

SOCIAL  
DIMENSIONS OF URBAN EDUCATED YOUTH  
IN INDIA

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DECLARATION

Certified that the material in this dissertation 'Dimensions of Urban Educated Youth in India' has not been previously submitted for any other degree of any University.

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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

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### INTRODUCTION

The theoretical framework underlying the study of contemporary urban youth in India can be related to three main ideas. (a) The colonial heritage. (b) A greater change, introduced due to a faster pace of industrialization and urbanization than before. (c) And, finally, as a result of the above processes the pervading effects of modernization on the youth.

The above-mentioned propositions are present in all the chapters, sometimes very prominently and in others as underlying assumptions. These chapters may be dealing with political involvement of urban educated youth, or the interest may be towards the socio-cultural dimensions of youth or when the theme is focusing on the <sup>Socio-</sup>economic problems of youth.

#### (a) The Colonial Heritage

The history of the seventeenth, <sup>1</sup>eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is primarily the history of the formation of modern nations. The process of nation-formation has continued during the twentieth century. This is especially as regards the awakened people of Asiatic and African continents. As a result of colonial impact, the development of Nationalism in different countries followed certain lines which were determined by their respective social and cultural history, their existing political, economic and social structures and the specific psychological and economic characteristics of the various social strata.

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1 A.R. Desai, The Social Background of the Indian Nationalism (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1971).

The contact of the Indian tradition with the West was of a radical significance. Historically it was a contact between a pre-modern and a modernizing cultural system. However it must be kept in mind that by the time the Western tradition could bear meaningfully upon the social, political and cultural system of India, the Indian structure itself had undergone radical internal metamorphosis. For example, its traditional hierarchical structure had broken down,<sup>2</sup> which rendered the value structure a little more open and humanistic.<sup>3</sup> Besides the Western contact ushered in amongst the Indian people a new found sense of confidence in the scientific and technological world view,<sup>4</sup> based on rationalism, equality and freedom.

Yet the historical value of the contact with the West lay<sup>5</sup> in the fact that it started a new era of change. The cultural tradition of the nineteenth century West which overwhelmed the Indian scene was fundamentally different from the traditional and cultural pattern of Hinduism. The form of legal rationalism on which the Western tradition was based recognized a contractual-

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2 Cf. Louis Dumont, "The Modern Conception of the Individual", Contributions to Indian Sociology, no. VIII, October 1965, pp. 13-61.

3 See Max Weber, The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism, Talcott Parsons, trans. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958); Alexis De Tocqueville, Democracy in an Age of Reconstruction (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1940).

4 See Percival Spear, India: A Modern History (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1961), p. 255.

5 Yogendra Singh (1973), Modernization of Indian Tradition, p. 85.



individualistic relationship between man and society. In matters of legal justice and civil rights, it encouraged the values of equality, equity and universalism and not those of status and hierarchy. In contrast with communal and familistic status allocation system of India, the Western tradition through various bureaucratic structures, administrative, legal and military, and through educational and cultural innovations introduced new criteria for social stratification which were based on achievement and not ascription.

The result of educational changes was two-fold: The interjection of the western values and ideologies among the members of the new educated class and secondly, the rise of social and cultural reformation movements coupled with the expansion of Christianity; these changes gave a further push to the process of Westernization.<sup>6</sup> Most of the early educational expansion was confined to the Upper and Middle class urban people. Their interaction with the Western cultural tradition led, in the initial periods, to an exaggerated effervescence for all that was Western. Most extreme were the students of the Hindu College at Calcutta who adopted an aggressive attitude to everything Hindu and openly defied the canons of their religion, while some of them offended public opinion by eating beef, drinking to an excess etc.

As in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras too had hyper-Westernized youth movements, but their scale was not the same as existed

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6 Percival Spear, op. cit., p. 292.

in Bengal. In Bombay this form of Westernization was confined mainly to the Parsis.<sup>7</sup> Otherwise, in emphasis and orientation primary westernization process in Madras and Bombay was deeply embedded in the emergent nationalist aspirations.

Despite the high quantitative significance that these sub-cultural movements of westernization had for culture change, the movement of westernization did not become strong enough to have acquired a deeply-rooted institutional base which could totally disrupt the traditional bases. However even though its normative categories were weak, it did make an impact on the urban middle class student population.

Therefore by the time the British had come and departed, many more macroscopic changes were introduced in the Indian society setting a pace of change which was faster than before. These changes can be seen in relation to the urban educated youth, in terms of modernization.

The above takes us logically to the second proposition (stated in the first para of the introduction), namely, viewing the youth against a background of increasing modernization due to an increase in the process of industrialization and urbanization.

In sociological literature, a relationship between cultural modernization and urbanization or industrialization is assumed as a matter of logical necessity. All classical works

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7 The over-enthusiasm of Parsis for the Western Culture is reflected in the writing of a Bombay Parsi Fariji in Bombay in 1863.

in Sociology are replete with construction of neat dichotomies such as rural-urban, sacred-secular, community-society. However if one moves away to a more complex reality, it eludes such neat compartmentalization. This is especially true about the extent to which urbanization or industrialization is necessarily modernizing, although variations in the extent and pattern may be there. In such pattern variations, historical factors play a crucial role. To a large extent this is true for India.

Urban culture in India is centuries old. Traditional forms of urbanization tended to reinforce the established cultural pattern which was hierarchical, caste-oriented and pre-industrial.

Historically in India therefore no straight equation between urbanization and modernization might be possible to establish.

Now the pertinent question to ask is, 'Is Industrialization in India contributing to the growth of modernizing processes in Urbanization? Answers to these questions are important especially as regards the nature of change, and how the latter has affected youth.

The focus in various urban studies and surveys conducted in India are not always uniform, or directed to the issues raised above. Nevertheless in these studies there is much relevant information on this theme.

Many urban studies show that cities in India continue to be dominated by cultural and structural attributes which are far different from those which are considered to be typical

of a city,<sup>8</sup> e.g. formalization, atomization, lack of familialism and kin-bound groupings. Studies reveal that in the Indian context a rural-urban dichotomy is untidy if not irrelevant. For example, comparatively a large number of persons are found engaged in Primary Industries even in metropolitan cities. Contrary to earlier sociological stereotype, the familistic norms and joint family structures have been found to be predominant in many urban centres.

Furthermore cities in India do not constitute a cultural isolate. There is a continuity of interaction between the city and the village and in many realms of cultural activity, the distinction between the two as separate complexes are blurred by the unity of the regional cultural pattern. Bert Hoselitz concludes that, "Indian cities...even some of the largest ones... show sizeable quarters which have preserved their rural character and in which life is carried on under general conditions only little different from the villages"<sup>9</sup>. According to him, urbanization in India follows a pattern which exists in Latin America. Uniformity in the actual patterns of Urbanization in some Indian cities is comparable to that in the Mexico city, studied by Oscar Lewis.<sup>10</sup> Caste and community neighbourhoods of the Indian

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8 Richard D. Lambert, "Some Impact of Urban Society Upon Village Life", in Roy Turner, ed., India's Urban Future (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), p. 117.

9 Bert F. Hoselitz, "The Role of Urbanization in Economic Development", in Roy Turner, ed., Some International Comparisons.

10 Oscar Lewis, "Urbanization Without Breakdown: A Case Study", Scientific Monthly, vol. LXXV, no. 1, July 1952, pp. 31-41.

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cities find their parallel in Mexico city which represent neighbourhood units based on face to face relations and kinship ties. It is a process of urbanization without total breakdown in the traditional pattern.

Furthermore social change and the new realities it creates arise not only from the impact of objective exogenous or revolutionary forces on established system, but also from alternative potentialities within such systems.<sup>11</sup> For example, comparative stratification studies have viewed the caste system as rigidly ascribed and closed status groups whose super-ordinate and subordinate relationship are legitimized by a comprehensive sacred ideology blocking social mobility and change. Such an analysis assumes a dichotomy between Tradition and Modernity which is fallacious. Now one has begun to realize that novel economic opportunities often enabled alien or subordinate castes to establish themselves within the traditional system.<sup>12</sup> However one should not overlook the importance of 'cultural change'<sup>13</sup> or diffusion of modern values even though the pace of 'structural

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11 Marxist theory stresses this insight when it emphasizes the creative possibilities of historical contradiction. Ideal typical or nueristic analysis of modernity and tradition are likely to miss these creative possibilities and place Tradition and Modernity in a dichotomous rather than a dialectical relationship.

12 Rudolph and Rudolph, The Modernity of Tradition.

13 A structural analysis of change differs from a cultural one which is in terms of particularities of customs, values and ideational phenomena, their integration, interaction and change.

change'<sup>14</sup> has been slow in India.

Urbanization and Industrialization have led to the growth of increased communication, monetization of economic relationships, factory and workshop employment for many, popularization of mass media of leisure and entertainment and slow but steady growth in the new sub-cultures of modernized elites. Increased use of modern transport, banking, other rational monetary transactions, modern medicine, a political culture, a more mobile stratification system create a cultural foundation for modernization. Thus despite the persistence of traditional cultural values and institutions in the cities, urbanization and industrialization foster many cultural norms and material conditions which are macroscopic and modernizing.

Therefore from a theoretical perspective, contemporary urban educated youth in India has to be viewed against a background of transitional and increasing industrializing and urbanizing structure. Structures, in which tradition and modernity exist side by side.

"Transition does not mean necessarily a change towards modernity". Transition in this dissertation implies a mixture of tradition and modern - which might either take one form or the other or inter-mix into a more stabilized and institutional structure that may be 'permanent transition' as Clifford Geertz suggests in the case of Indonesia,<sup>15</sup> and not a prelude to "take

14 A structural analysis of change consists of demonstrating the qualitative nature of new adaptations in the patterned relationship as when the joint family breaks and becomes nuclear, caste group is transformed into a class group.

15 Geertz, Social History of Indonesian Town, p. 152.

off" or mismanaged modernized programme. Rudolph and Kothari have viewed 'transition' in terms of a linear cultural theory of change in which the 'old' is replaced by the 'new'. However, transition here implies a 'dialectical' relation between old and new rather than a dichotomous one. The end result is yet to be foreseen. In words of Kothari, Indian society is a 'modernizing' society, which is neither modern nor traditional. It was simply moved from one threshold of integration and performance to another, transforming in the process both the indigenous structure and attitudes and the newly introduced and ideas.

In this transitional society we encounter a large number of structural inconsistencies such as democratization without total commitment to universalistic norms, rise in media participation and aspiration without proportionate increase in resources, Verbalization of a welfare ideology without its proper implementation<sup>16</sup> as a social policy, over-urbanization without the same degree of industrialization and finally modernization without meaningful changes in the stratification system.<sup>17</sup>

Such inconsistencies are common to South Asian countries. According to Gunnar Myrdal, these inconsistencies are the needs of change which will either re-establish the old values and ideals in a new form, or they may take an altogether new and a

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16 Myron Weiner, The Politics of Scarcity.

17 S.N. Eisenstaat, "The Development of Socio-Political Centres at the Second Stage of Modernization: A Comparative Analysis of Two Types", International Journal of Comparative Sociology, vol. VII, no. 1, March 1966, p. 125.

18 Gunnar Myrdal, Asian Drama.

modernized form. At such a period of a society many reconciliations between the old and the new have to be made. These reconciliations cause conflict and tension. Conflict and tension are an in-alienable part of social change, however the tension is heightened even more so, where tradition and modernity co-exist.

Before going into what has been dealt in the various chapters of this dissertation a definition of Youth has to be attempted.

Is Youth to be defined according to its 'social age' or 'physical age'. As a matter of fact both the physical and the social factors have to be present. The age dimension of youth I have set myself is from 18 years of age upto 30 years of age. They are however not representative of Indian youth in the Statistical sense. They have all had College and University education and have been involved to a large extent in the student community. However to define youth only by its physical age is inadequate; for example the twenty-four years old political activist or graduate student, may differ from young adults of similar age, whose place in society is settled, who is married and is fully committed to an occupation. What then characterizes the youth?

Youth is characterized by those persons who have not settled some existential questions. These questions relate to the relationship of youth to the existing society in terms of vocation, social role and life style.

The tension in the latter relationship is further exaggerated due to a faster 'pace of change' which leads to a



discontinuity between the values embodied in the family and those emerging in other institutional contexts. For youth in the developing countries like India, discontinuity arises because of the fundamental conflict between the traditional orientation of the family and the modernizing orientations encountered in the University and the cosmopolitan community associated with it.

In this dissertation, I have dealt with and focussed on certain <sup>social</sup> dimensions of youth - political, economic and (unemployment), psychological (alienation) and cultural (family, religion, education). These chapters have as their basis the above-mentioned theories.

### Methodology

The relationship between theory and data has always been of major concern in sociological literature. Merton who is one of its most lucid exponents, espouses that there are two groups of sociologists - one group who seek above all to generalize. At the other extreme are those who report facts are verifiable and often verified, but they are somewhat at a loss to relate these facts to each other on the basis of a generalized theoretical perspective. These positions are synthesized by Merton who says that "Generalizations can be tempered, if not with mercy, at least with disciplined observations, and close, detailed observations need not be rendered trivial by avoidance of their theoretical pertinence and implications". In most of my chapters, I have tried to show a correlation between theory and the available empirical data.

As already clarified the first chapter in this dissertation is in the way of a general introduction which accounts for the two major variables of colonialism and modernization. The latter two variables are viewed in terms of the theoretical perspective which provide the background against which the available empirical data has been placed.

The second chapter which is titled, 'Youth Change and the Dimensions of Socialization' process has definite sociological overtones and talks about the three fundamentals of socialization, namely, education, family and religion. What is the change which has occurred in the three dimensions, the extent of these changes and their effect on Youth. The quality and the nature of this change is the major theme of this chapter.

The third chapters deals with the psychological dimension of Youth in India. Here one of the major themes is the tension which exists between self and society. In adolescence Adults find it easier to socialize their young. But in youth the relationship between socially assigned labels and "real self"<sup>19</sup> becomes more problematic and constitutes a focus of central concern. The awareness of actual or potential conflict, disparity, lack of congruence between what one is (one's identity and values) and the resources and demands of the existing society increases. The youth begins to sense as to who he is and comes to recognize the possibility of conflict and disparity between his emerging self-hood and social order. In this chapter a distinction is made between two kinds of alienated youth, the

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19 Erik Erikson, Identity and Crisis.

radical activist and the youth who is not a activist but who experiences what is termed "meaninglessness". Besides the chapter examines the theory of alienation and its relevance to the Indian situation.

In chapter four the political dimension of Indian educated youth, I have tried to draw a brief comparison between political involvement of youth in India and abroad. I have made certain conceptual clarifications as regards unrest, movement, protests. I have dealt with questions such as what happened to Indian youth before and after independence? Who are the youth which participate in politics, why do they participate, how do they participate are some of the questions asked.

