

**POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION AND PUBLIC PEDAGOGY THROUGH
WALL POSTERS: A STUDY OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
(JNU)**

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DECLARATION

I, **Shweta Sheel**, declare that the dissertation entitled “**Political Socialization and Public Pedagogy through Wall Posters: A Study of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)**” is submitted in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University. This dissertation has not been previously submitted for any degree of this or any other University and is my original work.

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ABBREVIATIONS

JNU	-Jawaharlal Nehru University
DU	-Delhi University
GBM	-General Body Meeting
LSR	-Lady Shree Ram College
SIS	-School of International Studies
SSS	-School of Social Sciences
SLS	-School of Life Sciences
SBT	- School of Bio-Technology
SCMM	-Special Center for Molecular Medicine
SES	-School of Environmental Sciences
SL	-School of Language, Literature and Cultural Studies
SCIS	-School of Computational and Integrative Sciences
SPS	-School of Physical Sciences
SCSS	-Special Center for Sanskrit Studies
SAA	-School of Arts and Aesthetics

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Street art may be seen as a sign of resistance against the ongoing processes (be it popular notion of art, politics, policies, kind of society, daily experiences, etc.). It contains various messages and is targeted to a wider audience. The space occupied by these artworks is what gives it a unique characteristic. As they are available to the general public, they on the one hand challenge the popular notion of art as being confined to an audience who can enjoy the art work because of their aesthetic sensibility; on the other hand, they contain messages which are meant to address, mobilize and aware the audience by expression of worldview of the artist. Such world view is often about the issues of contemporary society, personal experiences, or societal concerns and history. The context along with the space occupied by them gives it a special character than the art which is confined to a limited space of a museums or galleries. It is also common to find such graffiti and wall art on university campuses too. Students tend to use the wall space to project various musings and express their creative and political positions through the wall magazines, posters and hangings.

While the creative expression of students on walls and public spaces of the university is an accepted and general practice across many institutions of higher education across the country, the political expressions on the walls is unique to some institutions¹. Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) is one such institution in India, which acquired popularity for everyday student protests and resistance for various reasons.

JNU has been in the national news for student political activism ever since it was established. The campus is well known for its competing student political discourses and contestations which highlighted the general discourses in the society in general or in the national and international politics in particular. These contestations have been deeply ideological and at the level of ideas. The University is also known for it's a vibrant democratic tradition whereby students engage in fierce debates, often bordering verbal war, seldom resulting in physical violence and unrest on campus.

¹ Parwez (2014), Pasricha (2014) Khalid (2013), Pasricha (2015),

The existence of wall posters in JNU may be understood in relation to the street artwork. Like the street artworks in cities, they contain certain messages which are expressed through art (drawings and paintings) accompanied with slogans, poems or messages. They, as being in a university campus, have more limited and specific audience than street artwork. But even their existence along with their content makes it more interesting as an object to be understood. Their existence on the campus since a long time, some of them being reproduced again, shows that the aim is to pass on and socialize students arriving into the University year after year certain political messages (kind of content). Posters form a part of the political socialization of the new entrants and making statements to those who are already in the University. This makes the University unique among its peers as it created an unparalleled example of campus political culture. It is in this context, the proposed study seeks to understand existence of wall posters as tools of political socialization and resistance on JNU campus.

The posters depict both a visual aspect and also stated content, namely, the artwork as well as the text and messages. So the study would aim to ask questions such as: What are the images about? Whom do they address? What are the messages, concerns and idols portrayed in these posters? Can they be understood in terms of the 'space' (understanding the space both in terms of physical and ideological) that these posters acquire? Who makes them? What are the processes, intentions and ideas behind making and displaying of these posters? Do wall posters seek to socialize students politically in reality? Do they act as tools of public pedagogy for making students activists? Can they be understood as tools for political socialization of students?

Political Socialization and the University Campus: Setting the Context for the Study

Kenneth P. Langton (1969) defines socialization process as 'exhibition of persistent behavior apart from the momentary effect of his immediate environment'. According to him, 'this behavior results from the socialization process, a process in which individuals incorporate into their own attitudinal structure and behavior patterns the ways of their respective social groups and society' (Langton 1969: p. 3). He argues, 'political behavior may be looked at as a consequence of socialization'. Thus, "political socialization refers to the way society transmits its political culture from generation to generation". The process may serve to preserve traditional political norms and institutions... Can then this idea of political socialization be implemented on the institutional space of a university?

Understanding of university as associated with the process of political socialization requires an understanding of university as a space for practicing political activities. Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) has been associated with student activism and political culture. There are newspaper articles and reports on students taking active part in different protests. Be it the recent case on charges of sedition which is (one particularly related to the case of JNU university itself), policies of government (one example is of scrapping of UGC NET scholarship which is related to the contemporary concerns of society). There are also books about the university which highlight the political activity as important to culture of JNU campus.

JNU as a university then may be associated with having its own identity in relation to its unique political and institutional culture to form a system. There are different models for understanding of a system in relation to political socialization process as emphasized by Langton which may be broadly looked at from macro or “system level,” approach to socialization and micro perspectives as individual approach. “The former focuses, for example, on the role or function political socialization plays in the stabilization, change, and integration, of political systems. The later emphasizes the process whereby an individual acquires political organization.” (Langton, 1969 p, 8) Both of these are required to understand the university in relation to its functions and processes. The Structural functionalists approach socialization emphasizes political and social systems as performing requisite functions necessary for their maintenance. Talcot Parsons mentioned in Langton (1969) in his work *economy and society*, for example, postulates four such functions, one of which is “pattern maintenance”. Pattern maintenance here refers to sustaining the demands and roles prescribed by the cultural. In the process of socialization individuals get molded to fulfill roles and expectations of the society and polity.

This pattern maintenance in relation to identity of the university is to be understood in terms of both as system and process of political socialization may be understood from different literature that are available on the campus. One such work is by Kanjiv Lochan (1996) in his book *JNU: The Years* have presented a collection of articles on JNU campus of thoughts and reminiscences by senior professors, young teachers and alumni of the university. These articles provide pictures of functioning, problems, special character of university. This book provides information about different aspects of JNU. As most of these are work of memory and most of these contain elements of nostalgia. It may be questionable to use this work as a

study but the kinds of narratives do provide a glimpse of different processes which are important to formation and conceptualization of the university. They also present the popular notion about the culture of the university. To understand these process and existence of an identity of university (being politically active- mention of student protest movements, having significance because of idea of national importance- conceptualization of university in relation with the role that it plays in larger society, kind of political ideology most prominent in the campus as being majorly leftist, how the visualized characteristics of the university are being practiced in the university with agencies of students, teachers and administrators as in the case discussed in chapter). This book provides a general understanding of the university.

Batabyal (2014) provides a historical account of the University starting from conceptualization in 1964 and proposal of the university to 1989. It is based primarily on the parliamentary proceeding (which are detailed), newspaper accounts and pamphlets. It makes the account of university more reliable. It discusses the early conceptualization of university in terms of the ideologies and visualization in terms of kind of university, the university to be “a high quality university that would give India an edge in science and technology” as the need of nation at that time is to progress in science and hence proposing to “have world class department in technology and agricultural science”. (p, 6) Its socialist agenda arising from Nehruvian politics and communist parties at that time which were still struggling to preserve their identities at that time. As a result of which the idea of university was opposed during the presentation of the bill.

Mentioned in the book are instances and examples of student activism, political lives and protest be it regarding the daily lives of students like (water politics during mid 1980s) (Batabyal, 2014 p. 191) or demonstration of JNU of its ‘social self’ “socializing the new students in the new milieu through ‘pamphlets’, and “pamphlet writing as being the contribution of JNU’s student community”, how writing and reading of these pamphlets because of their use to spreading awareness about the issues “provided students a new world: an insight into contemporary socio-economic and political issues.....also being a collective effort it helped in community building in the campus. (Batabyal 2014 p,193) apart from that there is discussion such as of directly related to understanding of different parties Such as SFI and what role did it play in the communist current in “institutionalizing and establishing the organized student movement in JNU during 1980’s”. The idea of the party is discussed in

light of the student and teacher members of the party and how it went about conceptualizing/reforming itself in that time.

The book provides both macro and micro level of understanding of structures and functions of the university, discussing its cultural social and political dimensions. This may help in understanding of process of student activism and understanding of ongoing process of political socialization in the campus.

Also the conceptualization of JNU university as mentioned on the university site: *the very Nehruvian objectives embedded in the founding of the university, national integration, social justice, secularism, the democratic way of life, international understanding and scientific approach to the problems of society had build into it constant and energetic endeavor to renew knowledge through self-questioning.*” Provides an understanding of how the university identifies itself.

Along with the newspaper articles about university provide processes (protests, agitations issues) and how the university is perceived by the others one such example from the newspaper the Indian express is:

“JNU and its teachers and students stand for the idea of a nation that is espoused by a majority of the oppressed and working classes in the country...the teachers and students of JNU have made concerted efforts to break “Hindu society and the nation”. JNU hence having a distinct character do sustain an idea about the university. These characters may also be looked at as by understanding the presence of posters in the university campus.

Politics, as explained by Minogue (1995), is also related to process of dramatization, formation of ideals (“ideals being the concepts by which political parties identify themselves” [p, 79]), and ideologies. An important skill for politician is “of constructing a position which will appeal to many people” (p, 65)... and the work of a politician is presented through the metaphor of a work of magician. Hence, in the context of the university presence and understanding of these posters in relation to these concepts would be to see are these posters related to any of the above processes? And what are the purposes for which these parties are involved in making these posters?

