause, 31.70% says that it is an issue but not a big one while 39.02% of the students do not think that it is a great issue. About the co curricular activities also the students are satisfied so that only 19.51% of them think that it is a big cause of unrest. The table shows that the problems directly related with evaluation, the behaviour of administrative authorities, Personality development and placement services and Library facility are the big causes of unrest.

Table 2: Causes of Student Unrest according to Gender

Statement	Important	General	Less
	Cause of Unrest (%)	Cause of Unrest (%)	Important Cause of Unrest (%)
Perception of Male Students			
1 Educational problems	71.42	19.04	9.54
2 Administrative work	33.33	23.80	42.85
3 Educational evaluation	66.66	28.57	4.76
4 Students' representation	19.04	47.61	33.33
5 Behavior of employees and transparency	76.19	9.52	47.61
6 University facilities and students' welfare	28.57	23.80	14.28
7 Personality development and placement services	66.66	19.04	47.61
8 Co-curricular activities	23.80	28.57	14.28
9 Hostel facilities	33.33	42.85	23.80
10 Library facility	66.66	19.04	14.28
11 Infrastructure facilities	42.85	42.85	14.28
Perception of Female Students			
1 Educational problems	60.00	30.00	10.00
2 Administrative work	10.00	45.00	45.00
3 Educational evaluation	65.00	20.00	15.00
4 Students' representation	0.00	25.00	75.00
5 Behavior of employees and transparency	75.00	15.00	10.00
6 University facilities and students' welfare	15.00	20.00	65.00
7 Personality development and placement services	55.00	25.00	20.00

8 Co-curricular activities	15.00	35.00	50.00
9 Hostel facilities	25.00	35.00	40.00
10 Library facility	50.00	35.00	15.00
11 Infrastructure facilities	15.00	20.00	65.00

The above table shows the different perspective of boys and girls on reasons behind the students' unrest. Both the boys and girls have the same opinion that the major cause of student unrest is the behavior of university employees and lack of transparency. 28.57% of boys think that the university facilities and students' welfare are a cause of unrest while only 15% of girls support it. 42.85% of boys points out that the lack of infrastructural facilities are creating unrest among students, but only 15% of girls support this view. Regarding the Student Representation (presence of students' union), none of the girl students think that it is a matter of unrest, but on the other hand 19.04% of students' opined that absence of Student union is one of the major causes of student Unrest.

Table 3: Students opinion on Students' Union Election Based on Gender

	In Favor of students' Union Election (%)	Not in Favor of students' Union Election (%)	Total
Male	80.95	19.04	21
Female	65.00	35.00	20
Total	73.17	26.82	41

Interpretation: Among the respondents, 80.95% of boys and 65% girls are in favour of the election to the students' union and overall 73.17% students are supporting the student union elections. In further analysis it was found that among the 82 samples, 60 students are in favour of student Union election. Out of these 60 students 50 were in favour of democratic election, 2 student was in favour of the appointment of the class topper and 8 students were in favor of selection of students' representatives by university authority; rest of 22 students are not in favor any kinds of student elections.

Interpretation: Though most of the students are in favour of the presence of students' union the opinion is different among the day scholars and hostel dwellers. 81.75% of day scholars are supporting the presence of the students' union. But

Table 4: Students' opinion on Election of Students' Union Election based on Residential Status

	In Favour of student Union Election (%)	Not in Favour of student Union Election (%)	Total (%)
Hosteller	68.00	32.00	100
Day Scholar	81.75	18.25	100
Total	73.17	26.82	100

Table 5: Student opinion on involvement of political parties in campus politics

Group	In favour of the involvement of Political Parties (%)	Not in favour of the involvement of Political Parties (%)	Total (%)
Male	4.76	95.23	100
Female	10.00	90.00	100
Total	7.31	92.65	100

Table 6: Student opinion on involvement of Political Parties in Campus Politics based on Residential Status

Group	In Favor of involvement of Political Parties (%)	Not in Favor of involvement of Political Parties (%)	Total (%)
Hosteller	12.00	88.00	100
Day Scholar	0.00	100.00	100
Total	7.31	92.65	100

among the hostellers only 68% are supporting the presence of students' union.

Interpretation: Regarding the presence of political parties in campus, most of the students (92.65%) have a negative approach. Further it was found that 95.23% of male representatives are against the involvement of political parties. 90% of female students are opposing the presence of political parties in campus.

Interpretation: All the day scholars in the sample are against the presence of political parties while 12% of the hostellers are supporting the presence of political parties in the campus.

Students' views on the nature of politics in the campus

Although the campus of Himachal Pradesh University is not that much politically active like that of the Jawaharlal Nehru University (Delhi) or the University of Hyderabad, the students here are no less politically aware. Most of the students expressed their views in clear terms.