A major <sup>Social</sup> dimension of the youth in India is obviously the problem of educated unemployed. Here the sociological, psychological and the economic bases of unemployment have been analyzed. This chapter is of particular relevance because in rapidly changing societies like "India anticipatory socialization" into a vocation occurs more frequently, as a practice of a profession becomes a major avenue to social status. The absence of suitable role models in society for the youth amounts to a blockage of the path towards a desirable future, leading to their frustration.

The conclusion is by the way of a summary of the underlying essence and theme of the dissertation. It also suggests further areas of research.

Chapter II

YOUTH, CHANGE AND THE PROCESSES OF  
SOCIALIZATION

## Chapter II

### YOUTH, CHANGE AND THE PROCESSES OF SOCIALIZATION

The three main vehicles of the socialization process which have a pervasive influence on urban youth are namely: (a) family, (b) religion, (c) educational institutions. The question here is how far changes due to the processes of industrialization and urbanization have affected these crucial institutions of socialization.

#### Family

The two relevant factors which can be raised in relation to the above statements are (1) Is the Indian family changing under the forces of urbanization? (2) If so, what are the changes which have occurred and how have these changes affected the urban youth?

To answer the first question certain consideration as regards the quality of change has to be taken into account. Various authors like Shah,<sup>1</sup> Gould,<sup>2</sup> Madan<sup>3</sup> have ventured into the above discussions as have many others. The tendency of these discussions is to question the earlier conclusion that the joint family is breaking down and is being replaced by the Nuclear family. This belief about the traditional Indian family subsumes a set of some other beliefs or assumptions. These

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1 A.M. Shah, Household Dimensions.

2 Milton Singer, North Indian Family and Change in When a Great Tradition Modernizes.

3 T.N. Madan, Kashmiri Pandits.

assumptions are (a) Traditional India was village India and the Joint family was therefore a characteristic of village India. (b) contrariwise urban areas are new and characterized by the elementary family. (c) urbanization therefore leads to disintegration of the joint family. Census data previously used to support such conclusions are not being disqualified on grounds that such data gave only information about household size and unreliable index of family type. The entire question of rural-urban distribution of joint and nuclear family is being reconsidered in the Census.

These reconsiderations and the new studies based on them offer a considerable challenge to the thesis of a linear transformation of the Joint family into the nuclear family under the influence of urbanization. They show for example that large joint families are more prevalent in urban than in rural areas<sup>4</sup> and vary in prevalence with region and caste<sup>5</sup> and that nuclear households are as prevalent in villages as in cities. Furthermore the concept of the developmental cycle explains that nuclear

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4 A.M. Shah's article in Economic and Political Weekly indicates that the early 19th century data show that there was a higher proportion of more Sanskritized castes in towns than in villages. The bulk of the village population consisted of lower and less Sanskritized castes. Since the Sanskritized castes were more under the influence of the principle of patri-kin and their wives, it followed that there was a higher degree of observance of the principle of joint family in towns than in villages.

5 Adrian Mayer in 'Caste in Central India' states that Jointness of the family was not defined as living under the same roof, but by the terminological distinction between 'kutumb' and Bhai Bhand, and the patterns of interpersonal relationship between kin.

households in both villages and cities may with the changing domestic cycles of marriage and birth grow into joint households, and decline with separations and deaths into nuclear households again.<sup>6</sup>

The 'no change' change critics have introduced greater sophistication into the problem but they have yet to come to grips with the problem of change.

The Indian joint family as a system is characterized by different components kinship terminology, the categories of relatives designated by terminology and the rules of marriage descent, inheritance and authority. The Indian joint family is usually characterized in terms of these components as follows. It is patrilineal in descent, patrilocal in residence, patripotestal in authority and has an inheritance rule that divides family property equally among adult males, lineally related. But there are significant variations in each of these components in different regions, castes and tribes and religious groups.

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- a. Gould points out the three stages in the North Indian domestic group. Stage one is when daughters-in-law are held by the patriarch; stage two is when the patriarch dies and family becomes what is called a fraternal joint family which is unstable; stage three when conflict comes to a head, between the sons, and the property gets divided, leading to the establishment of the nuclear family.
  - b. A.M. Shah in 'Household Dimensions also shows that the simplest one member to most complex multi-member types are 'not discrete and haphazard but interrelated in a developmental process'. The households are affected by three major factors (a) demographic factors, (b) explicitly stated norms regarding the residence of various relatives in the household, and (c) patterns of inter-personal relationships in a household which is largely dependent on norms or codes of conduct attached to kinship.

The problem of change of the family in the urban context can be approached from two ways:

(1) Synchronically - by investigating the conditions of equilibrium of the social system in terms of mutual adjustments of the component parts so as to maintain and restore the structural type or (2) Diachronically - by which leads to change in the type. R. Brown called the first type of change social physiology and second structural change. The change in Indian family can be approached synchronically, i.e. changes have occurred by the way of mutual adjustments; it is the roles within the overall structure which have changed. Diachronically, the Indian family has not changed, i.e. the Indian family has not changed its type; it still maintains its overall structural pattern.

In developing societies like India, modernization in both cultural and structural forms is exogenous to the system and constitutes a phenomena of historical growth, mostly through colonial confrontations. Under these circumstances there is often a lag between the cultural and social structural forms of modernizing influences in these societies. The equations of modernization which proved to be reliable with respect to the Western society fail to represent the socio-cultural processes of the new nations. Apparently, modern social structures in these societies, in terms of functions might only partially serve the goals of modernization, as in parts they might be

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7      Joint property is considered the most important criteria of jointness by authors like Bailey in his book entitled Caste and the Economic Frontier.



reinforcing traditional role-structures and forms of social obligations.

Thus the conclusion reached is that there is relative scope of organization of role in such a manner which reinforce the process modernization without basically altering the essential nature of the functions they perform. Rudolph and Rudolph suggest that social change and the new realities it creates arise not only from the impact of objective exogenous or revolutionary forces on established systems but also from alternative potentialities within such systems. For example, comparative analysis of stratification studies show caste system as a rigidly ascribed and closed status group whose hierarchy is legitimized by a comprehensive sacred ideology which blocks social mobility and change. Such a argument is fallacious. Now one has begun to realize that novel economic opportunities often enabled alien or subordinate castes to establish themselves within the traditional system. Therefore youth has to be seen against a background of transitional society where tradition and modernity exist side by side in a dialectical relationship. For instance, the family in its social relationships involving a basic set of family roles does not change, but many of the functions which were traditionally performed by the family are

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8      The Modernity of Tradition.

9      Marxist theory stresses this insight when it emphasizes the creative possibilities of historical contradiction. Ideal-typical or nueristic analyses of modernity and tradition are likely to miss these creative possibilities and place tradition and modernity in a dichotomous rather than a dialectical relationship.

radically reduced in a modernized society.

Thus nobody can deny that changes in the family have not occurred due to modernization, but what is pertinent is the kind of change. Further this kind of change which causes a lack of fitness between the cultural and structural processes of modernization (as mentioned earlier) causes its own problems and conflicts stresses peculiar to a transitional society like India.

What then are these changes which have occurred and caused and introduced certain seeds of strain and conflict amongst the urban youth.

The new urbanism was evident in the rapid growth of cities at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the last decade the rate of urbanization has been higher than many western countries. Urbanization represents a change from the old way of agricultural life. It involves not merely a concentration of large populations in small areas, but a heterogeneous population, where contacts tend to be secondary and vertical and greater mobility is possible.

One of the crucial aspects of the family resides in the hierarchy of power and control. In traditional joint family the elder was the pinnacle of power and was helped by his brothers and his eldest son to exercise authority but in the nuclear family one individual must bear the heavy burden of responsibilities alone which makes his dealing with the young people in the family more difficult. Much of the present day conflict between parents and youth is due to this. Besides the elders who

occupied positions of formality before cannot keep pace with the dynamic changing society in the context of skills experience, leading to a decline in the position of elders. However on the whole there is not yet evidence, among urban educated families, that even when the younger generation live as separate units, the control of the elders completely disappears. There is evidence however that the elder generation no longer dominates the younger to the same degree and in the same way as before.

Transition from joint to nuclear families also alters the nature of affection and sentiments in inter-personal relationship of family members. Love for one's own children, affective bonds between husband and wife become more particularized and become intense. Bonds uniting collateral relatives tend to be weakened, thus altering the very structure of joint families. Sociologically this change is the result of higher education and occupational diversification. The importance of the latter two factors as sources of change can be reinforced by citing the example given by Gore who studied <sup>the</sup> Aggarwal family. The Aggarwal family resides in a urban area and is still a joint family. This is mainly because the Aggarwals follow their traditional occupation, a occupation which absorbs many hands. All brothers have a common interest, besides women are excluded from occupation. This segregation make possible the operation of traditional norms to govern family life. Besides traditional occupation does not entail a lengthy formal education. The lack of education may be a major factor in insulating the Aggarwal community from meaningful contact with the new modernized outlook which is gaining

acceptance in the educated urban middle class.

Furthermore occupational diversification creates changing patterns of relationship. The absence of the worker from home and family during occupations has the consequence of mother centred socialization of the young; a greater distance between father and son is introduced. Furthermore, a reeducation occurs in the intra-family interaction, centred upon common purposeful goals.

Another problem faced by young men and women is the need to be independent on certain issues, away from parental control. It is significant that men interviewed had more conflict with their parents in Nuclear than in Joint families. This often confronts one in the area of marriage. Many urban families in spite of education do not allow their daughters and sons to choose their own husbands. They are propagators of the arranged marriage system which restricts individual choice. However change is taking place. Sylvia Vatuk in 'Hindu Family in Urban Setting' indicates that increased freedom of marital chance is indicated by small but rising numbers.

The above analysis points out that urban Indian family will experience a change in certain factors. In other aspects it will be able to adjust to roles in a new urban milieu. This capacity to adjust to new forces has not thrown 'Youth asunder' as it were in the West. Family bonds and patterns play a stabilizing role in the lives of the Indian Youth. The modern educated youngs are to a great extent dependent on their parents, economically and emotionally forging the already existing

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structure of relationships. For example, <sup>in mate</sup> innate selection the principle of personal choice is being increasingly reconciled with parents approval; the young woman's freedom in the middle class homes to work outside in offices operate to a extent within the traditional framework of the husband's approval. With regard to inter-household family relationships, there is ample evidence to conclude that even those urban people who subscribe to the ideal of a simple and independent household are deeply embedded in such relationships. In fact frequently young men set up separate households in order to avoid tension of joint living and strengthen inter-household ties.<sup>10</sup> Further Harold Gould asserts that work may be detached from its caste contexts without necessarily destroying the hold of caste on individual lives. Often even for the urban educated youth caste has become the basis of his self-hood and social identity. These features of caste are rooted in and sustained by the kin group and the local community.<sup>11</sup>

Thus change in the structure and function of the joint family in India has followed a reconciliatory pattern. Such reconciliations are however not without tension, which is an

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10 A.M. Shah, op. cit.

11 Similar examples have been offered by Milton Singer in his study of Industrial Leaders of Madras who manage to lead a productive life by compartmentalization of tradition (Indian) and modern (Western). M.N. Srinivas in Caste in Modern India finds that westernized members of the upper classes, even if they have given up dietary restrictions and marry out of caste and region, adhere to caste attitudes in surprising contexts.

inalienable aspect of social change, more so in a transitional milieu as mentioned before.

### Religion

One of the most important dimensions of the socialization process is religion. The question of relationship between religion and world maintenance is a much discussed theory. The sociology of religion has been able to show, in numerous instances, the intimate relationship between religion and social solidarity. Hence Durkheim asks in his Elementary Forms of Religious Life: how can reintegration of the individual into the collectively be effected? According to Durkheim, modern society is characterized by social differentiation, organic solidarity, density of population, intensity of communications and struggle for survival. Social differentiation, a phenomenon characteristic of modern societies, is the formative condition of individual liberty. Only in a society where the collective consciousness has lost part of its over-powering rigidity can the individual enjoy a certain autonomy of judgement and action. In this individual society, the major problem is to maintain that minimum of collective consciousness without which organic solidarity would lead to social disintegration. One of important institutions which could lead to social integration is religion.

In the case of religion the sociological explanation has a two-fold quality. On the one hand, it is the collective exaltation caused by the gathering of individuals, in the same place which gives rise to the religious phenomenon and inspires a sense of sacred. On the other it is the society itself which the

individuals worship without knowing it. This is to a large extent prevalent in primitive societies where individuals differ from one another as little as possible. The individuals, the members of the same collectivity resemble each other because they feel the same emotions, cherish the same values and hold the same things sacred. In primitive societies not only does the collective consciousness embrace the greater part of the individual existence, but the sentiments experienced in common have an extreme violence which is manifested in the severity of punishment inflicted on those who violate the prohibitions. The stronger the collective consciousness, the livelier the indignation against crime, that is, against the violation of the social imperatives. Finally, the collective consciousness is also particularized. Each of the acts of social existence, especially religious rites, is characterized by an extreme precision. It is the details of what must be done and what must be thought which are imposed by the collective consciousness.

On the other hand, Durkheim believes, he sees in organic solidarity a reduction of the sphere of existence embraced by the collective consciousness, a weakening of collective reactions against violation of prohibitions and above all a greater margin or the individual interpretation of social imperatives.

In such a situation there occurs a separation from society, which inflicts psychological tensions upon the individuals. These tensions are grounded in the root anthropological fact of sociality. The fundamental process of socialization and social control seeks to contain individuals within groups, to

act according to the given normative conditions. This is done through what Berger calls 'legitimation'. By legitimation is meant socially objectivated knowledge that serves to explain and justify the social order. Put differently legitimations are answers to any questions about the 'why' of institutional arrangement. They are cognitive and normative in character. They do not only tell people what they ought to be but 'what is'. For example, the very fact of incest taboo is legitimizing. The essential purpose of all forms of legitimation may thus be described as reality maintenance, both on the objective and subjective levels. Religion has been historically the most widespread and effective instrumentality of legitimation. Religion legitimates so effectively because it relates the precious reality constructions of empirical societies with ultimate reality. The realities of the social world are grounded in the "sacred", which by definition is beyond the contingencies of human meaning and human activity.