Political culture

According to Formisano (2001), the concept of political culture has been conceptualized from various perspectives. Each of the perspective provides a different approach to understanding of the term. Mentioned by Pateman (1971) is the understanding of “Parson’s framework to understand political culture and structure...the political structure to be seen as a structure of shared political values (shared, internalized, normative culture) that defines their normative situation.” Further mentioned is the “internalization of norms is important for political efficacy”. Political efficacy² as discussed by Easton and Dennis mentioned by Pateman have “three dimensions the evaluative or the normative, the psychological (the feeling of personal effectiveness or ego strength), and cognitive (knowledge and belief about the operation of the democratic political structure”. Also mentioned by John Street is the political culture not just as given but as a “lived and not just held but culture as a constant state of flux”. Hence conceptualization of political culture for the process of political participation, being motivated to participate in the political activity is getting influenced both by political structure as given and also as a dynamic and lived experience. An experience, need to be understood in terms of formation of norms, values and behaviors which are in constant mode of change. So while understanding the university and its political culture is the need to understand how the political involvement of the students began in the campus, what are the various changes that have happened and how are they getting shaped through different practices in present context. What re the various values, norms and believes that are being formed and practiced by students in the present context? And how are they being perceived as? As mentioned by Street (1994) is also important to understand are the various conveyed appropriate images, myths and symbols. How can then the use of appropriate image, myths and symbols are understood in the context of the study, relating the posters as the symbolic representations (as the tools for socialization)?

Wall Posters as Tools of Public Pedagogy on JNU Campus

“The posters and the graffiti in JNU stand out because of their unique combination of artistic genius, ready wit, and relevance to our contemporary social ethos...and are also

² As conceptualized by Campbell, Gurin and Miller (1950) mentioned by Pateman (1971) political efficacy as a “feeling that individual political action does have or can have an impact on the political practice i.e. It is worthwhile to perform one’s civic duties”

proof of how minimalism works in terms of painting; a picture can indeed narrate several stories, without the aid of too many ‘bombastic’ words”. (Gnagy, 2015)

Ongoing process of political socialization and student activism which can also be understood in light of presence of the posters in campus for example in the work *University as a site for New Social Movements: a study of identity based student activism in Jawaharlal Nehru University* by Gaurav Jogi Pathania. He in chapter 3 and 4 discusses how certain idols and icons and model that are used by members of different parties for presenting their ideologies through the posters. The different identities of historical figures are used as models for asserting their concern with the issues and ideas. An example is of Ambedkar as an “ideologues of depressed” by different parties. Examples such as these are there also in terms of ideologies or ideas about university which are still present in these posters.

These ideas relate to student politics, student activism, political culture, and space for such an environment may be understood in light of political socialization and how these posters become the tools and medium to express ideas, identities, spread awareness. These issues of ideas, identities and awareness may also be analyzed in terms of the role that these posters play. The posters at times have been used as a means to protest.

These posters if understood as in light of the identities of the student parties and the individuals who make them can they be located as a means to pursue the students who are new to the culture? Who makes them? What is the process of making and putting up of these posters? How do these parties or individuals contest for space? Who are these posters addressed to? It is also related to the discourse/ a subfield of sociology as sociology of art and public pedagogy dimension to understand political socialization process.

Also understanding these posters in dimensions of context, space and institution of JNU makes them having a distinct character and identity. As mentioned by Giroux in relation to the cultural theories – “culture’s role as an educational site where identities are being continuously transformed, power is enacted, and learning assumes a political dynamic as it becomes not only the condition for the acquisition of agency but also sphere for imagining oppositional change”. (p, 60) As these posters are mostly made by students who are already a part of JNU and associated with political parties. The posters as part of JNU culture becomes means for asserting idea of change and imagining and expressing a different worldview. As expressed by Giroux “culture plays a central role in producing narratives, metaphors, and

images that exercise a powerful pedagogical force over how people think of themselves and their relationship to others". Understanding these posters as a part of culture of campus then present and the kind of contents that these posters carry may be related to how the realities are being produced and presented. These posters may also be understood as the tools and means to socialize students. The existence and content of these posters do indicate towards process of socialization.

For example there are different themes which emerge in these posters.

- 1) Ideology³: posters which are meant to convey the ideology of the parties (having slogans such as: stand for cultural nationalism, concept of university, different thinkers such as Marx: Marxism is not a dogma but guide to action before Godawari hostel and administration block)
- 2) Inequality: defend the right to equality, quality, affordable education, health and social services.
- 3) Everyday resistance⁴: for example- Education divorced from life is lies and hypocrisy, study and struggle

Somrita Gnaguly in her article *Painting Resistance: A Study of the Political Graffiti in Jawaharlal Nehru University* states:

They are, of course, the voice of dissent on campus. While they do not have individual tags, signatures or markers, they are commissioned by different political parties and their students'-wings and they therefore necessarily have the name of the political party highlighted. While the individual artists remain anonymous, their political affiliation is only too visible. Relating it to the process of formation and claiming of space one can relate it to the ongoing processes of socialization and practice of kind of culture and ideas that the university tends to follow. As mentioned about one of the examples given by her in "it is

³ The concept of ideology here is referred to understanding of truth and hence not just what is the truth but as mentioned by Minogue "both to the truth and also to all the other beliefs which are judged to be false in terms of that belief." (p, 99) and also mentioned in relation to politics is "Ideologies... claim exclusive truth. They explain not only the world, but the false beliefs of opponents as well. Ideologists possess the long- sought knowledge of how to abolish politics and create perfect society." (p, 100) Hence ideology in context of these posters would be how these posters portray the idea about truth, Justice, and change (justice which need to be looked at in relative and subjective terms).

⁴ Resistance here is in relation to ideologies, ideas, change and idea of justice. What are the ideas that are considered worthy of standing for and against? How is the struggle for maintaining the identity and presenting a change being carried forward?

evident that students on campus indeed follow this unwritten law of democratically respecting each other's wall space, strictly. The picture shows an old sticker of the SFI on a wall, indicating that the wall space has been occupied by this particular party. The sticker has undergone wear and tear and is almost on its last leg clearly evincing that there has been a considerable time lapse since the sticker must have been put up on that wall. For reasons that we can only guess and cannot be certain of, the party did not put up any poster or graffiti on this wall after marking it as its own. What is impressive is that the wall lies bare even now, with no other party usurping that space for itself, despite the apparent neglect of this space by the party that had originally claimed it". These are the ideas which may be related to understanding of university as a system and identity of the university in relation to its culture, norms and values.

Wall Posters and Public Pedagogy: A Review of Literature

"Street art as Picasso puts it, belongs to everyone and no one" (Brassai, p 254). Be it organized or instinctive, political or puerile, original or inspired, casual or serious, street art is always necessarily personal and deeply-felt, as far as the artist is concerned. And high or not, it is definitely art ...street art is about making a statement, and more often than not, this statement is political; b) street art is about intentionally creating something on the walls that will be visible to the public. It is not, as Tristan Manco suggests, about painting old legends on walls, but about creating a modern "urban mythology" (sited in Ganguly, 2015)

Ashley J. Holmes (2014) *Street Art as Public Pedagogy & Community Literacy: What Walls Can Teach Us* has analyzed how public art plays an important pedagogical role specifically in the case study of a project Stop Telling Women To Smile (STWTS). According to her "STWTS demonstrates the power of public art to address injustice and provoke community conversation... if seen as educational sites". STWTS uses public spaces as sites to address issues in society. One example discussed in it is work by artist Fazlalizadeh. Her work presents issues of race, gender, politics, and/or sexual orientation, connecting with national and international current events. Her work Get Angry was inspired by protests and revolution in 2011.

According to Holmes "by physically taking up public space, the posters confront members of the community and provoke attention." Taking the project as a case study it intends to understand public art as public pedagogy and community literacy. To do so it relates to Henry

A. Giroux (1999/2002) study to analyze how the messages serve a pedagogic function. As the street art project is situated in the 'non-commoditized public sphere' it serves an important function of presenting 'voices and perspectives of who live there within that community'. According to her "the stories communicated through STWTS work as a form of public pedagogy that educates local community members in a number of ways: 1) by documenting and highlighting the problem of street harassment; 2) by placing the faces and words of women directly into public spaces; 3) by speaking back to both offenders and potential offenders; and, 4) by providing women and others with the language to defend themselves against future street harassment". At one level these are documentation of silenced voices of women's experiences and narratives on the other they also are for the larger cultural conversation of issues related to harassment and abuse. Hence these posters are a means to address local problems and move communities towards social change.

The other examples discussed in the paper are of using these posters and these sites as a tool to for pedagogical practice in classrooms by requiring students to be more observant of their environment and using these as sites for learning. These sites become a tool for learning and seeing their environments critically. The study presents a case in which importance and use of such posters as pedagogical tool for change is prominent. Be it the change in society, everyday lives or formal settings.

Such studies emphasize the needs of change (challenge the notion of education being just limited to four walls of classroom) in understanding of sites of education. They also promote the significance of such work as not being just mere piece of art because of its aesthetic appeal but also use of such work for understanding of the society. Not being confined to an institution and being available to general public such work address and attract a wider public.

Such work can also provide us a better understanding of the posters existing in JNU campus.

As these posters are about different themes these portray different identities (caste, class, and gender. And how these identities will be presented by different parties) in them, these provide a picture of processes of socialization (promotion of ideologies through posters- Marxism leftist etc.). It in turn may indicate how these are there because of particularity of the context (institution, time, and space). And their existence in terms of occupying of space or presenting an idea, addressing to an audience hence being sites for pedagogy and protest indicate towards possible reasons and importance of their existence.

Heidi Jo Davis-Soylu (2011) in her article *Pretty Fierce: Amazon Women and Art Education* studies how the stories about Amazon women (nomadic nation with female warriors) have been depicted in two different settings by analyzing the visual media. First is of formal art education curriculum (content analysis of textbooks - K-16 textbooks, undergraduate art history textbook) and the other is at the sites of public pedagogy (social media, sculpture, architecture, ceremonial artifacts, comic books, games, toys, and film). The design of study is based on John Dewey's concept of selection and rejection from the book *Art as Experience* (1934/1980). As cited in the text "Dewey (1934/1980) suggests that in the creation of an artwork careful consideration goes into selecting what is relevant while rejecting what is irrelevant". His ideas have been used as conceptual framework and tools to understand the practice of art and analyze the data. This selection/rejection practice of the arts studio is applied as a research tool in this survey of art education. And complementing it is the analysis of depictions of these images.