India is the largest democracy in the world and democracy should prevail in the campus. And politics teaches to fight for rights. This is the view

put forward by most of the students of the HPU Campus. Even though the students are in favor of students politics in the campus, they are actually in favor of a constructive and peaceful student politics that takes care of students' interests and welfare. Almost all the students voiced against violent politics in the campus. According to their view, campus politics should be such that it does not spoil the healthy teaching-learning environment in the campus; violence by the students in the university spoils the name of the university; the students should be guided by the teachers in this regard. Students' politics must have to base on ideas and thoughts.

Students' politics, according to the HPU students, gives them a primary forum for grievances redressal. Students can also raise their problems and demands easily heard by the university administration and sometimes get them fulfilled. Moreover, according to some other students, the campus politics has its educational value. It keeps the students informed about the policies, plans and decisions of the university administration and thus ensures some degree of accountability and reduces the chance of the administration being autocratic. It also makes students aware of their rights and duties and to

stand and fight for the same. Regarding the process of election, few students are of the opinion that there should be democratic election of the students' union in the university.

Most of the students of the HPU campus have the opinion that there should not be any involvement of political parties into the campus. According to them, association with political parties divides students in different colours who get active only to get votes neglecting the actual problems of the students. Very few numbers of students in the campus dislikes students' politics and are totally dissatisfied with it. They condemn the attempt to force students to join politics who are not interested in it. According to some others, politics should not be there in the university level where students come for their studies. Lastly, a negligible number of students have not expressed their views on the matter.

The steps should be taken to solve the students' problems and their demands

Various ways have come up from the responses of the students of the HPU campus as to what steps should be taken by the university administration, according to them, to solve their problems and demands. First of all, there should be a separate administrative department in the university that will attend the problems of the students to solve them. Most of the demands of the students are related to the basic infrastructural facilities. Thus, they feel that the administration should pay heed to their demands. Their dissatisfaction is not without any cause. As because they lack basic facilities in the university, so is the agitation, hunger strike, boycott etc. To some students, all the demands put forward by the students are not legitimate and justified. So, the administration should accept the legitimate demands of the students avoiding the illegitimate ones.

Some of the students suggested some concrete steps to be taken by the administration. These are to abolish the RUSA, reduction of fees, providing infrastructural facilities like safe drinking water, adequate number of books in the library, bus facilities and proper lab facilities etc. Besides, they demand for the filling up of the vacant faculty posts in various departments of the university as soon as possible. Some students are for the political pressure on the university administration for the betterment

of the students. According to them, not only the university, but also the state government should come up with effective policies and programmes for the large number of students studying in the university.

CONCLUSION

This study analyses the present scenario of the students' unrest in the context of the ongoing protests of students. Students, the most important stake holders of the higher education in universities have to be given the proper representation. There have to be a dynamic mechanism to address the issues of students. Though there is a student charter and students' redressal mechanism, the students are not satisfied due to many reasons. This study analyzed some of the reasons of unrest.

The educational problems, administrative work, educational evaluation, students' representation, behavior of employees and transparency, university facilities and students' welfare, personality development and placement services, co-curricular activities, hostel facilities, library facilities, infrastructure facilities etc were analyzed in this study. The perceptions of students regarding the students' union elections also documented. Most of the students preferred a democratically elected students' union. It is notable that the absence of a democratically elected students' union is a great cause of unrest. But at the same time the students are not in favour of the presence of political parties in their campus. They are not ready to be affiliated with any political parties.

Discussion of the Study

- ♦ The study expresses that Behavior of Employees and Transparency, Educational Problems, Educational Evaluation etc., are leading causes of unrest. The possible reason behind this may lack of student pressure over employee, less number of faculty member and non teaching staff and implementation of RUSA evaluation pattern.
- ♦ It was found that males are more in favor of election than female students. This may be because of males' more political involvement in University campus as well as society. Day scholars are more in favor of election than hosteller. This may be due to less availability of

facilities to day scholar than hostellers. Overall significant numbers of students are in favor of student union election as it is well known that University campus have a rich history of student politics from its beginning.

- ♦ It was found that most of student are in favor of direct and democratic election because democracy is a better way of functioning and ensure participation of everyone.
- ♦ Significant numbers (93 %) of students are against interference of political party because it was found that many of problems of students' politics are due to involvement political parties.
- ♦ Most of student suggested that democratic student politics should be applied in the campus because student union works as a pressure group for University administration.
- ♦ Student suggested that University should provide basic infrastructural as well as welfare facilities because one of the important causes of unrest is lack of facilities.

Educational Implications

Based on the findings of the study following Educational implications has been drawn:

1. This study will help to know about causes of student Unrest in HPU.
2. The study will be helpful for University Authority, policy makers and educational planner in various ways.
3. The study will help in providing various facilities in University Campus.
4. Last but not the least Student Unrest is an important area of the study in the present rapid global context. Therefore, the present study is a great input understanding student democracy in State and country.

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