( A society like India which is moving faster towards industrialization religion is slowly becoming peripheral for the urban educated youth. It has partially lost its function of social constraint and are no longer capable of specifying to the extent it did before the obligations or rules which man should obey in his secular life. With an increase in the process of secularization, the various spheres of social life which were formerly guided by religiously ordained norms were exempted from its hold and are increasingly governed by norms which tend to be rational or hedonistic or both. According to Durkheim,



modern religions are no longer the schools of discipline to the degree they were in the past. The latter can be seen in terms of the young in India who as has been stated earlier are caught in a conflict of values in a cultural crisis, i.e., in the emergence of a sector of the youth population, which have a mobile urban way of living, who find their fundamental values, aspirations and character structure in sharp conflict with the values and practice of the past. This has largely been the result of secularization, which came about not only with colonial contact, but was propagated by the leaders after Independence. The Indian National Congress which came into power as a political party under the leadership of Nehru consistently advocated the need for India becoming a secular state. It was propagated that the state must be neutral to religious goals and should not levy taxes for religious purposes or encourage religious teachings in educational institutions. However, despite the claims made by the state as regards religious neutrality, the state has intervened in religious matters. In the political sphere too, many political parties and groups have continued to voice a communal point of view. Despite these difficulties, secularism has been accepted widely as a national policy in India. After Independence, many legislations regarding reforms in customs of marriages, untouchability have been brought forth. This is explained by the emergence of an enlightened elite in the Hindu society with a rational commitment to rationalism. The traditional parochial and particularistic identities represented by caste and kinship have moved towards a more universalistic

framework for the educated youth. Youth is confronted with a wider variety of 'reality defining agencies that compete for his allegiance or at least attention, but none of which is in a position to coerce him into allegiance. Put differently, secularization has resulted in a widespread weakening of the plausibility of religious norms. This is manifested on the level of consciousness of the youth (subjective secularization) and has its correlate on the social structural level (objective secularization). Mass communication, greater exposure to media, higher education and the questioning spirit etc. have caused the youth to be uncertain about religious matters.

However this is not to state that where the urban educated youth is concerned, religious beliefs, norms and values do not play any part at all in the lives of the young. It would be inaccurate to apply western concepts of secular urban mass culture in interpreting change in religion. There are indeed secularizing tendencies, but they have not yet cut off urban culture from the traditional matrix of sacred culture. For example, according to Milton Singer, "the secularizing tendencies were seen in the general difference that existed between urban cultural events, and the more narrowing religious performances in the home or temple was the greater freedom from caste or sect identification. Neither performer, performance, nor place of performance was identified with any particular caste, sect or religious community. Frequently all that was required for admission to public performances was a contribution or entry free. Thus there occurred a 'democratization' of religious

culture, a 'deritualization' of religious culture. This is visible and its influence manifests itself in religious festivals and caste rituals and ceremonies like marriage, births and death. Thus secularization norms instead of replacing religious norms are intertwined in a peculiar synthesis found in transitional societies. Its gradual 'replacement' by more advanced and universalistic group - identities would take place only through a greater advancement in change in Indian society.

### Education: Theoretical Perspective

Before going into the relationship between youth education and modernization it is necessary to throw light, even if briefly, on the nature of relationship between education and socialization. Some of the major theoretical approaches in regard to conceptualization of the process of socialization are (1) behaviouristic (mechanistic) - interactionist, (2) symbolic subjectivistic, and (3) symbolic interactionistic. The behaviouristic theory of socialization which focusses only upon the behavioural consequences of socialization, apart from its other weakness, is inadequate for an analysis of this process in relation to education (since the very co-determinance between education and socialization lies in the context of the inter-play of various socio-cultural forces which sustain it through growth and change). Symbolic subjective theory of socialization is rooted in the interpretive tradition<sup>12</sup> of sociology. However, it neglects the reality of the external social structure and the

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12 One of the main exponents of interpretive tradition being Max Weber.

mode of its interaction with the individual self as an objective process. Therefore, it neglects the whole institutional matrix which goes to explain the nature of relationship between socialization and education.

The symbolic interactionist theory of socialization, however, is in keeping with the essence of the problem i.e., in the way it has been dealt with in this dissertation. This is so because the symbolic interactionist theory of socialization focuses upon the reciprocal interaction between the individual and the social situation, leading to internalization of values and skills of the society in the personality system. It gives due weightage both to the individual organism and social institutions and culture.

Before the British came, religion, caste and the extended family in India had been the chief socio-cultural institutions which kept the traditional processes of socialization and education going. Here reference groups and the accompanying process of 'anticipatory socialization'<sup>14</sup> became important. In one sense,

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13 The modern symbolic interactionist theories of Parsons, Merton, Linton and others have viewed the process of socialization in terms of individual i.e., in terms of the need component as the bases of the system of personality as well as culture and society for e.g. Parsons relates with Gratification deprivation.

14 Ref. Whiting, J.W.H. Child, Irvin L. (1953), Child Training and Personality: A Cross Cultural Study, Yale University Press, p. 64. According to this theory, the phenomenon of group membership is a relative one and a matter of degree since there exist constant social psychological push and pull factors in the system of members' aspirations creating new commitments. The new role structures and norms are constantly accepted or converted according to Reference groups, with whom an individual might identify his social goals, ideologies and cultural norms.

the literate were a closed group who imparted education to a select group. They served as the ideals of highest learning, social status and honour and they were also the traditional power-elite. The possibilities of attaining membership of this group were not only empirically closed (due to wider gap in socio-economic status etc.) but also closed by the norms of culture and religion. The caste system from this point of view functioned as the key installation in the framework of which not only did the process of differential socialization take place, but the moral and cultural reinforcements were also provided for such processes of socialization and education.

The categorical structure of modern education, especially as it is being imparted at higher levels, is in spirit essentially modernizing. Its value structure is casual, utilitarian and probalistic. The world view on which its foundations has been laid is liberal. This is especially witnessed in the case of college and university education modelled on patterns introduced by the British.

With the increase in Industrialization, primary socialization remains in the family but the secondary socialization is differentiated from its sphere of influence and takes place in group situation other than the family. The dominant values-orientation are those of universalism, specificity, achievement orientation, affective neutrality, etc. Thus not only are roles differentiated but the value content of roles undergoes changes. High mobility with strong achievement orientation increases the marginality of membership in various groups and adds to the

incidence of anticipatory socialization.

Now the important question to ask is that with the change introduced in the educational sphere, Is education by itself be a basis of socialization for modernization of youth? In effect, how much of the modern values are really being internalized by the college graduates is often a matter of speculation.

A few studies which have been undertaken to find out this phenomenon, reveal that education in India creates many 'transitional types' of youth, in between traditional and modern world view rather than a totally modernized youth structure. The above is due to a number of factors. Contemporary education, which is an agent of modernization in various forms is Western in origin. The foundation of modern education in India was established by the British. Its historical landmarks are Macaulay's policy of 1835 to promote European learning through English. In cultural content contemporary education was different from the traditional education whose content was esoteric and metaphysical. The roles both of the teachers and the students were qualitative, ascriptive. Modern education has a fundamentally different orientation and organization. Its content was liberal and it had a scientific world view. An important element in this education was its emphasis on contemporaneity and humanistic evaluation of social, political and historical issues. Its sociological result was a disenchantment with traditional education, whose scriptural and mythological content had an obsessive degree of orientation towards the past. The categorical structure of the new education

was oriented to the present and future.

However after Independence apart from the emphasis on the works of Western thinkers and literateurs a current of cultural introspection and new look on traditional literature was simultaneously going on in India. Its symbols were drawn from the pragmatism of the Vedas, the logical metaphysics of the Upanishads and the philosophy of positive action as contained in the Gita. Leaders like Vivekananda, Tilak, Gokhale, Gandhi and Aurobindo established the foundation of this tradition. A militant nationalist culture flourished in Bengal, Punjab, Maharashtra and some other parts of India. This cultural process served to counter-balance the effect of Western education and its literacy and cognitive content. Therefore some elements of conflict between tradition and modernity can persistently be discerned in the functioning and administration of the educational system in India. Whereas modernization has in some forms been welcomed, there has also been a conscious effort to preserve traditional values. Thus formal higher education in India, being far removed from the ethos of Indian culture and the needs of society, did not lead to integrated socialization. This value conflict and aspiration tension was especially visible at the university level of education.

This has a very logical explanation. Modernization in all traditional cultures goes along with the process of a new identity consciousness. Since the former is "other-directed" process, the latter must necessarily be "inner-directed". Hence this dilemma in the process of socialization and education has been explained by

Cormack as a movement in the character of Indian students from "tradition directed" type (Reizman's concept) emerging from "security of family" suddenly to the other directed type, which seeks "security in bureaucracy", without passing through the intervening inner-directed stage, which is based on "security in Self".<sup>17</sup> A study conducted by the writer of this paper also indicates that the modern India students' commitment to democratic values which necessitates a liberal value system and a high sense of freedom and responsibility is very weak and wavering.<sup>18</sup> Hence identity consciousness finds its basic symbolic structure with past tradition. Thus the impact of modernization on youth emerges as a queer blend of modern psychology of outer directedness and the commitment to tradition as revealed by inner-directed search for national symbols. Education in the highly industrialized societies of the West is integrated with social structural processes and the inconsistency between socialization and education, arising out of the lag in growth of adaptive structures is minimal. The family being predominantly nuclear and neolocal, and there being a high emphasis on 'independence training of the child right from the beginning, a right foundation for the democratic liberal socialization is assured. In India where the family structure still remains an

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17 . Cormack Margaret (1960), She Who Rides a Peacock, Indian Students and Social Change, Asia Publishing House, p. 232.

18 Yogindra Singh, "Cultural Integration and Changing Values", Sociological Bulletin, vol. XII, no. 2, September 1964, p. 61.



extended type or contains degrees of jointness,<sup>19</sup> the lag between primary socialization and education is bound to exist for a long time. However, it does not mean that functional integration is not taking place. In fact there are trends in modern education in India which reveal a strain towards consistency in regard to the needs of society. Education is being valued more and more for utilitarian reasons, i.e., for acquisition of scientific skills and lucrative job opportunities. Consequently there is a heavy rush for medical, engineering and scientific disciplines. Will authoritarian socialization of Indian youth be a hurdle in such training and education? In all probability, the answer to this would be in the negative, firstly, because technological training to a great extent involves mastering of skills rather than of values which is the case in the humanities; secondly, because the self-selectivity of such courses is still in favour of the upper and middle class families where processes of primary socialization are generally liberal and adequate anticipatory socialization create motivational orientation functional to such training and education. In the case of humanities and social sciences the conflict of norms between socialization and education is probable. This is so because the selectivity of higher courses in social sciences and humanities in Indian universities is negative, often a last resort for those who could not do better. Furthermore since the world view of the social science is consensual, liberal and humanistic, the authoritarian base of

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19 I.P. Desai (1964), Some Aspects of Family in Mahuwa. Sections IV and VI, Asia.

socialization which is visible in Indian family might endanger a severe conflict at this stage.

## Chapter III

### PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION

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### PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION

A brief insight into the theoretical perspective of alienation is necessary before one examines its empirical relevance in terms of urban educated youth in India.

Before one ventures into the above arguments however one has to keep in mind, the general line of argument being focused upon in this dissertation. The chief contention being that of Westernization which led to an increase in the pace of urbanization and industrialization. The latter however did not cause a total breakdown in the traditional structure. The result was a 'transitional milieu'. It is against this transitional background that one views <sup>the Social and Psychological problem of</sup> youth and alienation.

#### Theoretical Perspective

When people reflect on the problems of contemporary society, one of the ideas that comes up frequently is "alienation". Yet in many discussions, "alienation" is used primarily as a vague image to suggest a great variety of attitudes, values and behaviours, instead of in clear and specific ways that would increase meaningful communication. The resulting confusion about its meaning has been so great that several writers have suggested that the concept be abandoned altogether. But the peculiar attraction it exerts for intellectuals, students and social critics, indicates that the idea of 'alienation' will not easily or quickly give up its prominent position in contemporary thought. To diminish some of the ambiguity surrounding it, a number of scholars have recently attempted at clarifying and

specifying the use of the term.

These efforts suggest two separate axes for analysis of an attitude of alienation. One focuses on the referent or object of alienation. From what is the individual alienated? Objects of referents may include for example, inter-personal relations, the political system, the job or workplace, the university, or other social institutions or organizations.

Second, we may ask what is intended to be communicated when we say that an individual is 'alienated'.<sup>1</sup> The focus here is on the meaning of alienation. What, specifically is the nature of the relationship between the individual and the object or referent of the alienated attitude? The quality of this relationship defines the sense in which the individual feels alienated. For example, an individual may feel that he cannot make important decisions (at his job or in politics) or that the particular activities in which he is required to engage do not reflect his true needs and potential. To be concise these attitudes for example might be described as a sense of powerlessness, normlessness and meaninglessness. These are some of the dimensions of Alienation. Yet, since any given individual described as "alienated" may not be so in all these different ways, it is important to specify the aspect of alienation which is meant. Thus we can imagine a variety of referents of alienation. Both these specifications need to be made in order to describe adequately an attitude of alienation.

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1        Ada Finifter, Alienation.

2        Melvin Seeman, Dimensions of Alienation.

The concept of alienation as propounded by Emile Durkheim has a relevance to our understanding of urban youth in India.

The selection of Emile Durkheim is from his study: Suicide in which he derives a theory of human needs and aspirations, to explain variations in suicide rates among different social groups and at different times. One of the types of suicide, which Durkheim posits in this theory is 'anomic suicide'. Durkheim defines a breakdown of norms as a state of social 'anomie'. The social conditions become manifest at the individual level as uncertainty in action and belief. If the individual is not able to cope with the anxiety produced by this uncertainty, he may be driven to take his life. Thus, Durkheim uses this theory to explain, the higher rates of suicide observed in times of both sudden economic depression and sudden prosperity, following the death of a spouse, and among divorced rather than married or single people. In each of these cases, there is a relatively abrupt loss of normative regulation. Normlessness, an important variant of the alienation theme is derived from Durkheim's description of 'anomie'.<sup>3</sup> As noted above in the traditional usage, 'anomie' denotes a situation in which the social norms regulating the individual conduct have broken down or are no longer effective as rules for behaviour.

According to Merton 'anomie' is the sociological term in which common values have been submerged in the welter of

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3 Durkheim's concept of anomie has been extended to the political realm by De Grazia. In this analysis De Grazia argues that political association, mass movements are responses to seek political community to overcome disintegration.

private interests seeking satisfaction by virtually any effective means. Drawn from a highly competitive, segmented urban society, the persons live in a climate of reciprocal distrust which, to say the least, is not conducive to stable human relationships. Thus, normlessness can and often does result in powerlessness, isolation and meanginglessness. The specific dimension of powerlessness is not a construct that necessarily implies overall personality styles, intellectual capacities or generalized withdrawal. Rather it refers to the expectancy or probability held by the individual that his own behaviour cannot determined the occurrence of the outcomes or reinforcement he seeks. Isolation and Meanginglessness are based on competing value systems and in a need for rationality and comprehensibility.