It is interesting to see the kinds of differences that emerge because of selection and rejection technique and depiction of the imagery in and outside the school. The findings suggest there is a difference in conceptualization, selection and visualization of gender in both mediums. The inside school had selection of female imagery more related to traditional roles in which Amazon motif was rejected for Greek vases in which women are depicted as picking fruit, weaving wool, as onlookers at the scene of a battle, or being abducted, but never as Amazon warriors. According to the study ancient nomadic women have been rejected in the formal curriculum and their presence in the visual culture outside the formal setting is more visible. The public sphere also plays with the imagery of the warriors which may or may not be in positive sense when analyzed through gender lens. The depiction has been used in three different ways according to the author- "(a) identity formation, (b) propaganda, and (c) liberation.

As an instrument of identity formation, visual imagery in public domain present females in opposition to social and political gender norms and roles in the nomadic themes. And the presentation along with their imagery is related to themes of liberation and challenging stereotypes. It suggests that public pedagogy have framed the motif and have evolved whereas the formal schooling environment has rejected it. Based on these findings the author suggests implementations for formal education, as public pedagogy dimension to these identities and representation to be included in formal education system to enhance and

promote discussion on the gender norms stereotypes and present the view that female identities and roles has not always been in the same way but are rather socially constructed, are not historically universal and have varied. Hence, there is a need for promoting children to be critical consumers of the visual culture as the visual culture does not provide complete picture of history and often the children's literature contains stereotypes.

Theoretical Framework to study Resistance and Public Pedagogy

The term public pedagogy as mentioned in by Sandlin, Malley and Burdick (2011) first appeared in 1894 and since then there have been various context, meanings and approaches to the term. The in their paper *Mapping the complexity of Public Pedagogy Scholarship: 1894-2010* have tried to broadly categorize analysis of 420 studies as following- a) citizenship within and beyond schools, b) popular culture and everyday life, c) informal institutions and public spaces, d) dominant cultural discourses, and e) public intellectualism and social activism. (p, 340)

Various scholars have used the term in different way focusing on different possible aspects, such as- using the term public in relation to availability of space (kind of audience- institutional and beyond institutional boundary, kind of administration- public and private, societal context- neoliberal regime, changing technology and globalization) and hence pedagogy being learning associated with such a space. Mentioned before are the work of Soyly and Holmes, which study the space being available to general public and use of the artwork to understand the dialogic possibilities of the pedagogy.

The works by Giroux about using the term public pedagogy, if analyzed according to their categories will be covering more than one category. Such work indicate towards the different possibilities of the meaning associated with the term and how there is a need to specify the context and meaning associated with the term.

As mentioned earlier, this study is about how visual imagery, art community and public domain may be influencing political socialization and student activism and resistance. The visualization and presentation of these do affect the viewer as they become a part of their daily lives. Understanding of these posters in relation to the culture of JNU campus, the production of these posters may also be a part of JNU campus. As these are unique to campus and are produced in context of the university and wider society. Culture as defined by Giroux

(2004) “plays a central role in producing narratives, metaphors, and images that exercise a powerful pedagogical force over how people think of themselves and their relationship to others. Culture is the primary sphere in which individuals, groups, and institutions engage in the art of translating the diverse and multiple relations that mediate between private life and public concerns.” This understanding of culture may be related to the understanding of the posters in terms of as a product of the culture. As these posters present different narratives, images in order to serve a pedagogical function by presenting different functions, idols, concerns and images of reality.

According to him culture may also be related to how the public issues are translated into the private concerns. It may be related by understanding how these posters relate and portray the larger issues of neo-liberalization to issues of daily life (contextualizing the poor in light of different policies and reforms). Related to this is expressed is the idea of “permanent education” by Raymond Williams:

“What [permanent education] valuably stresses is the educational force of our whole social and cultural experience. It is therefore concerned, not only with continuing education, of a formal or informal kind, but with what the whole environment, its institutions and relationships, actively and profoundly teaches. . . . [Permanent education also refers to] the field in which our ideas of the world, of ourselves and of our possibilities, are most widely and often most powerfully formed and disseminated”.

It is related to idea of pedagogy in this context “pedagogy is no longer restricted to what goes on in schools, but becomes a defining principle of a wide ranging set of cultural apparatuses engaged. Pedagogy represents both a mode of cultural production and a type of cultural criticism that is essential for questioning the conditions under which knowledge is produced, values affirmed, affective investments engaged and subject positions put into place, negotiated, taken up, or refused. Pedagogy is a referent for understanding the conditions of critical learning and the often hidden dynamics of social and cultural reproduction”. (p, 63)

These posters when understood as a means of performing the function of public pedagogy present these ideas. And these posters when used by different educators or by the artist/artist associated with a political party or the educators who include understanding of these posters in their classrooms as one discussed above in example by Holmes in which there is mentioned the teachers including these in their daily classroom practices in order to include

student's life world in formal setting is one example of critical education. And the idea of such an education to be pedagogical is related with the idea of pedagogy being as discussed by Giroux- pedagogy ...addressed as a moral and political discourse in which students are able to connect learning to social change, scholarship to commitment, and classroom knowledge to public life'. (p, 72)

As a critical practice, pedagogy's role lies not only in changing how people think about themselves and their relationship to others and the world, but also in energizing students and others to engage in those struggles that further possibilities for living in a more just society. These posters in themselves, the artists and people engaged in making them are playing the role of a critical educator.

Specialty of these posters is that they are not just means of public pedagogy which is just men to aware, arouse certain feeling and discomfort, rebel, play transformative role, join protest/act about the wrong that is happening around them but a pedagogy which is which is playing a role of political socialization as these are meant to mould student's identities not just in according to the ideas presented but also to enter the larger identity or culture of the campus which requires multiplicities of views, democracy, space for diversity and discussion. Hence political socialization in this case need not be discussed as happening in the society as discussed by Langton but the culture which is due to the public pedagogy dimension to it.

In the light of the above theoretical framework, we propose to undertake the study with the following broad objective and specific research questions:

Broad Objectives

- To investigate the uniqueness of JNU as a site of political activism and how students are socialized to become politically active beings.
- To study how wall posters on campus act as tools of public pedagogy to transmit ideologies, express political standpoints and socialize students as activists

Specific research questions:

1. What signifies the political culture and activism on JNU campus? (How do we understand the origins and sustenance of a political culture of resistance on the University campus; what

are the factors that have contributed to the emergence of unique political culture in the University?)

2. What have been the ways in which the political aspirations and activism expressed on the University? (How do members of JNU student community - alumni and current - visualize major changes over time in the political culture of the university and the manner it is expressed)

3. What is the logic, rationale purpose of making wall posters of resistance? (Who makes them? What are the processes, intentions and ideas behind making and displaying posters?)

4. Do wall posters seek to socialize students politically? If so, how do general students (non-activists) look at these posters? Did the posters change their ideas of issues and make them politically conscious students?

Justification of the Study Setting

Wall posters do exist in other university campuses too. However, the choice of JNU as a study setting is based on its uniqueness among its peers. The university was chosen because of its political significance and student activism. Though there is already some literature on culture and political understanding of the university, there is no systematic study of unpacking the political culture and its variants. It is this that makes the setting and the selection of JNU as a site for the study makes it more relevant and apt. The chapter 2 discusses a brief account of the University and how it had transformed over the years.

Methodology

The study is primarily an **exploratory** in nature. It focuses on a very narrow issue of the making of the activist, his/her socialization and the relevance of posters in understanding the political culture of resistance among students on a university campus. However, in doing so, it is intended to understand the broader contexts of emergence of such culture of resistance public pedagogy on campus.

Firstly, the study needed to explore the archival material from individuals, institution and the media to collect information and understand factors contributing to the historical evolution and transformation of the political culture and activism on campus. An attempt was made to

collect posters from various political parties, researcher's own collection (those which were present in 2016) and also from private individuals who had collected them over time as a matter of interest and the researcher had collected some through this process.

Secondly, materials in the form of reflections and informal and in-depth interviews with the students (activists and non-activists) and faculty (retired and current) were collected on the political activism, posters, and the purposes posters serve in the university campus. An attempt was also made to understand the culture of student resistance on the campus and the role posters play in that.

Thirdly, the study also looked at the relationships of visuals and the texts and how they correspond to produce a culture of resistance. An attempt was made to understand what makes the student more attracted to the posters - the visual art or the text or both and How?

Fourthly, the study aimed to conduct in-depth interviews with various potential informants:

a) Former students (some of them may have been teachers as well):

Interviews with these provided how the culture of the university had undergone transformation and how does it still retain its unique identity? This provided an understanding of how political culture emerged on the campus and what are the various characters of the university.

b) Present students- There were semi-structured interviews conducted with the students from various schools. Also to understand the overall composition of the students, survey method was used (a structured questionnaire which included both close and open ended questions)

c) Members of student parties – leader, student artists

This provided information about the process and importance of these posters for the parties. As the interviews were done with members of different student party members, it provided a dimension of relevance of these to their identity, how and why do these posters exist in the university. As these are the students which may be understood as mainly involved in the political debates, issues, and student activism in campus their interviews are important for

study. Also the interviews with the student artist will provided a better understanding of the process of poster making, decision of the content, assertion for space for the posters.

d) Non party/activist members - Newly admitted Students at MA level and students at M Phil and PhD level

It was also a part of purposive sampling because interviews of these will indicated the importance and situated the effect of the posters in relation to public pedagogy and political socialization. There was differentiation which was made in sense to understand different types of students. It was to better understand and locate the process of political socialization. This demarcation may provide difference in thinking or indication to the process.

Table 1.2: Overall School-wise distribution of Sample Respondents (currently registered students)

School category	Number of Questionnaires
Sciences –SBT, SCMM, SES, SLS, SCIS, SPS	28
Languages-SL, SCSS	30
Social Science	27
International Studies	26
Arts and Aesthetics	6
Law and Governance	7
Total	124

Chapterisation

The dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter one provides the overview of the study by providing and contextualizing the need for the study and how the wall posters in the context of the university are unique part of the political culture of the university. Chapter two provides understanding of the university and its political culture, university as a space which is a result of the visualization and implementation of the ideas. Chapter three provides an understanding of the political activism and socialization on the campus and the different aspects of political engagement from its conception and then the present form, how various practices have contributed to the political culture of the university. Chapter deals with the issue of how wall posters provide a platform public pedagogy on campus. Chapter 5 is the conclusion which expresses how these platforms become platform of learning which is happening outside the walls of the classroom.

Chapter 2

Jawaharlal Nehru University: The Origins, Transformation and the Student Perceptions

The chapter briefly outlines the moorings of the University, its uniqueness and character as it developed over the years. It is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the way JNU is made out to be a unique university that sought to be a unique university in the Indian context. The second part deals with the perceptions of students in terms of how they view their university.

I. Origins and Unique Character of JNU

Batabyal in his book *JNU: The Making of a University* presents a vivid description of the way JNU is conceived and developed right from its moorings. It was in 1964 that M.C. Chagla, the Minister of Education at that time, presented the Jawaharlal Nehru University Bill in the Rajya Sabha⁵. According to Batabyal (2014), different elements of the university gave its structure a unique character. In developing such unique character, he notes that different people were involved - in conceptualization, imagination and opposition - who represented the wider political and social discourses in the country at that time. The debate that seemed to have gone around during that time about the university was about addressing the national situations, needs and aspirations, social and political conditions of the time⁶. Accordingly, people were drawn from different walks, streaks and regions to make it truly a university of 'National' character. It is not to say that there were no debates and controversies that surrounded the establishment of JNU. There had been discussion and opposition around the need for such a university⁷ to mere fact about the name⁸ of the university. Despite all the opposition, the JNU university bill was passed on 14 November 1966 and the university was

⁵ As stated in JNU the making of the University Rakesh Batabyal

⁶ One-Trying to incorporate Nehru's socialist view in university curriculum...to be in the bedrock of the university's ethos-serving the poor and needy rather than the rich." (Batabyal, p.8, *report of evidence*). Two- the whole possibility of visualization of university of a kind is also a result of the times and the people involved.

⁷ Discussion and need felt as expressed by Batabyal need of that time due to distrust and failure of educational institutional system in the country, need for the institution to share the load of the other university specially Delhi University. Lok Sabha Debate in Lok Sabha –“the new university to help manage the overflow from Delhi University.... Chagla had argued that DU had become an unwieldy and cumbersome institution and its academic and its research standards were being diluted due to its heavy pressure of numbers”.

⁸ Impact of as poor precedent on democratic process for future generations..... The legislators were reluctant to set a prototype for developing personality cults and therefore unwilling to name university after Pandit Nehru.(Batabyal, p.18)

established. V.K.R.V. Rao in response to a question in the Parliament explained the ‘uniqueness’ of the proposed university. According to him, the university should be different from all other universities in this country and therefore unique in itself. Furthermore, as a university bearing Jawaharlal Nehru’s name, it should embody three basic principles: national integration, establishment of a decent society and a universalistic philosophy.

Further, the uniqueness of JNU could be understood from various aspects of the university such as following:

- 1) **National character of the university:** There were different forms in which the national character has been the focal point of the conceptualization of JNU. As Batabyal remarks,
The focal issues at the time of establishment of the university were "a) federating national level science, technology and language institutions within the university and b) national integration of the students⁹, faculty and administrative board of JNU” (Batabyal, 2014: p.32). The origin of JNU is not to reproduce Eurocentric university in structure and nature.
- 2) **Academics:** JNU as a university when conceptualized as a centre of academic engagement of high level. The idea was to make an institute for scientific research which will be inter-disciplinary in character, which will “embody a unique synthesis of humanities, science and technology” (Batabyal, 2014: p.15)
- 3) **Emphasis on excellence:** Because the university was considered as a tribute to a personality, there has been an emphasis from the start to make it a great university, hence there were efforts in terms of both making it a centre for excellence- Batabyal, citing the JNU Bill, writes, “the Jawaharlal Nehru University **would reflect the vision** of Indian Leadership and the typical enlightened liberal understanding of postgraduate study research of Chagla’s era”. He continues, "The minister was of the opinion that the university would produce great scientists and engineers, and also those well versed in humanities. To facilitate this, ‘while science and technology will constitute the core of the new university at the post-graduate level’ there will be facilities for ‘specialization in social sciences and language not only of India, but also

⁹ To Bhupesh Gupta...the proposal needed to be viewed from the perspective of the prevailing economic conditions in India. ‘the first thing’ according to him, was to ensure the doors of the university are open to ‘the sons of the working people, the workers, the peasants and the middle classes’.... ‘different outlook would have to include the primary role of the state undertaking to provide grants, scholarships and other subsidies for such education...government benefits would be applicable to students from both the lower- and middle-income groups...shifting the emphasis of debate about university ‘from upper classes to the classes that are economically at the bottom layers of the society’. (Batbyal, p.8, sited from *report of evidence*)

different countries of the world, so that this university caters to the harmonious development of both science and humanities' on an international level" (Batabyal, 2014: p.16).

- 4) **Autonomy:** There was vision that the element of freedom in making it an autonomous institution, autonomy which was specially considered in terms of making the teachers the decision makers of the syllabus. The teachers will decide what to teach and *the syllabus will be dependent on the teachers unlike* the other institutions where the syllabus is already defined in terms of what and how to teach. According to Professor Romila Thapar, "Most obvious, through this entire debate, was the underlying urge to create a completely autonomous institution, and this could be done by making the teachers the custodians of university" (cited in Batabyal, 2014: p.40).
- 5) **Structure of academic programs:** The structural provisions in the schools at course and syllabus level and the possibility of attending and opting for courses from some other centers or schools, flexibility and freedom in choosing the courses provided by faculty and opted by students, multidisciplinary approach, *providing more than one teacher of a discipline in one center*, having people from different disciplines in one center to provide space and a sense of an interdisciplinary approach are some of the characteristics that were built into JNU.
- 6) **Residential campus:** The idea of the university to be situated in Delhi to was to relieve the burden from DU and to maintain its national character. One of the *factors was to make it a residential campus*. It was suggested by the JNU Bill to set up a 'combined university' comprising both residential and day scholars, catering solely to postgraduates¹⁰. This element of having a residential campus has given JNU a unique character as it provides people from different parts of the country and the world to live together. And hence, it is made to evolve as a place for global and national diversity and plurality. This residential character has also contributed to the socialization and intense political engagement of the students as it provided space to people from different backgrounds and experiences to interact with each other. Batabyal cites a quote from one of the teachers:

"...the city was ruthlessly arid, and full of the kind of crass Punjabi entrepreneurship which a Malayali, with a clannish compulsion for discourse on the latest debate emerging out of *Mathurbhumi*, or a Bengali, with its

¹⁰ Batabyal, 2014, p.28, sited from Gupta, Bhupesh, *Rajya Sabha debates*, 1 September, 1965, Vol. LIII, No. 12, cc. 2301.

genteel elitism, found difficult to cope with. The campus was heaven for them...Enclosed as they were in their class, religion and ethnic shells, they suddenly found themselves at a place which held no meaning for all these virtual boundaries, and yet could interact... JNU ambience transcended the limited horizon of the particular and one became part of the larger Universe...”¹¹

7) **The space (physical) provided:** The place where the university was situated in, along with the kind of structure there, had also given it a different character. The land in Munirka was allotted for the university. As per the Loksabha Debates of 1965, “the university would be located in south Delhi near Munirka village, i.e., Ramakrishnapuram, where a site measuring 600 acres had been earmarked”. The natural space is described by Batabyal very aptly: "The boundary wall which separated the world outside from the inside, the kind of vegetation, the buildings and the roads, it allowed the nature to coexist. Also the kind of infrastructure architecture provided the university spaces that allowed the students to socialize with each other. And hence different spaces for discussion and debate. Kinds of canteens, kinds of shops specially Dhabas etc". Further, “the spacious dining halls and the club buildings provided a wonderful open space for students from various parts of the country to mingle, chat and interact. The post office, bank, coffee rooms and supermarket also sprang up to cater to the needs of the JNU population” (Batabyal, 2014: p.168). Describing the infrastructure developed on campus, Batabyal narrates:

“the nine-storey library, the pinnacle of the academic complex, continues to be the center of academic, political and social life of the university...this was where the student leaders, cadres and non-cadre members of the communist parties and the other student formations like the Free Thinkers or the non-representative and most often secretive extreme radicals would discuss politics, academics and other topics....” (Batabyal, p.177)

Distinct spaces for political debate: certain places provided JNU space for political discussion, providing JNU its unique character of political discussion and debates. For Batabyal, “in 1980s, the canteen emerged as the summit for social and intellectual discussion. Canteen tables would be full before election when the politicians would entice and dialogue with the non-politicos. Over a period of time, the university

¹¹ Batabyal, cited from Harjeet Singh, in *Booklet of Aluminni association of JNU*, 2009, p.55.

gradually developed a third track, the politico-academic track where the professional politicians emerge as the winner in faculty recruitment...”

- 8) **People: It was** the network of people, political context of the time and the associations which gave the university a leftist character as mentioned by Batabyal. The different personalities which joined JNU both in making and taking various positions of professors, vice chancellor, etc. along with the kind of students that joined at that time made it a unique place. Liberals like Chagla held secularism as the unifying factor in a country of pluralities. “JNU was the vision of such liberals who anchored their liberal attitudes principally in the ethos of nationalism, anti-colonialism and secularism which they believed would be coterminous with an autonomous national educational culture in sync with the historical evolution of the society” (Batabyal, 2014: p.66)

Character of students in the University: Who should come to study in the University?

Tara Chand, a legendary teacher, knew from experience that the students who would come to the university would not be children and would soon settle down in life in a couple of years or so, and hence it was important to take an interest in them ‘not as boys and girls but as men and women’. He therefore asked the people to develop such bodies in the new university where young adults can articulate their own concerns (Batabyal, 2014: p.40 cited from *Rajya Sabha Debates*, 2 December 1965, c.3583).