Normlessness is a result of the transitional urban milieu. Many psychologists and sociologists have felt that the Indian socio-cultural milieu is in transition. The accepted value systems and identification patterns are in a flux which result in considerable confusion for the young. It is because the traditional values and beliefs do not have as much efficacy as in the past and the old values which have lost their former vigour and meaning have not been replaced by new values. Erikson has said, "There are periods in history, which are relative identity vacuums and in which three forms of human apprehensions aggravate each other, fears aroused by discovery and inventions (including weapon) which radically expand and change the whole world image, anxieties aggravated by the decay of institutions which has been the historical anchor of an existing ideology,

and the dread of an existential vacuum devoid of a spiritual meaning".

Empirically defined, "normlessness" should thus account for the objective social conditions existing in urban Indian society leading to the subjective feeling of "alienation".<sup>4</sup>

Thus when studying alienation what is needed is a socio-psychological approach which does not preclude either a sociological or psychological explanation i.e., the individualized elements or the familial personal contents of the actor's life.

#### Objective Social Conditions

Western scholars have briefly adopted five main generic concepts to explain the malaise of the youth.

(a) The shift in family roles

In the context of Western society, the higher rate employment and a general level of affluence have made economic dependency on parents during late adolescence and early youth irrelevant. This has created shifts in the nature of the

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- 4 a. Durkheim has postulated objective conditions in society such as a faster pace of change which results in uncertainty and anxiety in the individual. Similarly Merton speaks about a disjunction between cultural values and socially approved means of achieving these values which will lead to the subjective feeling of alienation.
- b. The distinction between 'subjective' and 'objective' approaches to alienation tends to parallel the distinction between philosophical and empirical analyses of this concept. The philosophical approach is frequently based in the writer's judgement's as to the alienating social conditions and processes while the empirical approach relies almost entirely on the subjective evaluation of attitudinal alienation.



interaction between the parents and their grown-up children. The result is that the economic role is no more the stabilizing source of interaction between the generations. No definite focus for stabilizing the interaction has emerged. Emotional communication for stabilizing the interaction is still vague and is frequently caught up with fears of control for the youth.

(b) Modernization has caused the shift in the nature of work. The shift in the nature of work has removed the back-breaking drudgery of physical effort. Earlier, the very viability of output of effort and its pangs gave the individual a sense of meaning and of having met a challenge. It seems now that man has been driven to the role of a mere coordinator - a role that demands only monotonous effort - and hence he cannot entertain the same feelings of meaning and pride in his work. The youth looking ahead on work as the emancipating force, senses futility.

(c) The next generic concept is that of the "generation gap". The older generation has a strong need to perpetuate its values through the socialization of the younger generation. This urge to socialize the young may vary from culture to culture. In India, one feels that a very strong need to see the historic continuity as a whole at the psychological level persists. Even in the midst of manifest westernization of forms of living, parents expect their children to be guided by traditional values. Parents not only demand continuity of their way of life, but it seems that they also want to relive their frustrations and pleasures through their children. Instances, where a father who

missed achieving a goal himself, pushes his children towards it, are not uncommon. Many parents knowingly or unknowingly, push their children to surpass themselves. However, efforts of the youth to do so tend to make the parents feel powerless and meaningless. As a consequence his success becomes coloured with guilt. In many cases the parents verbally demand excellence but in action they cause more and more inhibition. The result is that the youth instead of finding strength to reach the goal develops dependency and shies away from these goals.

While the primary rubric of the generation gap described earlier seems not only applicable to, but more clearly congruent in the Indian context, the elements of ecological change described above appear viable in the Indian context with certain reservations. It is so because even though the shift in the family roles and shift in the nature of work are occurring, they have not reached a point of total transformation. Whatever change has occurred is more visible and effect the youth in bigger urban cities than smaller ones. The modern Indian bourgeoisie produced a new world of childhood. The structural precondition of this was the separation of the family from productive economic activity that resulted from capitalism and more importantly from the industrial revolution. With the firm establishment of industrialism in modern economies, specially in the urban metropolises, very few youth continued to work in the same place in which they lived with their families. Thus the family became a protective enclave from the harsh realities of economic life. The same enclave, of course, provided the

location for childhood. The bourgeoisie developed an ethos of childhood that placed very great importance on this stage of biography a viewpoint that is particularly expressed in the educational qualifications and aspirations of this class. Thus the lengthening of the educational process and the tendency of more and more occupations to demand very long educational preparation for admission has led to an expanding scope of the biographical state of youth from what was a hundred years ago. This has led to an expanding scope of the biographical stage of youth, from two to three years a hundred years ago to what is now at least a decade for most individuals. But its structural location in modern society almost guarantees that these expectations will be disappointed. It is precisely these people who confront anonymous, impersonal, abstract structures of an up and coming technologized and bureaucratic world.

(d) The fourth generic concept to explain the malaise of the youth is that of the change in the structure of the city under the impact of Industrial urbanization. The organismic unity of the ancient city has vanished and a vast sprawling conglomeration of human habitat has emerged. This has not only fragmented the relationship with the environment but also the stable role relationship of the family culture. A anonymity results due to the very complexity and pervasiveness of the technologized economy which makes social relation more and more opaque and impersonal to the individual. The institutional fabric as a whole tends towards incomprehensibility. Even in the individual's everyday experience, other individuals appear as agents of

forces and collectivities over which he does not have control. The typologies and interpretive schemes by which everyday life is ordered must be used from moment to moment to deal with vastly complicated and constantly changing demands. Once more the result is tension, frustration and in the extreme case, a feeling of alienation. Further the youth has to face many pluralistic structures which often alternate between highly discrepant and contradictory social contexts. The modern Indian youth is tossed between two contexts with little or almost no congruence. There are various ways of identifying these two discrepant roles or cultures. In the experience of the youth these are: the culture of the family versus the culture of the college; the culture of the parents versus the culture of the peers, the culture of the family and peers versus the culture of modern institutions; the culture of 'shoulds' versus the culture of 'aspired thoughts', the culture of passive obedience versus other determined path of life; the culture of the past versus the culture of the future.

Thus on the whole the lives of the urban youth is more mobile than it was for youth before. A world in which everything is in constant motion is a world in which certainties are hard to come by. Social mobility has its correlate in cognitive and normative mobility. What is truth in one context of the individual's social life may be error in another. What was considered right at one stage of the individual's social career becomes wrong in the next. Once more the anomic threat of these constellations is very powerful indeed.

In a situation which is transitional there is a tendency towards normlessness and anomie. Against such a background, the other dimensions of alienation mentioned and defined above are "powerlessness", "meaninglessness" and "isolation".

Powerlessness, meaninglessness and isolation manifest themselves in two kinds of youth: (a) the Radical activist (b) non-radical alienated youth.

The defining characteristic of the "new" activist is his participation in a student demonstration or group activity that concerns itself with some matter of general political, social or ethical principle. Characteristically, the activist feels that some injustice has been done and attempts to 'take a stand', 'demonstrate' or in some fashion express his convictions. The anti-ideological stance of today's activists has been noted by many commentators. The distrust of formal ideologies (rightist-centrist and leftist) makes it difficult to pinpoint the positive social and political values of the student protests. For example, the minority who are the New Left on the campus have rejected familialism and careerism and have become politically alienated. Alienation here however does not mean a rejection of society, but some of its values. For instance the youth, may reject familialism and careerism, but at the same time he or she may be committed to certain other goals which they feel are crucial to Indian life. For example they might show their allegiance to values like equal opportunity, participation, decision-making, justice, etc.

In contrast to the politically optimistic, active and

socially concerned protester, the non-radical alienated student is far too pessimistic and feels that his own behaviour cannot determine the occurrence of the outcomes or reinforcement he seeks' (Definition of Powerlessness). He therefore does not demonstrate his disapproval in any organized way. His demonstration of dissent are private: through non-conformity of behaviour, ideology, and dress, through personal experimentation and above all through efforts to intensify his own subjective experience, he shows his disinterest and distaste in politics and society. The activist attempts to change the world around him, but the alienated student is convinced that meaningful change of the social and political world is impossible instead he considers 'dropping out' the real option. Very often the alienated student though feeling frustrated and tormented continues to be academically and occupationally successful. These alienated students tend to be drawn from the same general social strata and colleges as protesters. But psychologically and ideologically, their backgrounds are often very different. Alienated students are more likely to be disturbed psychologically, and although they are often highly talented and artistically gifted, they are less committed to academic values and intellectual achievement than are protesters. Furthermore such students usually find it psychologically and ideologically impossible to take part in organized group activities for any length of time, particularly when they are expected to assume responsibilities for leadership. Thus from the given definition of Powerlessness it is gathered that "political alienation" need not necessarily point to a

apathetic attitude to society, on the contrary it may imply a greater participation in student leadership and demonstration or group activity that concerns itself with some matter of general, social or ethical principle. The latter is the case of the "radical youth". In the case of Non-Radical youth a feeling of Powerlessness converges closely with a feeling of meaninglessness and isolation. Therefore in a overall perspective one can visualize a interdependence between the various dimensions of Alienation, that of Powerlessness, Normlessness, Isolation and Meaninglessness.

Interestingly enough this combination of personal and social factors in rebellion is brought to its sharpest focus in the case of the much maligned student leader.

The stereotype of an Indian student leader usually consists of an academically poor student, much older than his fellow students, who with the active or covert support of political party, spends most of his time in organizing agitations, mostly violent, on the most trivial of issues. However, certain social scientists<sup>5</sup> hold a contrary view and feel that at the present moment we not know enough about the way change takes place in social institutions to condemn student indiscipline completely.

A few Indian sociologists and psychologists<sup>6</sup> have attempted

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5 Joseph Di Bona - The Indian student leader offers a image of energy and determination and organizational skill; and his efforts to alter the basic structure has been unnecessarily condemned. We have to delve deeper into the superficial stereotype of the student leader to find out the relationship between youth and social institutions.

6 Sudhir Kakar, Pulin K. Garg and Indira Parikh, op. cit.

case histories of students and student leaders, to clarify some of the questions posed by rebellious youth.

Pulin K. Garg and Indira Parikh have selected 20 representative cases selected out of a sample of 300 youth who underwent intensive interviewing and registered for post-graduate course,<sup>7</sup> 'career roles and identity. In their book, the authors have taken certain case studies which deal with youth who have experienced a sense of meaningless and isolation. Similarly<sup>8</sup> and kamala chowdhury Sudhir Kakar has contributed case studies which throw light on the dimension of powerlessness in youth, as in the case of the student leaders.

Most of these studies view alienation in two different though related contexts. One, which takes into account the objective social conditions which I have already accounted for; and two, they consider the life histories of the students leaders in the subjective level, the personal context. For example, Kakar postulates the case history of Rajan who was the ninth and the last child of his parents. Of the other eight children only two elder brothers had survived their infancy. Rajan's father was a minor government official earning Rs.150 per month. His parents pleased at Rajan's early successes, looked toward Rajan as one who would rise above them and have great success.... "There was a parental pressure for success on me, especially since my brothers had been failures". Rajan however shows an

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7 Identity and Profiles. Pulin Garg and Indira Parikh.

8 Conflict and Choice. Dr. Kakar and kamala chowdhury



uncertainty as to the strength of his parents' love for him. Rajan talks of his father as being honest and good but as one who still failed as a father because of the absence of two components. These according to Parsons are: (a) authority which breaks up the boy's dependency on his mother, (b) model for the boy's assumption of masculine roles. Thus Rajan felt two contradictory emotions for his father: love and hostility. The feeling of hostility made Rajan feel guilty. There could not possibly be any confrontation with his father. According to Kakar a growing up boy needs confrontation with his father. If this is lacking at the personal plane, it might be sought at the social plane. May be in the agitation. Here Kakar, exemplifies that a simple displacement of private emotions into public affairs is not sought. What is sought is the personal and social aspects in the theme of student agitation. The stage of life at which the agitation took place is also important. Rajan felt he had an aptitude for the Arts but opted for science due to parental pressure. He hated it and the result was his first failure in examination which caused him to enter into an crisis a period full of anxiety and frustration. Rajan spent a year at home recovering and later, returned to the college to finish his studies. It was at this point that he played a leading part in the student agitation. Perhaps we can infer from this study that Rajan's agitational activity was one of the choices which were present before him. Another choice was that he could have withdrawn into isolation.

Kakar suggests that the agitation was a continuation of self-therapy, e.g., combining a purposeful activity towards clear goals with his leadership role which served as a reassurance of the old sense of superiority, the agitation helped in restoring Rajan's fragmented personality.

Another study by Garg is that of a boy called 'kirtikar' who belongs to a middle class family and who lost his mother early. This event provided the basic setting for his life pattern to emerge. In short lack of money and perceptible differences in his setting as compared to his peers, drove Kirtikar to experience a sense of burden. He found it difficult to come close to people. His journey through the educational system only brought deterioration in performance and left him, isolated and anxious. He is still in search of meaning of life.

In conclusion, one can say that in Indian cultural milieu two distinct and sometimes competing patterns of culture have operated for a long time. One is the Agrarian ethos of traditional India. This ethos has created a culture which is role-oriented and role-anchored. It is prescriptive in nature and its processes required that the individual must deny the self and act within the given framework of actions, feelings and thoughts. The other ethos flows from the Modern West and is a peculiar admixture of the values of the renaissance and the demands of the technological structures. This ethos has created a culture of self-orientation. It requires that the

individual move forward to create a place for himself and thus emerge in a role of his own making. The parents of the youth coped with these two competing patterns of culture by fragmenting their life-space into two clear-cut sectors. In the sector of social public existence which revolved around the task, the organization and the professional role they acted in the behavioural form of the modern ethos. In the sector of social private world which revolved around the inter-personal relations of home, kinship and community and caste. The parental style of coping with these two competing patterns boomeranged on the youth. He was pulled towards both and caught in a double bind. He had perhaps internalized both the patterns and as such his fragmentation was experienced at the level of the self. This in turn set up intra-psycho conflicts around a number of focal issues. Briefly the areas of dominant conflict are:

(a) Role Orientation vs. Self-Oriented - The conflict between the latter two is the most central. The youth's experience of role-orientation was anchored in obedience, conformity, withholding feelings for the sake of the system; and for others he was supposed to sacrifice his own needs. The self-orientation of the new culture supported by the cognitive systems of new educated and his exposure to the modern west demanded that he exploit all reasonable opportunities for growth, change and innovation.

(b) Closeness vs. Individuation - This conflict centres on closeness, intimacy and dependence on one hand and independence

and individuation on the other. Caught in this conflict, the youth displayed the classical pattern of withdrawal. The youth had either the choice of being a sentimental exploitable and dependent being living by obedience and conformity in involuntary relations and by being an echo in voluntary relations, or he had the choice of being alienated, isolated, self-centred and manipulative. Neither of these choices provided for a sense of well-being. As a result, reality based relationships were rare. The youth ended up living with a restricted and close system.