Further, the identity of students in terms of socio-economic profile informs us that a large number of young, and sometimes not so young, people arrived from mofussil towns, villages and first and second-generation literate families, and have provided the university with a mosaic of vitality and genuine simplicity. This unpretentious and wholesome section was the one which learnt the language of intellectual commitment, followed and asked the questions. It is this section that helped the university zealously guard the autonomy of the intellectual. It is this section of the small-town non-radical which did not allow Delhi’s social elite to capture the university (Batabyal, 2014: p.181)

“JNU was the only institution which created an atmosphere of a horizontal level meeting ground for young people without regard to division such as rural-urban, poor-rich, influential-obscure, high-status-not-so-high-status groups. It is here the admission policy of the university became very significant” (Batabyal, 2014: p.182).

While the influx of the students began, the political and intellectual atmosphere also began to rapidly change. Some of the discussions were on international issues such as the Vietnam War (which was in its final phase), the radical and communist movements in Latin-America, the Bangladesh war, etc. The students joined the university at the time when these developments were taking place around the world. The unity that the Bangladesh war had created among the nationalist left and other progressive forces across the country had also found voice on the campus too. So the understanding of the students as young adults capable of having an opinion and hence the vision as to provide the space and freedom for that individuality to flourish was one of the aim. Along with all these factors, JNU emerged in the context of larger global and national developments which shaped the university. However, university as imagined and put into practice in the early days has over the years transformed and gone through many physical and academic changes. It is in this context, the current batches of students are asked about their perceptions of their own university.

II. Perceptions of Students about the University

In order to set the context for understanding the student activism and political socialization, the researcher asked the students about how they perceive various aspects of the University in which they are currently enrolled, namely, JNU. It begins by discussing the reasons for their joining the university and moves on to include aspects such as

Students were asked what were the reasons for which they joined the university and how did they get to know about it and why in particular they chose JNU in case they had the option of joining some other? The intention was to know how does the university attract and maintain its national character in terms of its student body.

It is important to note that JNU entrance examination is held in various centers around the country, this makes the university more approachable and accessible to students from all parts of the country. They don't have to come all the way to Delhi to give the exam. This increases their chances of appearing for the written exam. Also, the exams are held in other languages, which make it more inclusive. Another aspect is through different structural changes to admission policy such as the provision of deprivation points for various categories like for students from backward regions¹², for female students, students with disability¹³, and students

¹² As mentioned by Prakash Karat it was due to the student politics that such an issue was raised as the students themselves did a research on the kind of students who are joining the university reflect an elite character. And it was due to the presence of people in the higher position specially Moonis Raza who looked into the matter and

from backward classes also strengthened its inclusive policy of student recruitment. It is this unique admission policy which made diversity possible on campus. It also made the campus politics unique considering the role that students coming from different geographic areas brought along with them to the campus.

When asked the question how would you describe your experience on JNU campus? Students described it in many ways (See Table 2.1). There are various ways in which the experience of students could be looked at. Each category has distinct meanings, interpretations and experiences through which the meaning of the terms may be understood.

Table 2.1: Experience on JNU

Experience Criteria	Number of responses
Academics	41
Diversity	15
Freedom	14
Just and Inclusion	1
Positive experience of Political Socialization	16
Excessive Political activism	13
Socially alienating	2
Others	13
No response	5

It may be noted that a large number of students chose JNU as their university because of its academic reputation and excellence. They chose this university in particular because the image of JNU is that of 'academically' good institution. The students generally got to know about the University through the university web site, media (newspaper, television and social media), and experiences of friends, family, teachers and seniors. They knew that the

considered the point raised by students. Hence the innovation and policy formation when seen in this particular context is both bottom up and top down. A possibility realized and then the changes made with the help of the students and faculty. This also is something which is unique to the culture of JNU. As discussed are the various demands and issues raised by students at times by the students of JNU with the help of its political culture.

¹³ There are various levels at which the factor of inclusive structure may be looked at one is the policy for admission seats reserved for the category. Another is mentioned by one student with visual impairment. The fact that "JNU is more inclusive than the teacher and the students are very helpful also there are other things like ramps special center for students with disability in the library for students (Hellen Keller center) all these things are the things that I like about JNU. JNU though not an ideal situation for students with disability but still better than the other parts and institutions I have been to". Another student mentioned the role of the political parties as very important a friend that she had made in the center (senior) who accompanies her in reaching different places and sometimes in reading text to her. Another is provision of a reader or a person to write the exams for the students with disability. And last but not the least is platform at the school level at SFC meeting where there is a possibility to raise issues faced by the students with the help of student representative.

university has a reputation for being a good university for research as a factor for choosing the university. As university is most often in the news for some or the other reason its reputation keeps on attracting the talent from across the country:

According to a respondent, “all of my professors in Delhi University are from JNU only. And I am interested in academics. JNU was a good option”, another student mentioned, “the research faculty is the best here”. There have been repeated responses from students such as “the university has a good reputation”. As one student put it: “it is a big name... so people have a dream to come here...I also had... I had two - three professors who were fortunately from JNU.....That's why, I felt I should go there”. Yet another student stated, “I had heard from my seniors that it is the best university...because here school of environmental sciences is the oldest in India and it is one of the best, therefore I came here to join”.

Students seem to have chosen the University for the kind of academic choices it offers. As one student puts it: “I heard from my brother that here it is flexible and has many choices for academic programs”. Another remarked, I joined because, "it is world famous for its language courses” Another remarked, “JNU is known for economics, it is one of the best in India”.

The choice of JNU as an academic destination is also because here "the teachers are very good”. According to one student, “it was a pleasure to come here...clearing the exam was like a dream come true... the readings that we read in DU are written by the faculty here...one get to work with them”, He continues, “I actually had an interest in doing research. Regarding my discipline is also political science and I wanted to pursue higher education and JNU seemed feasible and I had prepared also for JNU. The kind of environment we have here, it is incredible”

Some students got attracted to the university because of its progressive character. “I heard a lot about JNU that there are progressive people in the University and, in terms of academics, people have freedom in research for choosing topic and great people have been to this university”, A science student recounts: "In JNU when I came my lab was one of the top 5 labs in India so it was a good thing to be here. Because JNU was established as a research university first.... there is a lot of freedom here than in other universities” For another student, subject of History was of interest and that he was advised by his friends to go to JNU. He says, 'if someone want to do MA or M Phil in history, it has got to be JNU. So naturally, by default, he says he came to JNU.

Students do try multiple times to enter the university if they do not make it in their first attempt as the competition for admission is quite difficult. A student opined, "I applied twice

for JNU. I completed my BA in 2008 and after that appeared for JNU, but did not get through. I got admission in Jamia but I always wanted be in JNU. So in the next year I applied for the second time and got through. When I did not get through JNU I became stubborn to come here... So definitely I felt how to compensate what I lag". He says that once he got admission, he finds the MA course 'rigorous'.

Low cost of good Education:

The idea of JNU being a public university which will provide education at low cost makes the university education accessible to a wide population is something that had shaped the character of the university. As discussed above, The inclusion of students from poorer home backgrounds make it a unique place of simplicity and high thinking. Interestingly, JNU had acquired some stereotypes or topicalities in terms of its simplicity. Batabyal (2014) notes that the students wearing Khadi Kurta pajama, jeans, having a Jhola (kind of a sling bag) is a symbol of their simplicity. This stereotype may also be due to the fact that in our present political scenario these are the kinds of clothes that the politicians wore.

The fact that the students are admitted based on their conditions of marginalization, deprivation and backwardness itself is unique feature of the university. If education is considered as a public good, then it should be equitable distributed and made available to all. This is truer for good quality education. This aspect of inclusion and diversity on campus is what gave JNU its academic and social context a distinct character. Batabyal writes that this has had its impact on the campus politics and political culture: “the teachers began to be intimidated by the left-oriented students’ body. It is here the core of left politics began to take shape. By 1973-74, the left parties, particularly CPI(M) began building its students movement through its student’s wing SFI.... it was soon understood that the students from small towns from the back of beyond were easy constituencies...so the idea that people from backward regions should be given an opportunity began to be used as an admission criterion¹⁴.”

This has had affect on the kind of students who joined JNU. As mentioned by a student activist, “Education in JNU is affordable. Otherwise I wouldn’t be able to go to a university like Delhi University or any other university in the country”. Another activist who came from a backward region of Bihar, who had been to an institution which did not have adequate education facilities notes, “there were so many changes in my life that I couldn’t have

¹⁴ Discussed in the next chapter

imagined... when I worked in a project...I went to Bihar with the team...I got an opportunity to look at my society in a different way...I spent a semester in Germany...All this is because this university gives best education for lesser costs". Yet another activist noted that: "the education here is free... means cheap...you get hostels...mess food is relatively cheaper as compared to the other universities...with the scholarship money I get here I save some for my family too".

Thus, the possibility of social change through higher education made possible by making the 'commodity' of higher education, like JNU education, accessible to sections which couldn't afford it earlier. According to Batabyal, there are two processes which are happening. First, student activists used low cost of education and diversity as a political entity. Second, this has further affected the political culture and the overall character of the university.

JNU Culture and the Context and Causes for becoming Politically Active

Another way in which it may have had impact is what you do students think 'activism' is for? Why do students become activists? What kind of politics they adopt or are attracted to is something which is discussed in the next chapter. All these questions may also be looked at by looking at the background and the stories that the students have narrated about their political journey, hence in a way political culture is also getting decided by this crowd as they are the constituting bodies of it, the notion which prevails "politics is for the rich people, or for people from affluent backgrounds, or for the goons" is something that JNU's political culture has provided an alternative for. Making the students realize a need for political participation as mentioned by a student leading to struggle and stand up for asserting their rights, participate in the cause that they believe in (as the student is not affiliated with any of the political organization and her participation is as she says is 'cause' based):

"Everything here is political, your existence is political. The fact that I am standing here talking to you in this university is a result of politics, policies, the mixture of privileges, struggles and the experiences...then how can I separate myself from the politics...when the politics decides your future you should decide your politics... that is something I have learned from JNU...I never was interested in politics... I use to run away from it!"