#### Experienced Growth vs. Validated Growth

The next major conflict of the Indian youth revolved around his experience of his own growth and maturity, and what the system assessed it to be. The youth felt he was grown up and could have a realistic appraisal of himself and the situation, but in the eyes of the significant other, the college and family he was still a 'kid', a passive participant. The youth felt that the college considered his skills good enough, but in the occupational context these very same skills were deemed inadequate. This dissonance obviously caused tension and frustration in his life. On the one hand, the conflict between self-appraisal and the appraisal by the system and on the other hand a conflict within the system itself (i.e., between education and occupation) paved the way for his demotivation, apathy, irresponsibility and scepticism towards the system.

Social Identity vs. Work Identity

The conflict of social identity vs. work identity had a significant impact on the attitudes and orientations of youth as the conflict of role orientation vs. self-orientation. This conflict is anchored in a very basic set of the agrarian ethos and the modern ethos. In the agrarian ethos, work was merely a part of the overall social role. It was not the source of fundamental self-meaning for an individual. He derived his existential meaning by his system of belonging or by his social identity. His social identity, for all practical purposes, was pre-set by the family status and its hierarchical position. Performance at work did not have so much to do with social identity. The social identity very often was acquired through successful social skills and kinship strengths. Actual work competency or excellence in work rarely produced social identity. Success at work was tied to social reward and recognition rather than self-satisfaction. Youth also very often witnessed that in many organizations people with social skills and significant social backgrounds did much better in terms of status. Work only to please others and to gain power rather than for its intrinsic satisfaction - became a general attitude.

In contrast the modern ethos gives self the central meaning through work. Social identity is something which an individual acquires by mobility and social reward of his work. Supposedly merit matters. Youth accepted the cognitive inputs of the modern ethos and to a large degree internalized it.

However, partly because the work was not self-chosen and partly because of the blockage to innovativeness introduced by role-orientation, the youth developed some ambivalent attitudes to work. Work was seen as 'repetitive', 'bore' a 'routine'. Shortcuts' for social success and recognition Leisure and its need also competed with work commitments. The youth was often tempted to indulge in leisure rather than be involved in work. Work became casual.

The above briefly take into account the psychological format, the basis from which Indian youth should be viewed psychologically.

## Chapter IV

### THE POLITICAL DIMENSION

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Political unrest may be defined as unorganized or organized public gathering of students which seek in some collective manner, to make their opposition to or support for some existing situation or policy known to the appropriate authorities.

The above calls for a clarification as regards the subtle conceptual difference between movements and protests. The latter points to the difference in the nature of urban youth agitation in India. This will become clear if one takes into account the two major variables considered in this dissertation, namely, the impact of colonialism and the forces of modernization.

The strongest tradition amongst students in the developing nations like India, especially shortly after Independence struggles has been that of radical nationalism. The University students have played an important role in fostering ideas of nationalism and national unity in largely traditional populations whom they mobilized against colonialism. Increasing nationalism contributed to a rapid politicization of youth. The youth was to a very large extent influenced by the 'nationalist elite' which had grown in spite of British policy. This new class of elites most of whom were westernized were yet committed to the Indian tradition. The new elite was a product of cities rather than



villages. It belonged to the professions (journalists, lawyers, social workers) rather than landed aristocracy which was in most cases hostile to the nationalist movement. The nationalist elite constituted a new middle class which grew in India as a result of English education and the expansion of administration, judiciary and teaching professions. (R. Roy, Keshav Chandra Sen, Vidyasagar, Patel Gandhi). There were a few cases where the elite were wholly enchanted by the West. In most cases their greater exposure to the Western culture and its system of values used to reinforce their feelings of nationalism and nationalist cultural identity. The elites of all three major ideologies, communal-conservative, moderate-liberal and radical-populists, had one fact in common, that is their emphasis on achieving nationalism. Such a consensus on the basis of a relatively well defined and comprehensive "ideology" was also directed to establish a continuity with the past. This was visible by, for example, by Gandhi's constant reinterpretation of tradition in order to legitimize his programme by actively committing both the traditionalist and the modernist segments of the Indian society to the Congress Movement.

Thus the cultural and political goals of the youth as a result of the colonial situation and ideologies of the nationalist leaders was more ideological in nature. This ideological and diffuse character cause student unrest to take on the form of what is called Movement.

Students Movements can be defined as an association of students inspired by aims set forth in a specific ideological doctrine, which is usually though not exclusively political in nature. A student movement may be generated by emotional feelings, often associated with inter-generational conflicts, although it may also be motivated by positive goals. The members of a student movement, moreover, have the conviction that as young intellectuals, they have a special historical mission to achieve; a mission which the older generation have failed to achieve, or to correct imperfections in their environment. A student movement is a combination of emotional response and intellectual conviction. The student movement is almost invariably expressed in organizational terms, although not all student protests are movements.

The achievement of Independence after World War II and the growing force of modernization for many of the developing countries like India brought substantial changes for the nature of student unrest. These changes in youth polity are again reflected in changes which occurred in the elite structure of the country.

After independence, the political elite increasingly succumbed to articulating the values and aspirations of regional group interests.<sup>1</sup> The diffuse ideological orientation of the pre-Independence is found to be increasingly absent in the consciousness of the emerging elite. There came about a

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1       Weiner, Politics of Scarcity.

multi-party system, a process of decentralization occurred. This was the result of (1) the diffusion of political power within the states, (2) an elaborate network of political patronage, (3) a greater complexity in the electoral system. There are many elected bodies in India - the national parliament, the state legislatures, the District, the Block and the Village Panchayat, (4) underlying all this and largely as a result of the operation of adult franchise, considerable shifts have occurred in the social base of politics. Sections of people who had been hitherto denied access to political power have been exposed to a new ideology.

However collectivities such as castes continued to function because of their ability to adapt their traditional function to the 'systems rules' of the new social order. At the same time, it must be remembered that the traditional hold of a primordial group on its members appears to loosen under the pressures of general social change; the political and social relevance of the group, therefore may come to depend increasingly on individual self-identification rather than on societally enforced distinction. This altered the elite-youth relationships, which were now materially dominated by interest groups within and outside political parties. Political factionalism of an academic variety exists everywhere, but in India it seems to have developed into a fine art.<sup>2</sup> The founding of local colleges is often related to politics, and political

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2      Altbach, Student Revolution, p. 23.

leaders are anxious to use colleges and occasionally the university itself as a base for political operations. Furthermore politicians felt that a strong and independent student movement could provide the basis for opposition to their own regimes.

Students themselves were faced with increasing difficulties. With the increasing pressures of modernization leading to expansion of educational facilities, a wider section of the population were able to send their children to colleges and universities. At the same time, the student population became less homogenous and condition within the colleges deteriorated. The problem of educated unemployment also became acute. The mass nationalist student organizations were unable to transform themselves in most cases, while political activism took on new forms. The achievement of independence certainly did not lead to an end of student political activism in India or elsewhere. But change in the nature of activism took place. Ideological movements often dwindled into protests. In place of mass student organizations a number of more local groups, mostly of an ad hoc nature, developed. Agitation tended to be localized focussed on university issues, such as University examinations, elections of student unions etc. rather than on national or broader ideological issues.<sup>3</sup>

Post-independent student movement was not united in its purpose and function. There was a lack of a definitive cause. Both the demands made and the technique employed depended upon the orientation of the particular student group.

The political involvement of youth in India can thus be

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Ibid., p. 15.

seen as phases before and after independence and divided under the sub-heading movements and protests. This is not to state that unrest concerned with longer nationalistic issues did not involve the youth at all after independence or that protests of a minor nature were entirely absent in the pre-independence era. In fact ideological movements, express themselves through local activism, but its purpose and end is wider and broader in scope. However on the whole a generalization as regards a division between movements and protests of the political involvement of youth in India is tenable.

#### Pre-Independence

The earliest evidence of direct political activity on the part of students records an incident in Calcutta during the first decade of the twentieth century. In 1905 students in Eden Hindu Hostel (a dormitory) burned Lord Curzon's effigy and boycotted college examinations as part of their protest against the government's decision to partition the province of Bengal.<sup>4</sup> During the next few years, Bengali students were among the most active participants in the early revolutionary parties. According to a report of the government's sedition committee in 1918, 63 out of 186 arrested in Bengal for revolutionary crimes were students, another 16 were teachers in schools and colleges. Students in Maharashtra and Punjab were also deeply involved in politics. In Maharashtra, Upendra Nath and V.D. Savarkar formed the young India League in 1906, and in the Punjab a group known as 'Hai hava' was formed to mobilize students and youth groups for

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4 M. Muni Reddy, The Student Movement in India, p. 73.

revolutionary activity. In Bengal, the National Council of Education was inaugurated for the purpose of creating national educational institutions.

For about 15 years student activities were directed against British policy in general, but in the early 1920s, student agitation came to be directed against the educational system itself. In September 1920, the Indian National Congress, passed at its annual conference, a famous resolution calling for "gradual withdrawal of boys and girls from schools and colleges and earnest attempt to establish National Institutions".

Agitation for national schools and colleges to replace the government institutions was a major issue in the 1920s. At Aligarh University where Gandhi, Maulana, Shaukat Ali, and his brother Maulana Mohammed Ali were urging students to join the Nationalist struggle, the students demanded that the University disown all connections with government and revise its curriculum on national lines.

Within a few years after the first world war, a number of Indian educational institutions were created. Among them were the Jamia Millia, the Bengal National University, the Gujarat Vidyapath, the Kashi Vidyapath at Benaras and the Visva Bharati at Santiniketan.

Meanwhile, Gandhi and the Ali Brothers toured Northern India, urging boys to withdraw from schools and colleges in order to participate in the national non-co-operation movement. In December 1920, an All-India College Students' Conference was held

at Nagpur under the Presidency of Lala Lajpat Rai, the Congress leader. Rai urged students to participate in the non-co-operation movement, he advised the law students to withdraw from universities at once, the arts students to watch the situation and withdraw if necessary, and the medical and science students to remain in their classes. Similar national student conferences were held throughout the 1920s in close association with the Indian National Congress.<sup>5</sup> In 1928 a student organization was formed in the Punjab under the leadership of Lala Lajpat Rai. The same year students in Calcutta founded the All Bengal Students' Association; its first conference was held under the presidency of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In 1929, the ABSA claimed membership of twenty thousand, published its own journal, was in touch with inter-national student associations, actively demanded that Calcutta University modify the examination system and was preparing to take part in the Satyagraha movement led by Gandhi in 1930.

Although the ABSA was officially banned, student militancy in Bengal continued to increase in the early 1930s. Mammoth province-wide conferences including notable Congress leaders were virtually an annual event. Demonstration of students shouting revolutionary nationalist slogans were popular, and several

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5 These were invariably under the Presidency of eminent Congress leaders such as Lala Lajpat Rai, Sarojini Naidu, C.R. Das. Generally several thousand students attended. They urged students to leave schools and colleges, wear khadi etc.

attempts were made by students to assassinate high government officials in Mysore and Kashmir as well as in British India,<sup>6</sup> nationalist militancy grew throughout this period.

The first national organization of students was founded in 1936, with the establishment of the All-India student Federation. Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the Muslim League leader, was its first President. Within two years, the AISF claimed one thousand affiliated student organizations and fifty thousand members. The new organization directed a host of demands to the seven state governments that were then under Congress control, a reduction in fees, the introduction of free and compulsory education, the elimination of anti-national ideas from text-books, the use of vernacular languages as media of instruction, compulsory recognition of student unions by the Universities, more vocational training, relief for the unemployed, travelling concessions for the students on railway, free military education, compulsory civics, economics and science in secondary education.

Almost immediately after the Students' federation was organized, internal conflicts broke out between Communist and non-Communist students. The Communist section, which was led by K.M. Ashraf and Hiren Mukerjee, was critical of the Indian National Congress leadership and favoured more militant measures against the British than Gandhi's non-violent movement. In December 1940, at the sixth All-India session of the AISF at Nagpur, the Communists and nationalists parted ways. Thereafter, nationalist students supported the 1942 Quit-India Movement against

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6 M. Muni Reddy, The Student Movement in India, pp. 124-5.



the British, while those affiliated to the Communist group supported the war effort. In 1945 the nationalist group, with Congress socialist support, reorganized themselves into the All-India student congress. At the time of independence, therefore, there were two major national student organizations in India, the student Federation and the Student Congress.

In addition several political parties had their own smaller student and youth organizations: the Samajwadi Yawuk Sabha, the Progress Students' Union (Marxist Left Parties), and the Hindu Federation, and the Rashtriya Sevak Sangh. Non-party student activities centered around college student Unions, voluntary student organizations and annually elected officers. Some of these college unions were controlled by politically partisan students but others remained under non-party student control.

#### Post-Independence Students and Youth Movement

After Independence, sentiments grew against the affiliation of student groups with political parties. Congress leaders argued that the achievement of independence removed any need for a national political movement. In 1950, in an effort to depoliticize students, the National Congress leadership took the initiative in creating a national "non-political" federation of the various students unions. The student dissolved itself, urged the student federation to do likewise, and called for the creation of a national union of students.

In the same year that the All-India student congress was dissolved an attempt was made by the National Congress to create

a Youth Congress, to continue the work of youth associated with party. Many state Congress leaders were initially unsympathetic to this idea. Factionalism was already so great in many state Congress bodies that Congress leaders feared that a youth Congress would simply add to their political difficulties. In a few states where Young Congress men had earlier created their own organization, they had run into conflict with the state leadership over the nomination of candidates for legislation in assemblies. This new group did indeed become involved in dissensions inside the Congress Party. Within a year it was dissolved.

Congress then created a youth department under the direct control of the party organization. In 1955, this department was made into a mass membership organization, but remained under the careful supervision of the Parent-body. In 1957, the youth Congress claimed two hundred thousand members, with the largest membership in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. It is organized by district and claims a stronger membership in rural areas than urban. More than half members are above twenty-two that means beyond school and college. In Calcutta the members include lawyers, businessmen, teachers and doctors. Among its major functions are training young people for party work, creating study circles to discuss social issues, sponsoring sports and cultural activities. The bulletin of the organization Youth Congress, publishes regular discussion guides but these are intended to provide information about the Congress point of view rather than elicit discussion. The official attitude seems to be that students and youth must learn about the Congress point of view but not examine it, or disagree if opposition parties have been successful in winning

organized student support at the universities or colleges, Congress has fallen behind by default.

Eager to push students out of politics and anti-developmental work, Congress lost ground to opposition parties, who in the meantime were winning student participation for electioning work against government and authorities. Now however in the past few years, Congress has gained major student support and Youth Congress is a power to reckon with.