There are ways in which this criterion is affecting JNU culture. In a way these elements also come to constitute the University culture, popularly referred to within the university as 'JNU Culture'. The culture of the university is shaped by the context from which they come from

and the experiences that they go through. The wide variety of experiences, that becomes part of JNU culture and which also contribute to become politically active and activists on campus.

Diversity: Students have described their experience in the university in terms of diversity. Diversity here may be looked at in terms of socio-economic profile, states they come from, and diversity in terms of opinions and views. According to them, there is space for discussion and debate, which provides them an opportunity to learn.

Freedom: Freedom is another dimension of the campus culture. Freedom is described by students in terms of the space and flexibility to move around, in terms of expression and to hold opinion, etc. They all claim that their 'university is democratic'. There is space for everyone to speak, everyone can carry on the thing they want. For them, even the teachers are very cordial: "they meet you, they talk to you anywhere and anytime. And I don't think it is there in other universities".

Political culture: Can there be something which could be called as a political culture of JNU? If so then what are the norms and traditions of that culture? How can it be defined? These questions are discussed in the next chapter. However, briefly, what they mean by political culture is that there are platforms for political participation and students generally get involved.

Absence of money and muscle power: Students strongly contend that JNU is distinctly different from other universities in terms of using muscle and money power. This aspect differentiates JNU politics from the politics in other campuses like Delhi University and Allahabad University in specific. According to a student: "... DU politics is totally based on muscle politics and money power. Compared to that, JNU politics is much more accommodative and emancipator in various forms...which shows its democratic potential". Another student observes, "Here, politics is without money. Everyone can take part. No special accord is given to leaders. Like we see in other universities, we do not see the Students' Union president coming in a luxury car with two - three body guards around him/her. ... President is also a student, like everyone he/she is in queue", Politics in JNU is actually free from crime and money power and that is the good thing"

A student remarked, “I did my graduation from Allahabad University, there we have seen another type of student activism... Some students register as students there because they want to do politics (*election ladna hai*) only and there you would see a very bad face of student politics...there is a system (*jugad system*) for the vacant seats....student leaders get their cronies admitted. This doesn't and cannot happen here. See I think, here, we have space for all types of political opinions all type of ideologies, no matter it is left or right or anything”.

Another student puts it as following:

“JNU culture at least has certain kind of democracy and has humane relationships among students and teachers. JNU for me has been how I see JNU. It's mainly in terms of its democratic culture. No doubt it is a contested space, but it still has respect for all”.

Students also spoke of the culture of peaceful protests, debates and non-violent methods used by the students as defining character of JNU culture. Some examples are mentioned by alumni, Saurav Sharma: “...there was an intense debate going-on on some topic... during that debate somebody bit a student of the opposition group... what was beautiful is how everyone reacted to that situation...There was a meeting held about the behavior of that student and condemned the act and felt that that incident should not have happened... And the student in question was asked to apologize for his behavior. It was decided to talk to the student and counsel him” What is interesting here, is the kind of practice the students follow in such similar instances without resorting to any violence. Students also narrated incidents of “boycott”, when somebody misbehaves. Once, members of a party had stopped talking to a student on account of a case of mischief and misbehavior. The students devise some mechanisms for working and dealing with issues. Violence is thus considered as bad and not acceptable on JNU campus.

Students also spoke of JNU politics as a positive experience. According to them the student activists try their best to solve the problems of the students: “*wo jo chappal ghisne ka kaam hota hai na wo JNU ka activist karte hai*... They don't have money to do their politics of lure the students. All they have is their arguments and thoughts that is something they try... they will talk to you about various issues and help you out if you are facing any problem... stand with you if you need it”.

Another student notes that the interaction with the activists begin when the students come to University for admissions...they will help you out...as it is a very lengthy process... after that they have various events... apart from that if they see you around they will talk to you see how you perceive the world, look at the issues...understand where you come from...and then critically involve you in various talks about what is happening”. Yet another student observes, “they will distribute pamphlets...tell you about the things that are happening around...inform you...ask you to attend the event...that is something I like...there is a scope of talking they...you can criticize them you can argue with them they are very patient most of the time”.

These experiences indicate a process of getting a person politically involved in the activities that are political. This uses campus socialization as a means of politicization. The daily investment of time and engagement with the students is something which is used as a tool which happens at various platforms.

Excessive political activism: Students had also mentioned politics on campus in terms of excessive political environment. Some students did describe the political situation in the University as negative. These include experiences such as: “I once faced a problem due to some political party, which I cannot tell you...but that is why I don’t like the politics”. Another student pointed out, “I did not like the incident when they blocked the admin block...my application was suspended due to that and I missed a chance of going abroad...they must devise and adopt better strategies/means...I don’t appreciate this”. For another student, “I find student activists as hypocrite...they will talk about various problems around national and international issues but the students still face problems such as hostel and all never get solved”.

Summary:

Interesting conclusions can be drawn from the discussion made earlier. Firstly, the students consider their work as a kind of activism, by dealing with and engaging in issues related to inequality and issues in the distant areas they are providing a possibility of change as they are presenting the issues through their academic indulgence. Secondly, one of the ways in which the student activists deal with the problems is through protest and through academics. They consider their academic work as a medium to know and build their knowledge around various issues.

Chapter 3

Student Activism and Political Socialization

This chapter aims to understand the existence of student activism in the university. As described in the chapter 1, there exists a political culture in the university. The intention here is to interpret the data to see what are the different aspects of this political culture? How are student socialized to participate in the political culture of the university? What are the various factors that shape it? The chapter is divided into three main sections. Part one captures the evolution of this political culture in the university, part two is about the various elements of the political culture and the third part is about the process of political socialization, and the factors that shape the process.

Student Union Formation

As described by Prakash Karat “It was in September, 1971 that students’ union was first set up owing to efforts of the students only”. All crucial decisions beginning from the realization that a unified student union was needed or student body to represent the whole university student body¹⁵ to how will it work (formation of the constitution) and funding of the union and organization of campaign were taken by students themselves. The proposal was put forward to the administration and then the decisions taken were implemented.

The formation of the students’ union as described by him highlights following processes through which the union came into being:

1. **Realizing the need:** a student body- ‘Students Association’ as already formed body was already there in the SIS¹⁶. It was the need realized and discussed by the first three secretaries of Students Association in SIS that led the issue into wider discussion. The support of larger student community of the university was garnered on the proposed unified student union, which then lead to the formation of the Unified Students’ Union.
2. **Reaching out to students/ organization of the campaign/ getting the popular vote/formation of popular consensus:** A campaign was organized by the SIS

¹⁵Prakash Karat- “I had some background in student activity politics so when I came to JNU I thought to form a student’s union. So the first step we took was the SIS has already had a student’s association so I became the first year Secretary. There are three secretary so we discussed and decided that we should contact students in the other schools and that is how I got involved in student politics in JNU”

¹⁶ As mentioned by Prakash Karat

secretaries to spread awareness about the need for a students' Union. As discussed by him there existed opposition¹⁷ to the idea of a Unified Union at the time. So in order to gather support, a six month long campaign was organized to mobilize wider student support. The methods adopted were: door to door campaigning; going to the students, to convince the students that there must be a Unified Union, and a series of general body meetings with the students, discussion, debates along with distribution of the leaflets.

3. **Drafting of the charter and implementation:** as discussed by him, a committee was formed to draft the constitution on JNU politics. Then the drafted constitution was taken for discussion in the series of General Body Meetings (GBM).¹⁸

So the characteristic of this union as it emerged is that it can be looked upon as a democratic system which was organized by the students. Students were involved in all the processes through campaigning and discussions in the GBMs in the shaping of the students' union. What is interesting about the process or the act of involving and getting involved in process of campaigning for or against the Unified Students' Union is the foundation stones¹⁹ which were set in place by them. Some of these still continue to form and shape the culture of political engagement in the university which in some sense is unique²⁰. The uniqueness which can be understood by the methods that were adopted by the students for convincing larger student body about their idea of a unified students' union. The foundation is built upon the initially adopted processes of discussion with the students, the realization of autonomy²¹ of

¹⁷ Whether it should be a federation of Union; each school having its own union, or a Centralized Unified Union; idea of one union as representation of the whole university.

¹⁸ Prakash Karat: "it was a political campaign we conducted we had to hold series of general body meetings with the students and democratically it was decided.....the constitution was again drafted by a committee of students elected from the various Schools. That committee draft was again put before students they discussed and debated in the GBMs and amendments were moved some were accepted and some were not. The union constitution was adopted by all the schools."

¹⁹ Foundation stones refer to the means of approaching a problem in this case the different methods used by student activists to achieve their goals or express activism

²⁰ Prakash karat: "From the beginning the nature of student politics in JNU was distinct different from all other students organization or unions in all other universities and politics. To conduct to form the union or we had to conduct a big campaign. Six months campaign was there mobilizing, door to door going to the students, to convince the students that we must have a Union... so it was a political campaign we conducted we had to hold series of general body meetings with the students and democratically it was decided. Then the constitution was again drafted by a committee of students elected from the various schools. That committees draft was again put before the students they discussed and ...in general body meetings and amendments were moved some were accepted and some were not....when the union constitution was adopted by all the schoolsso the type of activity conducted in the campus was through discussions debates campaigns and for that what is the propaganda to be conducted. I mentioned about posters and from the beginning we used to issue leaflets all why we want this type of union. The others will say why union structure should be like this. So we encouraged that sort of campaign style, because all was in the campaign mode.

²¹ Prakash Karat: in that constitution there was another unique provision that in the process of having formed the union by the students themselves we felt confident that we can hold the elections ourselves. There is no need to

the student body, communication of the idea to students to gain a popular vote, the campaign adopted. Hence the tools used to mobilize and convince students, gain support and involvement students in decision making process became embedded in the way in which the political culture of the university was institutionalized in the form of a student union.