In contrast to the Congress, the Communist-dominated All-India Student Federation has been working continuously with students. But because of its opposition to the national movement at that time it lost much of its support. Not until 1951 did this student Federation become more moderate in its attitude towards the democratic process and towards the government. The AISF then took increasing interest in organizing and controlling student unions at schools and colleges. In 1955, the AISF claimed a membership over 100,000 with the largest members in Andhra, West Bengal and Hyderabad. The AISF claims that it goes beyond its membership and that it has played an active part in the various students movements that have swept the country. In West Bengal merger agitation, in the teachers' strike and in the movement against increased tram fares in 1953 and 1954. Two other student movements claim national coverage, the 'Progressive Students' Union, sponsored by the Marxist Left, and the Socialist Student Organization.<sup>7</sup> The PSU was started in 1954 and claims

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7 The term Communist is a general term indicating a generalized concept of leftist policy, as against the

thousands of members in Calcutta and many more nationally. They participated in the 1954 teachers movement for higher wages, sent volunteers to the Goa Satyagraha Campaign, and agitated against the attempt to merge the states of Bihar and West Bengal.

Thus, since Independence student political activities have continued and indiscipline has increased. Large-scale disturbances led to the closing of Lucknow University in 1953, and Banaras Hindu University in 1958.<sup>8</sup> In Patna clash over increased bus fares for students resulted in political firings. Police firing against students also occurred in Gwalior in 1950 and Indore in 1954. In 1959, students at Amritsar were arrested in a pro-Hindi movement, in Calcutta, many a time students have quit halls in the middle of examinations, in Jaipur students launched a mass movement against an increase in fees; and in 1960, major disturbances occurred in Lucknow and Allahabad.

Many explanations for these outbursts have been offered. A detailed study on student indiscipline was prepared by Humayun Kabir who was educational advisor to the Government of India. The specific proposals contained in Kabir's Memorandum were endorsed by the Central Advisory Board of Education in January 1954. Later in the year, a series of letters containing concrete proposals concerning discipline in schools and colleges, was sent by Kabir to Ministers of education in each of these states. The

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Rightist. Marxist left specifically indicates a particular shade of leftist policy / referring to followers of C.P.I.(M) /.

8 Government of India, Ministry of Education, Reports of the Banaras Hindu University, Enquiry Committee, 1958.

term "indiscipline" as employed in these official documents and in non-official writings is a term covering a wide variety of student activities. Behind this term lie at least four different kinds of activities:

1. Activities associated with larger political movements in the area surrounding the school, college or university. In Calcutta, students have actively taken part in the Bihar-Bengal merger dispute, the food agitation and other local movements. In Ahmedabad, some students actively collaborated with sections of the business community in the agitation against separating the city of Bombay from Gujarat. There has also been student participation in linguistic agitation e.g., anti-Hindi agitation in the South, and anti-English agitation in the North. Recent student agitation in Gujarat and Bihar helped to pave the way for Janata rule. In these and similar movements students' political organizations have been closely associated with non-student organizations and business groups.

2. Demands by students upon University authorities. Students have opposed fee increases, demanded an increase in admissions to colleges and called for the recognition of students unions.

3. Student demands upon non-university authorities on issues of special concern. Demands for special student rates on trams are most common. In Kerala students agitated when special concession rates on the ferries that ply were cancelled.

4. Sporadic, generally unorganized outbursts by students only vaguely associated with concrete demands, such as walk-outs

on examinations and subsequent destruction of college property, attempts of students to ride on buses and trains without paying fares, beating ticket collectors and other acts of student delinquency.

Having answered the question of How student unrest, the next pertinent and crucial question to ask is Why youth unrest.

Studentship is a transitory state, usually lasting only three or four years, though perhaps extended by post-graduate studies. While some student leaders have prolonged the affiliation with the student community, for the vast majority, academic life is short although a highly intensive period. This makes the existence of ongoing organizations and sustained leadership difficult. The problem is further aggravated by the fact that student participation in a movement is sporadic, for extra-curricular activities become difficult to pursue when the pressure of examinations grow intense and when official disapproval is manifested.

Moreover as the student feels he is in a period of transition he is not likely to develop lasting ties with the student community. Academic life is seen as a brief way-station on the road to economic advancement by many, while for other it is a time of unparalleled freedom. There often exists an important difference in orientation between the science student and the liberal arts student. This difference in orientation has vital implications. A number of studies have pointed out that, in many nations, liberal arts students constitute the key element in political movements.

There are various reasons as regards political involvement or lack of it amongst the youth. The student days are of the few

times in the life of an individual when one is not burdened by financial or social responsibilities or subject to outside control. Due to their freedom, students can afford to take risks which others in society saddled with family and other responsibilities cannot take. It is partly for this same reason that the student community is considered less corrupt than any other segment of the society. In the public image students have attempted to take upon themselves the leadership of the working classes, students have the reputation, perhaps justified, for having greater ideological 'purity' than other elements in society, and it is true, that they can often approach society without the biases of vested interests or social constraints and with a greater degree of intellectual honesty. Because students deal with ideas and intellectualized concepts in their academic work, they are better able to understand abstract ideological system than are persons who regularly work in concrete "non-intellectual" situations. As a result students are more receptive to ideologically oriented movements and causes.

Further the very tradition of intellectual, political, and physical freedom which students enjoy in many societies acts as a reinforcing element to the student movement, permitting it to act with relative impunity. Understandably, the student community often has very little in common with young people. For many college students in developing countries, college life is the first institution which provides for a different experience from

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9      Glaucio D. Soares, *The Active Few: Student Ideology and Participation in Developing Countries*, p. 206.

that of the family. Physiologically and psychologically the period of adolescence is of adjustment and change, and this cannot but have repercussions on the educational, social and political attitudes of the students. On one hand, there is the traditional family oriented society. The family may influence the student towards adherence to traditional social and religious ideas, and retention of traditional values. On the other hand, the need for independence and self-expression are great during this period, and the tendency towards rebellion against authority, particularly that represented by the father is marked. Studies of youth in Japan and in India indicate that many of the same factors, which have been documented in the West also operate in non-Western societies.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to the factors which lead the individual student in a political direction, there are various pressures on the student population which also drive them in this direction. The existence of a large number of students at one location, with similar interests and subject to similar stimuli from the university environment, gives a powerful impetus to organizational activities of all kinds. It is difficult to imagine a more cohesive community from which to recruit members. Communication within the student movement is usually quite good, especially when the majority of the students in a given area are congregated on one campus. Thus, when external conditions or ideological issues move students to action, it is easy to create a substantial

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10 Lewis Feuer, "A Talk with the Zengakuren", New Leader, vol. 44, May 1, 1961, p. 17.



movement in a relatively short time.

The sense of community which is often built up by the students because of their similarities in background and outlook and their common environment, which becomes a basis for a student movement or organization. Without this sense of community the students would be unable to participate in political and cultural affairs to the extent that they have done in new nations. In India, as higher education became available to young people from middle and lower middle class background and the educational institutions expanded at a rapid rate, the student community lost its cohesive quality and it has been more difficult to organize the students.

Despite the fact that students in the developing nations are usually privileged people and have a much higher standard of living than the average citizen, the student is often under severe pressure during his academic career. Sometimes, economic but more often academic or social. These pressures help to determine the scope and intensity of student social action. The most direct pressure on the student is from the educational institution itself. The need to pass the periodic examinations to keep up with the course work, and to achieve a high academic status are some of the main worries of any student. The educational institution often demands an outward show of loyalty from its students and occasionally asks for ideological and social conformity from them. In nations where university graduates are threatened by unemployment, and the quality of instruction is perceived by the students as inadequate there is likely to be a

good deal of underlying discontent. In India academic standards and employment prospects are much better for science and technological students than for those in the liberal arts, and it is true that science students are not often involved in politics.<sup>11</sup> In faculties where there is good deal of ambivalence about the future and a realization that standards of education are inadequate there is likely to be discontent.

The environment of the individual student usually provides pressure. Indeed much of his behaviour and his ideological views as well are shaped by his environment. Many students suffer from financial hardships during their educational careers and have to live in poor conditions. In many cases college facilities are poor and do not provide even the basic necessities for higher education. Inadequate libraries, badly trained staff are in evidence. The impact of these conditions cannot but have an important influence on the student, his attitude and naturally his educational attainment. Students from the working and new middle classes, whose experience with western values is shorter and whose families can ill-afford the expense of a college education, are usually affected by these factors most.

Thus political participation of youth in India takes on different forms, levels and degrees of intensity, depending on the socio-economic status, family structure, personality traits. The latter characteristics determine the character of the radical or the conservative students have different role images. A

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11      Altback, Transition and Turmoil, p. 93; and Joseph R. Gusfield, The Academic Milieu.

radical orientation seems to be connected with an integrated role image in the sense that the student role is not separated from the citizen role. Student life is seen as part of the national political life.<sup>12</sup> Conservative students on the contrary tend to see themselves as full time students, preparing for a career. They are more likely to think of the student days as a long term investment leading towards a well-paid occupation. They feel unhappy when university life is inter-woven with national politics. A conservative orientation seems to be closely associated with a compartmentalized<sup>13</sup> and more professionalized student role image.

However one has to bear in mind that the conservative youth may also be drawn directly into politics for showing their solidarity with the ruling party. Or they may undertake agitation for certain limited purposes such as better academic conditions etc.

The evidence presented above may cause one to legitimately disagree with a particular interpretation that radicals are more likely to participate in politics than others. However data generally to confirm the hypothesis that he is more interested in participation in politics. In the few instances where data

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12 This integration is well exemplified in the following excerpt from a paper by Rudolph Gudoldi, "Today more than ever the problems of the University are inseparable from the problems of the society as a whole, and it is clear that it would be Utopian to conceive of a progressive University with a regressive society".

13 In the context of the present analysis, compartmentalization is to be understood simply as an act of keeping things, separate, assigning separate functions to different roles, keeping communication between these roles at a minimum. Sigmund Freud, The Problem of Anxiety (New York, 1936).

covering supporters of far right politicians and political parties were available, this tendency is borne out.<sup>14</sup>

Who then are the politicizing students? It would seem, first of all, that the norms concerning student political activity are rather conservative in India, in that it is not quite legitimately expected of students or even faculty members to be active in politics. One survey at Allahabad showed that 27 per cent of the students believe that it is proper for students to take part in political affairs. This figure is markedly below the proportion of western students who would think politics suitable for youthful participation.

Metta Spencer argues that the norm is not altogether disregarded in practice. Despite the intemperate behaviour of the students who do become mobilized, the actual proportions are not inordinate when compared to the political involvement of youth in the non-student group. The results summarized in Tables 1 and 2 indicate that students are not consistently more politicized than are non-students nor do their party preferences stand out as exceptional in any consistent direction. In one survey the Congress was preferred more by students than non-students, while in another survey of the same year, the situation was reversed. In one survey the students were less likely to prefer any party at all, and in the second survey the relationship was reversed.

There is a common belief that a major side-effect of education is that it heightens political consciousness to a very

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14 Metta Spencer, "The Active Few", in Altbach, Student Revolution, p. 75.

Table-1

Comparative support levels for parties by Student  
and non-student  
(Madras, Calcutta, Delhi)

party preference	students (56)	non-students (104)
Congress	16%	33%
C.P.I.	5%	6%
P.S.P.	2%	4%
Jan Sangh	4%	1%
Others	4%	5%
No preferences	68%	52%

Table-2

Comparative support levels for Parties by students  
and non-student cohort with similar age, sex and  
marital status composition  
(All India, 1961)

party preference	students (51)	non-students (639)
Congress	37%	28%
P.S.P.	4%	2%
C.P.I.	4%	5%
Swatantra	6%	1%
Others	6%	6%
No preferences	43%	57%

great extent. Some authors view this as good, imagining that it brings forth such fine qualities of citizenship, 'as tolerant participation in community service projects and the like. Other authors in general view increased political involvement as undesirable in the Indian context, for they suppose it could only "overload" the political system by bringing many more political claims than can be satisfied. Nevertheless both points of view rest upon the assumption that education has a kind of politicizing effect, which it does not actually seem to have. Not only do the students fail to show any great difference from their non-student cohort, but if one looks at the non-student group alone, it can be seen in Table 3 that education is negatively associated with Partisan support.

Table-3

Education and Partisan support among a non-student group selected from an All-India sample to have Age, Sex and Marital status distributions similar to a student population

(Indian Institute of Public Opinion)

Partisanship	Illiterate	Under Matric	Matric	Graduate
Prefer any one political party	94%	92%	89%	82%
No preference	6%	8%	11%	18%

Students exceed other youth more on hypothetical expression of political commitment than on measures of real involvement, for example, when asked whether they were interested in politics or

not, the students overwhelmingly claimed that they were. While the non-students made no such assertions. Some 72 per cent of the students said they were interested in politics as compared to 39 per cent of the non-students. But the differential between the two groups narrowed as one asked about concrete action. While 59 per cent of the students and only 32 per cent of the non-students said they sometimes attended speeches, the actual participation in demonstrations was lower - only 15 per cent of the students and 13 per cent of the non-students claimed to have taken part in political demonstrations. Moreover the students who do take part in politics are not the most outstanding scholars nor the most prominent for other social reasons. Thus politically engaged youth belong equally to the leftist as well as the rightist parties. The older generation being more engaged in politics than the younger one men students being more politicized than women.

Table 4 shows the effect of income on political participation among students of eleven universities sampled in 1952.

Table-4

Less than Rs.100/	Rs.100 Rs.300/	Rs.300 Rs.500/	Rs.300 Rs.1000/	Over Rs.1000
(340) 58%	(682) 52%	(373) 48%	(330) 46%	(244) 42%

The Allahabad findings conducted at the Allahabad

University were consistent with these results. 55 per cent of the partisan students fathers had incomes of 250 or less, while but 34 per cent of the non-partisan students were from families whose income was that low. Some 33 per cent of the partisan students at Allahabad said that many of their relatives had attended Universities, as contrasted with 48 per cent of the non-active students. This must mean that if political involvement is the way a cadre of future leaders is formed, then such a cadre is not being recruited from the elite of the present day.

The Indian youth should not be interpreted as opposite to the response of the students in other countries because the political realities are not parallel in various countries. One has to find the appropriate political structure before drawing comparisons, and in that sense the response of Indian students could not be seen as unique at all. Indian politics is remarkably non-ideological and pragmatic. Young students are ideologically committed if they can afford to be. One does not find youth taking part to any extensive degree in local municipal politics which is so heavily loaded down with considerations of patronage. The same holds true for India. Students wish to have a place in the government, but they would prefer to work as bureaucratic officers than as party workers. Either one is ideological, or one is not: if one is, then there is no hope under the present conditions for changing India dramatically through the party structure that exists - one is defeated in that enterprise before he starts. And if one is not ideological, he would have little interest in politics as a young man any way - unless he needed



to use the political system to obtain amenities or other private or parochial ends. For such people, the political system offers a wide array of incentives to participation. And such people constitute the main base for the political system as it now functions whether for good or for ill.