II. Understanding of the democratic process and Student Activism in JNU

The foundation stones set up by activism in early days, contributed to set up the ethos, norms, traditions of JNU politics. As the nature of issues taken up along with the means in which they are practiced forms the culture. These could be understood by looking at the following:

- 1) **Major issues taken up by Students Union-** The major issue (as discussed by different alumni in the lecture series) taken up by the student activists/Students' Union time and again is the issue of admissions and the criteria of deprivation points which were developed with involvement of students. The admission issue first taken up by the union marks a landmark in the history of JNU, as it intended to alter the intake¹ of students to JNU as discussed in the chapter 2. The idea was to make JNU more inclusive for people belonging to the backward areas²², for students belonging to Backward Castes²³, and subsequently female students and physically challenged. Hence, student activism has affected the overall composition and character of the University.
- 2) **The methods used for activism-** there are different platforms, events and activities which are organized by student political organizations to work (both inside and outside the campus). Some of these events²⁴ include those which had been originally used at the time of setting up of the student union like GBM, gherao, protest marches, hunger strikes, posters, issuing pamphlets etcetera. Along with those are also other kinds of events that are organized by the student political organizations now in the campus and outside²⁵. These include organization of street/stage plays, movie

get any outside authority to conduct the election so we built student union constitution was the idea of having the election commission which is elected from the general bodies of the students in the various schools and it was self contained provision that the election commission constituted by students will conduct the election so the first election itself was conducted by students themselves. So this laid the foundation for the in one sense the most democratic process of formation of the union and the union which should perpetuate itself through the legitimacy of having elections conducted by the students themselves.

²²the admission analysis of the year 1972.

²³in year 1983 as mentioned by Prakash Karat.

²⁴ Prakash Karat: "...so the type of activity conducted in the campus was through discussions, debates, campaigns and for that what is the propaganda to be conducted. I mentioned about posters and from the beginning we used to issue leaflets all why we want this type of union. The others will say why union structure should be like this. So we encouraged that sort of campaign style, because all was in the campaign mode".

²⁵As observed through the posters and pamphlets and observations of the field.

screening, different workshops (theatre, poster making), dharna (protest), strikes, GBM, hunger strikes, marches, exhibitions, posters, candle light marches etcetera. All these events give a special character to the political culture of JNU.

As when asked the question- When you entered JNU for the first time what did you notice most prominently? The total number of students who mentioned student activism (clubbing the categories posters, student activism) in their responses about JNU is 65 students out of 124 students. The active engagement of student activist throughout the year gives the political culture of university a unique character and it also plays role in engaging the students in political activity. As these events are organized by the student parties these make activism visible and prominent to the campus. And also when talking about the unique political culture of JNU campus, the way in which these are carried forward and intend to engage with the students give it a unique identity. Unique identity which could be understood in terms of culture of dissent, discussions, debates and freedom of expression as mentioned in the chapter 2. These events play a critical role, in that they have been passed on and have maintained/helped to keep the culture alive. As they form the traditions²⁶ of the culture and to an extent maintain the uniqueness of the university space. As these events are organized by student political organizations these have objective of perpetuating or discussing certain ideologies and ideas or to understand the events. These may play a role in attracting students towards activism as they are the platforms for getting exposure to the ideology and work of the different organizations, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

²⁶Tradition- as successive generation of activists has been using these methods and it becomes a skill which they learn from JNU culture.

Table 3.1 Question: When you entered JNU for the first time what did you notice most prominently?

Criteria	Number of responses
Academics	11
Posters	23
Student Activism	42
Environment	14
Freedom and space	28
Dhaba Culture	4
Others	8
Not answered	3
Total	124

The understanding of different methods as per observation and through the interviews provide the understanding about them as spaces which are practicing the ethos and norms of the culture-

- 1) **Campaigning**- there are different kinds of campaigning as mentioned by student activists: room to room campaigning, campaigning at different places for meeting the students: Dhabas, classrooms, paths and the places around the different schools. One of the methods is distribution of pamphlets among students. Student members of political parties/volunteers distribute the pamphlets inviting and informing the other students about the event to be organized. Through this they get in contact with students. Based on these pamphlets there is an attempt made to initiate a dialogue with students about the issue around which the event is organized. As they are sometimes also counter questioned, these opportunities provide a chance to socialize, communicate, understanding and getting different perspectives and understand the things going around. As mentioned in chapter 1 is the aspect of JNU political culture, the campaigning forming a big part of it.

- 2) **Meetings**- there are different kinds of meetings which are organized by the student organisations; 1) post-dinner talk²⁷: often the political leaders and other celebrated speakers are invited to speak for the occasion at the mess of a hostel or dhabas. After

²⁷ As mentioned by different alumni in the lecture series and also the event observed. E.g. Inviting Irom Sharmila by a political party to speak.

the lecture/speech students are invited to ask questions, 2) Organization meetings: these are the meetings specifically for the members. Each organization has its own different working mechanism and organized structure for that. Discussions are held on various issues of contemporary relevance which range from students issues, university issues, national issues, and the party specific issues. These are the spaces for discussions for working of a party. These sometimes also involve reading discussion. Where the students discuss various texts. And reading of these texts provides exposure to the party ideology and understanding of different perspectives. The readings range from different leaders, ideals and new researches to literature. Hence, these party meetings which are both formal and informal, provide students an opportunity to learn about different text and provides informal spaces that foster learning. It in a sense may be understood as a place for critical thinking,²⁸ as they are the informal spaces where they learn to question their preconceived notions, ideas, and stereotypes.²⁹ 3) GBM, UGBM- it is organized by the Union. It is generally announced through the posters and pamphlet distribution. It is a platform open for anyone. The information regarding the place, the issues and speakers are printed on the posters. The issues to be taken up on agenda by the students unions and the university are discussed in these.

For example: activist 12- “you see some kind of problem are there which you think that it needs attention or you need to work on it then you can go and talk to people or talk among yourself you know this thing I have seen that you can talk about it or do something about it. Or some kind of issue is raised over here like Najeeb issue when the thing came up so all of us went out and there were all organizations and we met people and decided what to do. How to proceed with it movement and then every other organization are involved. But if you are talking about organization level we do study classes as well where we will talk about how to move forward with or politics and then how to understand society its economic suggestions so all this things we discuss amongst ourselves and then there are public meetings also to discuss particular relevant topic also those are going on or the topics you should be focused focus should be put on those topics. So we are in from organization level we do public meetings as well. Very recently we have so we have all lectures we arrange every time usually we use to do in February”.

²⁸ Include here the idea of critical thinking and critical education. Michael apple and Paulo Fraire.

²⁹ Include the responses which mention that



Picture 3.1 ...an event organized by a student organization in which Irom Sharmila was invited as a guest.



Picture 3.2 gathering of the students who attended the event



Picture 3.3. Irom Sharmila interacting with the students after addressing the event, in the mess hall of Shipra Hostel.

- 3) **Protest**- various means were used by the students (for example gherao³⁰, hunger strike) and it has happened at different places one of the most common place to protest was administration block. Students raise slogans and of the by the students for the issue of Admission. Students from the organization put forward their views and there is an opportunity provided for people to participate. Anyone is allowed to speak at the gathering that is held in support of the hunger strike. They just have to give their name to the organizer at that time only. There were various views which came up in the observation for the same issue. People from various organizations spoke on the same issue. Though the participation depended on the organizations and individuals, students from various organizations presented their own views to the issue.
- 4) **Posters**- posters are made by different student's organizations as a method to visually present their ideology. These posters range in size. They are handmade and

³⁰Gherao-gherao means surrounding of an individual or more by students for example happened during the protests when that person passes by, example of such incident was as mentioned during emergency and also at different times of the vice chancellor. Where the intention is not let go of that person without listening to the demands raised and inviting then to speak.

various students are involved in the process of poster making and deciding of the content³¹.

- 5) **Others** - there were other platform For example Mention of organization of cultural events by different parties for example- theatre workshop, plays, movie screening, organization of lectures, exhibition, candle light march, march to various places like jantarmantar, UGC, parliament etc.



Picture 3.4 ...photo exhibition organized by a student organization outside the Sabarmati hostel as a medium to raise awareness and rights of the tribal communities. The pictures were taken by one of the activist member of the organization. At the back a student activist of the same organization talking to media (Jansatta news channel)

³¹ Discussed in next chapter



Picture 3.5 ...Students performing a play just before a lecture organized outside the administration block, lecture and protest was a medium to protest against and communicate with the students and the administration. It was organized to convey the idea of decreasing spaces for dialogue (between the administration and the activists)

- 6) **Presidential debate-** presidential debate on the campus is an event attended by many students. It is platform where candidates contending for the post of president of the JNUSU present their views and vision. The platform has its unique character as it allows time for the candidates from the opposition to ask question, and also the students to ask questions directly to the candidates through chit system. The event has discussion on national and international politics. The debate goes on during the night and the event gets the attention of the news channels.



Picture 3.6. The event been covered by the media (news channels like NDTV, Star news etc.)



Picture 3.7. Picture is presenting a glimpse of the gathering of students to attend the presidential debate, around 3 o'clock at night.

All these various forms present platforms for getting exposure to activism and political culture of JNU, and they may also be understood the sites and practice of the ethos and norms. And these are also the sites for learning. learning which may be considered in terms of spiking up for the wrong looking at an issue from different perspectives, engaging with the other students, organization of the events, mobilization, or just getting information about what is happening around. These are also the learned behaviors, attitudes and methods as mentioned by the various activists (activist 6 especially) posters and pamphleteering as a method which the activist have learned in JNU and have implemented for his work outside the campus³². Helping at the time of admission is also a learned behavior as mentioned by a non-activist students who is not part of any organization but participate actively in the events organized by different party based on the issue- “you learn to be polite you learn to help others wherever possible, that is the culture and tradition of JNU, and that is what I have learned from here. You learn to talk to various people understand them, help them if needed, you learn to open your horizon (*Dayra*), you do not remain centered to your own self rather learn to talk to people connect and communicate with them.”

All these events may also be understood at the sites where the culture of dissent and debate are practiced, as these sites are also open for criticism. These sites are places for students to get exposure to student politics and activism in the campus, but how does it affect the

³²Work on various heteroclitics people rights work for women rights get their rights you know force government to form policies on them the downtrodden every people dharna, march, protest like when we went to Haryana we sat there for six days in front of hospital six days six long days....What we did was we distributed pamphlets in the city. We learn from JNU you work out then how to do politics activism. We learnt from there to do pacha-politics we went in the city gave arch and people came there.

students who come to university? What are the various means and factors through which the students get involved in the activist is discussed in the next section.