Chapter V

URBAN YOUTH AND UNEMPLOYMENT

## Chapter V

### URBAN YOUTH AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment is increasingly emerging as the most striking symptom of inadequate development in most countries of the Third World. In many countries open unemployment in the urban areas now affects 15-25 per cent of the labour force and often much higher percentage of persons aged 15-27. Further the pace of urbanization in the developing countries is so rapid that the size of the total urban population considerably exceeds that of the active people engaged in work. This is quite unlike the situation that existed in the countries of continental Europe during the early stages of their development. In fact according to certain authors, in the developing countries Urbanization is a fore-runner of Industrialization and growth, rather than their consequence. Thus <sup>here</sup> the proportion affected by employment problems often far exceeds the rates of unemployment in the industrialized countries at the worst periods of depression in the 1930s. But in the Third World countries like India, today the problem is not cyclical but chronic. A general up-turn in the world trade might help but would not fundamentally solve the underlying imbalances. Moreover, because growing unemployment in the developing countries occurs at a time of comparative and sustained prosperity in the developed countries, the contrasts between the rich and poor nations of the world are more sharply revealed. The problem of employment is in reality a range of related problems. Some more serious, some less serious. Briefly some of the dimensions of the problem for developing countries like India are:

- (a) The shortage of work opportunities;

(b) The under employment and under utilization of labour in addition to open employment; and

(c) Attitudes and job expectations, particularly amongst the young and educated, which are sharply at variance with the work available and with the jobs of priority for accelerating national development.

My concern in this chapter is to deal with problems of unemployment as affecting the urban educated only and not with all the aspects and sections who are affected by employment problem. In fact a major feature of unemployment in India is its concentration among the young and educated. In developing countries the rate of unemployment amongst persons aged fifteen to twenty-four is double or more the rate among the labour force as a whole.

These proportions are reverse of those of unemployment in the industrialized countries which in the 1930s was concentrated among older and mature workers and relatively light among the very young. The high proportion of young persons among the unemployed also reflects the rapid expansion of education which each year encourages larger number of college leavers to aspire to urban wage earning jobs far in excess of the number of openings available - leading thousands of young persons into a demoralizing delay before they are able to adjust to the realities of the job market. But whatever the causes of concentration of unemployment among the younger age group, be it inadequate demand, inadequate institutions and market distortions, mismatching between employment opportunities and individual expectations, its significance for

future economic development, as well as for political and social stability, is enormous since persons under twenty-five often comprise a high proportion of the literate and most go-ahead sections of the total population.

Socio-Cultural Characteristic of  
Urban Unemployment amongst Youth

There are a wide variety of complex factors both subjective and objective which are closely inter-twined and lie behind the problem of urban youth unemployment. Thus a fair judgement of the problem of the youth unemployment in India is not feasible unless one is adequately informed about the chief causal factors which include both economic and non-economic variables.

Before going into the problem of youth unemployment in terms of the population problem, nature of economy and migration, I will take into consideration certain socio-cultural and psychological characteristics underlying the unemployment. In other words, a focus on what Schumpeter calls Economic Sociology is called for. To use a felicitous phrase economic analysis deals with the questions how people behave at any time and what economic effects are they producing by so behaving. Economic sociology deals with the question, how they came to behave as they do. Often forces of change in the economic system lay outside the system itself. It is not surprising to discover that these forces lie largely in man himself - in his fundamental motives, the way he organizes his relationships to his fellowman, in his attitudes and expectations and norms and institutions.

Sociologists as might be expected have dealt much more

explicitly and for a longer time with economic variables than have economists. Max Weber started a very important tradition when he traced the roots of modern capitalist spirit to an ascetic protestant emphasis on hard work, in one's calling on this earth. He made many other contributions to the analysis of the social structure of modern industrial and bureaucratic society. Weber's ideas have been developed and elaborated largely by Parsons and his students in the United States. What these Sociologists have concentrated on is a description of the important characteristics of the social structure of modern industrialized societies which differentiate them from traditional societies. For example, in Parson's terminology, developed countries are characterized by the prevalence of achievement norms, universalism and specificity, whereas underdeveloped countries are characterized by ascriptive norms, particularism and diffuseness. That is to say, in developed countries people are evaluated in terms of what they can do (achieved status) rather than in terms of who they are (ascribed status), anyone is at least ideally able to compete for any job (universalism) rather than being permitted only to do particular jobs as in a caste system (particularism) and the relationship of one man to another is typically specific or limited to the labour contract, rather than diffuse as in a traditional society where economic relationships are tied intimately to all sorts of other relationships involving kinship, political, religious and other social structures.

However, such a description of types of variables are

idealized "pattern variables"<sup>1</sup> and do not actually pin point to what is present in the minds of men. In other words, more description (more empirical data) is necessary (Hoselitz). This is specially true of India which does not fit totally into the idealized pattern Parson has suggested. As has been repeatedly said, India is a transitional system where elements of modernity and tradition exist side by side and sometimes the latter making way to the former without much conflict.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore in the description of the socio-cultural characteristics effecting urban youth unemployment in India, one finds the cumulative effects of modern and traditional variables, a legacy which to a great extent can be traced to its colonial past.

The most important question one asks if one goes down to the basics is why does an individual want to work? The answer to this question according to Maclelland is in part, what he calls 'achievement motivation. Maclelland measures the achievement motive (a achievement short for need for achievement) by forces other than a desire to eat - but rather as desires for social approval, power or knowledge. According to him individuals with high 'n' achievement<sup>3</sup> are better equipped than others to carry

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1 Implicit in such a analysis is a bias that all one needs for economic development is a transference of the Western ethos to the Third World countries.

2 Caste and its politicization in the form of caste associations - Rudolph in when a Tradition modernizes.

3 The subjects for testing 'N' motivation were all male college students, who were given a series of tests to perform. These tests were used to select people of high administrative capacity, for positions in Washington, during the post-war. Thus in addition to general

out more innovative roles. The evidence MacLleland arrived at after analysis of his data supported that achievement motivation is an important factor affecting the rate of economic development, that is, a high level of 'n' achievement might predispose any society to vigorous economic activity. On the other hand, it might do so only in the West, or only under certain conditions such as free enterprise capitalism, a certain type of open social structure, or a relatively advanced level of technology.

Economists like Rostow, for example, have also insisted that economic theory must be linked ultimately to sociological and psychological constructs, if it is to be maximally useful. As a first step in this direction, he lists six basic human motives which economic analysis suggests are important for development. (a) to develop fundamental science; (b) to apply science to economic ends; (c) to accept innovations; (d) to seek material advance; (e) to consume; and (f) to have children.

There are others who have been influenced by Freud, who had been strongly influenced by Darwin. He recognized the importance of survival needs like hunger, but concentrated his attention on the force that perpetuated the species - namely sexual love. One thing he destroyed forever was the notion that motives are rational or can be rationally inferred from action. By concentrating his attention on notable irrationalities in behaviour - slip of tongue, forgetting of well-known facts, dreams, etc. he

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intelligence, they bring out an individual's capacity to organize material, assess situations accurately and quickly. In short these tests demonstrate whether or not he is suited to be a leader.



demonstrated over and over again that motives are not what they seem. This is in keeping with Mertonian argument of "Manifest" and "latent" function. Thus one should not confuse the subjective category of motive with the objective category of function. For example, people buy expensive goods not so much because they are superior in quality but because they are expensive. For it is the latent aspect 'costliness' - mark of higher social status<sup>4</sup> which is more important.

Keeping in line with the above argument, but with a difference in emphasis, the urban educated youth in India attach a great of importance to certain kinds of jobs because they are a mark of social status. Generally speaking a young man would prefer to be an I.A.S. officer rather than take on the role of an entrepreneur for eg. setting up factory, be it for chemicals or machine parts. This is often a result of the colonial heritage and the norms and values in our tradition (which I will take up<sup>5</sup> in detail later). As said before a greater degree of innovative spirit is associated with a greater degree of achievement, which in turn is related to a higher level of economic development. A lessening tendency of the urban educated youth toward entrepreneurial jobs means a lessening of (a) economic development; (b) a lack of self-employment which causes a greater rush into white collar jobs, which compounds and makes more tight the employment

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4 Velben Theory of leisure class.

5 Innovativeness is based on the conviction that he can modify the outcome of an uncertain situation by his own personal achievement.

situation. A Madras study<sup>6</sup> revealed that as many as 93.7 per cent in 1959 and 95.2 per cent in 1963 of the total alumni have sought and secured an employed status. Even technically qualified persons like agricultural graduates from farmers families apply for small jobs outside than using their talents at their own farms or family enterprise for higher yields and better income. Only 10 per cent of the unemployed post-graduates as revealed by a pilot inquiry<sup>7</sup> thought of joining the family business. Search for salaried employment, especially the government services are on the increase.

Furthermore, as stated earlier, the young persons attitude to white collar jobs is bolstered by certain socio-cultural characteristic in the Indian society. As is obvious general labour force participation in urban areas has been bolstered by poverty. The latter obliges most persons of working age to seek out something to do, no matter how meagre a livelihood it may offer. However, members of one group - the educated - have displayed a remarkable ability to sustain themselves without gainful work, often relying on family assistance and support. The institution of the joint family with its creed of pooling resources, reduces the incentive to cut down on the length of search. The unemployed Indian student can rely at least to an extent and for some period on some support from his family. Moreover the members

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6 Short term study of the utilization pattern of the educated persons during the Third Plan period in Madras state department of employment and training.

7 D.N. Majumdar and S.K. Anand, Unemployment among University Educated.

of this group impose severe restrictions on the type of work they will accept. While the educated demonstrate a high degree of geographical mobility as between urban areas, their functional ability is negligible. They are looking for non-manual work and are not prepared to accept work that 'soils their hands'. A recent survey<sup>8</sup> by A.D. King revealed that 33.7 per cent of the IIT graduates of 1970 were unwilling to take up non-engineering appointments and 52.0 per cent showed preference for administration and management jobs. These facts amply illustrate the craze for non-manual, administrative jobs. Besides the post-graduates and graduates having this kind of attitude, even the matriculates and those with only primary education often consider themselves exempt from any obligation to work with their own hands.

These views about education and about the type of work appropriate for persons with some measure of schooling are solidly rooted in traditional attitudes which are bolstered by the existing social stratification. However, they have been strengthened in some ways by influences from the West. Colonial rule had created openings for clerks and administrators. Schools were established so the native-born could acquire the skills needed to fill these positions. The curriculum in the schools was very literary and academic, and this emphasis also coincided with the traditional inclinations of India. Parents in the upper strata were generally very eager to have their children take advantage of these opportunities. Government jobs always had a high

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8 A.D. King, "The I.I.T. Graduate, 1970, Aspirations, Expectations and Ambition", Economic and Political Weekly, no. 36, September 5,

prestige value. By the end of the colonial era, the number of schools had grown tremendously but the attempt to give them a more technical orientation was not very successful. The tertiary educational institutions in particular have deteriorated in quality. They accept students who are not properly prepared, have a large number of drop-outs, and graduate individuals who are not of a particularly high calibre. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that unemployment among the educated has grown. Further these attitudes have an anti-rural bias which is a serious obstacle to progress in the country. The educated youth do not want to go to the villages, even those who come from rural areas see education primarily as a means to escaping the misery and dreariness of village life.<sup>9</sup> The waste involved in this under-utilization of man power is tragic. But the issues involved in the status and attitude of the educated in India, is as important a problem as is the matter of economic waste. At least equally serious are the broader consequences of the separation of this group from the bulk of their countrymen and from the real developmental problems of their nations.

Secondly, the increased contact with the outside world has raised aspirations specially for the urban educated youth. This has been made possible through increased mass media, cultural programmes, books, etc. Thus achievement is often measured by how much money it is worth. The dignity of labour of the

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9 In a study of unemployed graduates from Lucknow University, those who came originally from rural areas, were asked whether they would be willing to return to the villages after completion of their studies, had a job been available only 3.5 answered in the affirmation.

traditional artisan is lost. The money value of labour has replaced its intrinsic value.<sup>10</sup> A greater amount of money earned is an index of competence. This has led young men to be attracted to particular kinds of jobs, e.g. business executives in a multinational concern.

Another paradox of the unemployed is the lack of recognition of talent and improper placements. While on the one hand there is a frantic scramble for white collar jobs, on the other hand, in the hectic competition for limited jobs, the under-qualified persons manage to get jobs for which they are not suited and the qualified persons who are really deserving remain unselected. Higher and higher degrees are sought to be acquired to compete in the employment market.<sup>11</sup> The state of affairs has often resulted in brilliant young people migrating to foreign countries, where they are better rewarded and there exists a better recognition of their talents.

Another consequence of the above is that employment on positions below their level of educational attainment, or ability, would mean erosion of their confidence, ability and occupational dexterity. Under these conditions, their marginal productivity remains below their capacity norm.

Finally the problem of youth unemployment can be reviewed from the point of view of Elites ideology and social change. Elite structure and elite ideology of a society represents not

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10 Marx and Engles, Communist Manifesto.

11 K. Ray, "Education and Employment", Mainstream, vol. IX, nos. 12 and 13, 1970, p. 28.

only its basic values but also the extent to which these values find a concrete expression in the power structure and decision-making process of the society. It has been rightly suggested that the leadership of a society is the criterion of the values by which that society lives.<sup>12</sup> Therefore changes in elite structure also reveal the essential nature of social changes taking place in that society. In fact, the structure of elites in a society also undergoes the process differentiation with changes in the social system as a whole. This is specially true when a traditional society passes into the stages of modernization. Innovation in science and technology create value domain and spheres of skill which did not exist before and offer new opportunities in roles or elite roles in society. This leads to the growth in the number of elite groups which to some extent break the exclusiveness of traditional elite.

Before Westernization employment opportunities were fewer because of the homogenous structure of values. It offered fewer specializations whose valued outcomes were not only limited, but traditionally closed. The social structure of the traditional society was authoritarian. In most cases job opportunities were ascribed on the basis of birth, landownership, kinship and age. The social structure consisted of patrimonial or charismatic

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12 Marx and Engles have propounded the fact that through their own ideology the elite protect their own structures and systems of power, which are further vitiated by the peoples ideas, who also glorify the interests and actions of the classes that are in a position to assert themselves. The latter implies pictures which are at variance from the truth e.g. (a) bourgeoisie economy (b) Caste system and Brahmins.

elements.

The world view of traditional elites was rooted in the search for the esoteric and abstract ideals and had scorn for manual technical type of work which was considered plebian; this had led to a lack of creativity and innovation in their thinking especially with regard to the material and technological aspects of society.

It was only with the coming of British that a certain amount of decadance occurred in the traditional elite and this change in the elite brought about changes in the world of work. The British introduced new scientific and technological knowhow through a Westernized education system. This created a growth of the Westernized middle class and stronger aspirations for clerical and desk jobs. To a small extent other caste members than the Brahmin had a access to the jobs but mostly it was the Brahmin who availed of these new job opportunities. In this sense the structure of work was not really democratized. Thus the new elite in spite of modern education had continuity with the old elite. The predominance of the Brahmin in important work roles introduced an element of moderation in the social and cultural adaptation to Western values. For, it kept the traditional allurements for charismatic leader alive while not allowing the ascriptive element in job selection to die out completely.

However since independence the economic bases for recruitment of young persons to jobs had widened creating newer groups comprising the bureaucrats and professionals. The latter stood for modernization of economy, expansion of education, removal of

caste barriers, work opportunities for women. These values constituted a value system which was logically distant from the traditional Indian world view. Yet these elites were fascinated by the Indian tradition and wanted to preserve it in its essential form. This created a feeling of ambivalence between the values of modernity and tradition. This caused young men to imbibe modern values, to the extent of seeking newer job opportunities, participating in a competitive market, but at the same time dependency patterns on traditional norms was not totally eroded.

#### Education in Relation to Unemployment

When we talk of unemployment, it is the educated, unemployed young persons, who are in the forefront of the public mind. The Indian economy has been growing at about 3.5 per cent per annum since independence; a sufficient rate of growth, one would have thought to absorb all of the best educated people into employment. Nevertheless, educated unemployment which was already a serious problem in 1947, has remained a more or less constant proportion of a rapidly growing stock of educated labour. In 1965 the figure that stood at 8,41,833 swelled to 17,60,000 in April in 1970. In 1972 there were 1000,000 matriculates about 469,000 under graduates and above 268,000 graduates who were unemployed. And yet matriculates and graduates only 4 per cent of the labour force in India. Even among this relatively small group of educated people, employment rates exceeds anything normally experienced in advanced countries. Clearly here is something



of a mystery, difficult to square with popular notions of the crying man-power needs of underdeveloped countries. Why then there is uneducated employment in India? Because there are too many matriculates and graduates relative to the number of job opportunities that require these qualifications. But this answer only throws up more questions. Why do so many students rush headlong into secondary and higher education when they know that on average one out of fifteen of them will be unemployed? They may not know the precise figures for educated unemployment but they are perfectly familiar with the phenomenon. Besides, why is that the existence of educated unemployment does not cause salary differentials to fall, so as to increase employment in the short run and reduce the financial advantage of acquiring more education in the long run?

The standard retort to this line of questioning so standard as to have become stock-in-trade of foreign visitors to India is to point to the self-defeating search for status which drives Indian students to seek education without regard to career prospects - instead of acquiring qualifications in technical and vocational subjects. In other words, the fault lies partly with the educational system for not imparting technical and vocational education, and partly with educated individuals themselves for preferring white collar to manual and industrial occupation, the implication of the argument being that educated unemployment would soon vanish if only education were vocationalized and if only the educated people were willing to get their hands dirty.

This conclusion receives support from the fact that

educated unemployment is greater among graduates in arts and commerce than among in Science and Engineering. However even among B.Sc.s and M.Sc.s, engineers and technicians, high rates of unemployment have appeared. Besides, whose fault is it that so many more students study academic rather than vocational subjects? It is certainly not what the students want. It is known from attitude surveys and from application rates that every second Indian student would like to study medicine or engineering, probably because employment prospects in these fields is much better than in others. They end up in arts and commerce only because they cannot gain admission into medicine and engineering. The reason is quite simple: while technical education has been deliberately restricted in the light of anticipated demand for technically qualified people, secondary as well as general higher education has been allowed to grow at a pace determined by the pressures of admission. But why is there any demand at all for arts and commerce degrees if the incidence of unemployment among graduates with these specializations is as high as it is? The answer is that a B.A. can earn more than a matriculate, although much less than a B. Eng., even after allowing for the possibility of unemployment. Thus, an arts degree is a vocational degree in Indian circumstances and this is not really surprising because a growing economy needs administrators and clerks with B.A. qualifications just as much as it needs doctors and engineers.

The persistence of educated unemployment since 1947, and probably ever since the 1920s, can be explained only by certain features of Indian labour markets that slow down the process to unemployment and, in particular, the rate at which the unemployed lower their 'reservation price' (the price they offer themselves

for employment). Educated unemployment in India constitutes, as it were, a revolving queue: it is not that some are permanently employed and others are permanently unemployed, but rather that large numbers are made to wait years before finding a first job. The number of jobs is growing all the time and everyone will eventually find employment if they are prepared to wait long enough. The 'average waiting time' in 1967 for matriculates was just under a year and a half, and for graduates, just over six months. There are strong taboos in India about changing jobs to enhance one's prospects and this alone puts a premium on a lengthy search for work.

Thus the question which arises is that should people continue education in spite of so much employment. Surely, the implied waste of resources would be reduced if fewer educated people competed for the limited pool of jobs? To cut down on college places, however, would simply increase the number of unemployed matriculates, to cut down on secondary school places, would simply increase the number of unemployed school leavers and so on. Is there no advantage in keeping people off the labour market as long as possible, particularly as the incidence of unemployment does seem to fall with every additional qualification after completing schooling?

Unfortunately, resources are used up in producing more educated people, a social cost which is only partly borne by the individuals themselves. Indian secondary and higher education are subsidized, through fees which are set below unit costs and the availability of scholarships. Although four out of five arts

and science colleges and two out of three secondary schools are private institutions, they receive substantial grants from the state government, who are in turn supported by the Central Government. Furthermore, the government recovers little of the extra earnings of the better educated by taxation; income-tax in India is light and begins to apply at levels of income that are only attained by graduates by the age of 30 or 35. The result, as is expected is that social rates of return on educational investment in India, fall below the level of return which is desired. More to the point, however, is the fact that social rates of return to secondary and general higher education are considerably less than rates of return to primary and middle school education. Thus what is needed is a reallocation of educational expenditure towards primary education. The Fourth Five Year Plan (1966-71) shows that there is social under-investment in primary education and social over-investment in secondary and general higher education. Further, it is difficult to argue that political stability and the reduction of regional and religious strife in India would be better served by producing more unemployed matriculates and graduates than by increasing enrolment rates in primary education and thus producing more people with at least three or four years of schooling. In short, if equality, political stability and social cohesion in India can be secured by educational policies, the optimum policy is to divert resources from secondary and higher education to primary education, and adult literacy.

### Economic and Objective Causes of Youth Unemployment

A fair judgement of the problem of youth unemployment in India is not feasible unless one is adequately informed about the economic causal factors. In inquiry into the numerous and complex causes of unemployment, I will confine myself to those factors which are of particular relevance to the youth.

### Demographic Development

Mention has already been made of the high percentage of population growth rate in India, resulting in a broad-based age Pyramid i.e., in an extremely high percentage of children and youth 3-29. The predominant reason for unemployment seems to be simply that population has increased more rapidly than employment. Secondly the age distribution of the population is skewed in the direction of a high dependency burden (Myrdal).<sup>13</sup>

An important Economic factor is that on the demand side, of the employment market, factors related to the economic development process played of course the most decisive role in job creation. The experience over the last two decades seems to be that growth in industrial and manufacturing output does not necessarily result in an appropriate growth in employment opportunities. Even the most ardent advocates of Industrialization

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13 The proportion of children in the population is large. Lack of maintenance of lower fertility leads to an increase in the dependency burden and even when the working age is reached. The dependency continues due to lack of work opportunity, and even when work opportunity is reached, in many parts of our country, these seeking an urban job rely on relatives.

observed that the dynamic sector of the economy was not absorbing labour at a satisfactory rate (not only did the industrial sector's rate of labour absorption fall behind the growth rate of the urban population in many countries but also behind the general growth rate of the population). Industry in India concentrated mainly in the urban areas failed to provide enough job-openings. The apparent obstacles to the creation of additional employment in size and continuity may be summarized as follows:

Although it was recognized that some degree of industrialization was necessary to attain growth rates which would raise the per capita income at a fairly short period, it was also thought that new industries should as much as possible absorb the surplus labour which was streaming into the urban centres. The strategies suggested were to develop industries which were by their very nature labour-intensive. This seemed a logical thing to do, not only from the point of view of coping with the surplus labour problem, but also from the point of view of minimizing cost by using the relatively most abundant and cheapest factor of production.

From the very beginning Indian planners had intentions of stressing the promotion of industries which would maximize labour absorption e.g. cottage industries. However, in spite of these early efforts, Indian manufacturing development has taken place along fairly capital intensive lines. Thus after examining the data and Ranis (1964, p. 132) concluded that 'From the outset India<sup>14</sup> embarked on a policy of capital deepening in her industrial sector.

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14 The difficulties encountered in effectively absorbing labour  
(footnote contd.)

Contemporary developing countries like India find themselves at a distinct disadvantage since they are forced to use mainly the advanced technology of the advanced industrialized countries, which do not fit in with their factor endowments. They do not have an original technology of their own to conform to the latter or the resources to experiment widely with different types of production method. In India some of the technologies are manufactured at home but even where older technologies have been in use the tendency is to scrap them to adopt more modern methods.

The trend towards the adoption of modern labour-saving technology has been especially supported by technical missions of (a) International organizations, (b) interest rates have made the import of machinery more attractive, (c) a very lenient tax legislation allowing high offs i.e., short depreciation has encouraged capital intensity, and (d) high and industrial wage rates have resulted in a preference for the purchasing of labour saving machinery.

Another economic factor which has an indirect effect on youth unemployment is that when advanced technologies are imported even when it can make cheaper products, it displaces a large number of indigenous craftsmen, who may not be absorbed into the new factories because machinery is being employed instead of labour,

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in newer industries in many industrializing countries were at first, explained principally by the existence of a rigid factor proportion problem, in which choices of techniques were few and of a relatively capital intensive variety. However, in 1950 there was mounting evidence which suggests that even when choice was possible, developing countries were not adopting the most labour-intensive techniques.

and the difference in productivity is so great that some consumers may receive some benefit through lower prices, but this may be off-set by a decline in average neat income in the community at large. The fact that India is experiencing growing unemployment, a rising import bill, and domestic inflation at the same confirms the above argument. In this case the persons who gain most from technological change are the already rich exporting countries as the main benefits leak abroad. So in these cases there is little opportunity to compensate the unemployed by transfer payments from those with higher real incomes elsewhere or wait until a long term growth in employment opportunities absorb them.

In the developing countries like India, the innovation may take the form of an 'alien' transplant that kills off competing activities in the traditional sectors but has to be fed through external linkages established with suppliers abroad to be alive itself. This is because the indigenous industry lacks the specific skills, materials and equipment to satisfy its immediate requirements and time and money are too short for it to make the necessary adjustment.

However the employment potential of the tertiary sector is being realized. Many of the urban skilled youth in India are

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15 Decades or even centuries of development cannot be compressed into the couple of years it takes to build a plant and get it running. Thus the innovation may take little contribution to the spread of employment, or to raising the skills upon which self-sustained growth depends. The back-wash effects can exceed the spread effects and the technological and income gap widens (Myrdal).



now employed in this sector. This sector provides ample employment opportunities for educated youth and upward mobility. In the course of the gradual economic development process, the source sector will get larger and provide better employment opportunities. Besides employment in the tertiary sector is indirectly induced by the activity of the primary and industrial sectors, therefore additional employment creation in the tertiary sector can be expected.

#### Rural Urban Migration

The enormous exodus of rural youth to urban centres have been recognized as one of the chief factors for heavy urban unemployment. The rate of Urbanization in Asia, therefore, in India has been an average two to three times that of an average population growth. Higher density is a result of higher degree of industrialization and rapid urbanization. Literacy, industrialization and urbanization are almost simultaneous phenomenon. Thus the states which are industrially more advanced than others, which have a higher rate of literacy and a higher proportion of urban population, have also higher density, and higher per capita income, and a higher rate of unemployment, particularly among the educated unemployed. Within the industrially advanced states, the over-crowded cities, e.g. Calcutta in West Bengal, Bombay in Maharashtra have a rate of unemployment higher than the average for the respective states. A recent survey of educated unemployed in Bombay<sup>16</sup> revealed that short distance migration is the major

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16 P.A. Nair, Employment Market in an Industrial Metropolis (A survey of educated unemployment in Bombay).

element in the employment market. Roughly 25 per cent of the job-seekers constituted long-distance migrants.

Traditional theories on the causes of migration have always stressed the effects of 'push and pull' factors. Of the push factors, the excessive population density of the agricultural regions is of particular importance. Other factors are a drop in infant mortality, a gap between urban and rural income, a search for better education, attraction to the urban way of life. A survey on migratory movements of youth reveals that migration occurred most frequently amongst young adults, predominantly unmarried males. Once the youth have left the countryside for higher education in towns, they rarely come back, but look for work in the cities.

## ABSTRACT

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Cultural change like any other change has a temporal dimension, which is useful to distinguish into linear and cyclical varieties. Modernization of a cultural tradition in 'linear type' of change implies that the tradition has been transformed into a form that did not exist before. It is useful, in other words, to consider whether any particular change in tradition is continuous with the structure prevailing before a certain date or whether the structure has been replaced by a new one. In the former case one might speak of change as a 'traditionalizing type', in the latter as a 'modernizing type'. If the changes result in a structure that is neither like the traditional one nor a predominantly new one, one can speak of a compromise formation.

Thus can one speak of India's modernization being unique? This dissertation does not attempt to answer the latter fully. All that can be said is that often sociologists in their effort to show the importance of traditional elements in Indian society give the impression that 'no change' is occurring. The impression one gets is that Traditional India is a monolithic and immovable accumulation of immemorial customs, and beliefs blocking the road to progress. However India's traditionalism is rather a built-in adaptive mechanism for making changes. Essentially it is a series of processes for incorporating innovation into culture and validating them. In the process traditionalization is not simply a blind handing-down of meaningless and functionless 'survivals' but rather a creative incorporation of contemporary events and innovations into the living and changing

structures of tradition.

Further Areas of Research: A review of secondary resource material on youth revealed, that there is a lack of data on the psychological dimension of youth. This is in terms of intensive and subjective study of youth. There is especially a gap in research in the realm of the psychological aspect of rural youth. Furthermore, even if there is plenty of generalized sociological subject-matter on problem of Family and Religion, there is less material on the latter subjects in terms of their direct bearing and their impact upon Indian youth. Besides even <sup>in</sup> sociological studies of unemployment, the stance is more often than not economic than Social and Psychological. There are no detailed and well-planned studies on motivation incentives of Indian youth in employment. The existing data is more emirical than interpretive.

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