III. Political Socialisation

Political Participation

As described in the section before is the political culture that exists in the campus. So the next step would be what constitutes it? What/who are the different actors in that activity? And how they get engaged in that? Taking the political culture as given and existing in the campus, to understand the process of political socialization the question needed to be asked are-What are the different ways in which the students participate in the political activity and what are the different ways in which the composition of the students is to be understood according to their participation in the political activity? The data Form the interviews and questionnaires according to participation of students in political activities may be understood in following way:

- 1) **Membership-** Being an affiliate member of a student political party obligates the member to be taking part in the events, organizing, and campaigning actively for the event.
- 2) **Event/Cause specific participation-** These students may not be an affiliate member of any of the political organization but depending upon the appeal of an event, they take part in the activity or the event organized. The participation is mainly interest and event based. Depending on factors such as- relevance of the cause to the lives of the students³³, a different understanding of activism³⁴.
- 3) **Staying away/stepping back/withdrawal-** These are students who once were an affiliate member of a party or were in contact with student activist or had attended events or based on the interest/observation of politics in JNU and have consciously decided to stay away from the events and political activity. And hence this kind of action is also political in nature. Deciding to be a-political or anti-political.
- 4) **Not interested-** the students who are not interested or consider themselves apolitical from before and hence have decided not to be bothered by politics and hence stay away from political anticipation in the events organized.

³³As mentioned by the students Shut Down JNU movement and 9th February incident and aftereffects of it which affected many students to participate or withdraw from the political participation or form negative views about practicing politics in the campus. It was this incident that affected/mobilized them to take part in the activity.

³⁴alternative activism-as explained in chapter 1.

And based on the participation constitution of students may be understood in the following way-

- 1) **Activist-** these are the people who are members of any student political organization in the campus. This also include the students who were a part of some organization but due to some reason dissociated from that party and are no longer members of any political group but are active in political participation hence take part in protests and meetings. The number of student activist in questionnaires were 16, however, number of student activist interviewed is 12.
- 2) **Non activist-** it is a broad category which includes all the students who are not member of any political organisation. These include the categories 2, 3 and 4 mentioned above. Number of non activist students in questionnaire is 16. Number of non activist students interviewed is 12.

As the number of students in the questionnaire who are activist, that is, 16 is quite low as compared to the students who are not activist, which is, 108. What is interesting is the set of students who are not activists yet consider themselves as practicing any other/alternative mode of activism. These students form the majority on the campus (if the data taken is seen as the true representation of the larger student population) and an deeper understanding of them may be helpful towards decoding the practice and process of political socialization which forms one part of the story. The important questions in the given context then are; How do the students who are not part of any political group get inclined to one and what are the factors that affect political participation of the students? How the students describe their reason for political activity/act? How do these students see activism? Have they ever got motivated to participate in any political activity? What are the factors that contribute to their participation? What is the relation of these with the activist? What are the various platforms through which students get in contact with the student activism? What is the role that the student activism in JNU play in getting them involved in political activity? The next section highlights the process of socialization that initiates the students into the political culture of the university.

Political Socialization Process

Based on the above outlined categories of students, following are some perspectives that emerge about the socialization process-

- 1) **Form the point of view of the non activists/participants/audience based-** when the students come to the university for the first time they are exposed to the political culture in the campus through posters, protests and other various means. They get opportunity to participate and observe the political culture, the events organized by different campus political organizations. The posters, debates, plays, events, public lectures et cetera are all meant to invite and initiate incoming students into participating in the political culture of the university. When they come to the university they have their own understanding and experiences of the campus and outside. They accommodate and become a part of new environment. They decide about between getting involved or staying away from activism. Some of them also become activists after joining JNU and some of them already are involved in activism. As the students make understanding and accommodate or adjust in the new environment the intention of the student activist is to make them politically aware hence in a sense that student activism provide a unique opportunity for students to learn.

As already explained is the understanding of the audience or the population as they are mostly young adults and constitutionally having the right to vote hence having the choice and capability to decide on their own. As the students who were activist put it, affiliating oneself to a particular party involved a rational decision making process. They argue that it is a conscious choice and therefore in some cases whereby students don't feel satisfied with the party they initially affiliated to, they leave the party organization.

Students, therefore, observe the work of different organizations and based on their interests and work they decide the events to participate in, either to be a member of an organization or just attend an event without necessarily affiliating themselves with the party.

There may be understood different effects that student activism is having on the students-

- 1.1) **Political being/ awareness/political socialization/activation-** students who have not been active before get involved in politics after engaging with the political culture. Here, the culture has a direct effect on party affiliations.

as described by a student who is active in participation “before coming here I use to think about politics as a dirty word, after coming here my view about politics have changed a lot. Now, I understand politics in different terms. Even the mere existence of a person is political. The fact that I am standing here studying in this university is a result of politics and dynamics of the society. There is a saying when politics decide your future you should decide your politics.... The same has happened with me. And that is the reason that I have got involved in politics.” Presented in table 3.2, out of a total 124 students 45 students have described the view about student politics in a positive manner as presented in the table 3.3 are the reason for motivation to become activist for non activist are (issue based participation-10 students and work of the student activist-10 students) out of 48 non activist students who ever felt motivate to become activist, 23 students have given their reason for political involvement/political activity.

1.2) **Political inertness/reverse politicization-** as described in the table 3.2 many students after studying coming to the university and observing and engaging with student activism and politics has become disappointed with it and think of student politics in negative terms. This may become the reason for them to stay away from it. Being politically aware they consciously decide to stay away from politics and don’t get involved in it. Examples of such may be understood from the dissatisfaction that the students have expressed from the political activity on the campus. Table 3.2 captures how students not affiliated with any political organization on campus view student politics on campus. Out of 124 students, 48 students have described it negatively (not raising student’s issues-4 students, self/political interest driven-11 students, negative political atmosphere- 30) and 7 had mixed views about it. Out of the students who have responded for the reasons for not getting motivated (table 3.4) 20 students have expressed student politics as the reason (reason being lack of role model- 7 students and negative views about politics-13 students),

1.3) **Change in view-** there were students who were a member of a political party before and became part of an organization after coming here and have changed the organizations such cases are very less though but there are some students. For instance, activist 9 is the one such case, where the student was an active member of a political organization and after coming here and observing

and experiencing have decided to distance him from the mainstream politics in the campus, and decided to work independently. As explained by him, the tipping point was a protest which was held, in which some students spontaneously for that event met and decided to block the main gate. As explained by him, there was a need he felt for a change in the nature of politics for some better involvement- “I have been active in politics here and before also. But after participating and interacting here, something I felt it is best to stay away from the mainstream politics on campus. I don’t feel like being a part of this system. There is a need to break the structure and reform it and I have lost hope/got bored/ got disappointed, (*uubh gaya hu*).” Activist 6 and 1, both the activists had ideological differences from the organization and hence had decided to dissociate from the parties they were affiliated to. Activist 1 quit the organization with some other activists and formed a new organization, whereas activist 6 has decided to work independently. In the questionnaire the numbers of students who have shifted the organization are 3.

- 2) **According to the organization/activist/intention of the event organizers-** one of the intentions of the activists is also to get in contact with as many people as possible. The intention of the activists is to reach out to maximum people. There are various ways in which the student activists mold their daily routines in various ways in order to work for their organisations³⁵. They seek to understand students’ problems, their worries, to understand the different views that students come with and to get in contact with the maximum number of people. There are different ways in which the activists seek the support of the non-activist students.

The unique thing about this context is the absence of any significant role of money in the matter. The student activists try to help the other students. The helping process starts as soon as the students arrive on campus to get admissions. For example, during

³⁵ As mentioned by all the activists that they try to ensure that they meet people regularly. Meeting people is a big part of doing activism as the intent is to take the issue to maximum number of people. The role of the activist as described by Activist 8 is- “As an activist what the difference that you become and activist is the fact that it is a job to tell people that this is happening. Sometimes what happens is that in everyday daily life you have your classes go back to hostel you have your stuff you read you study sometimes you miss over things. Sometimes which are very very harmful for the campus. What does an activist do tell me what does an activist do? Hold for please wait parcha please read this is happening. Taking that their organization’s politics to the students also taking so many issues which are there which are happening around. Probably not saying missed out but probably drawing attention to this fact that this is happening. Come with us fight for this. As an activist it is your job to take your job to the people”. For which they try to incorporate spending number of hours for socialization at various places like Dhaba, canteen and ways to library and the places outside the schools. All the activists have mentioned that they make place for activism in their daily routine.

an observation, students' union organizes classes for the students seeking admission. They provide students classes and make them read texts etcetera. Another way in which these student activists intend to mould and expose the students to the party agenda and ideology is through discussion on different texts in the organization meeting. So the various events organized by political organizations could also be seen as various platforms where they are intending to socialize and expose the students for political socialization. In these meetings, for instance, student activists make the students go through different texts so that they get exposed to and get to learn about the party's celebrated ideologues and their ideas, students are oriented towards ideology and the ways of seeing things through engaging them in a discussion and questioning their preconceived notions. Then, they may decide to either stick to or to leave the organization.

However, the meetings, intended to increase students' political awareness is also seen as the platform for learning. Learning, it is not just limited to the text but also extends to capacity of dealing with people, reaching out to people, building self confidence, organizing events etcetera. Socialization plays a major role in the political participation.

So the political socialization process may be looked at from two different perspectives both of them have their vested interests. In the process there are many clashes of interest and meaning making about the process and the actors involved.

As it comes up in the questionnaires, be it negative or positive the student activism affects the students to take part in the political activities. The role of student politics is perceived in many different ways by the students. Both of these criteria when understood along with the next two tables indicated towards the factors which affect their participation in these activities as the presence of student activism in campus also becomes one of the reasons for contribution to a person becoming an activist. It becomes the reason to participate in or dissociate from the activity hence both are in a sense equally political. Presenting the possibility to practice or work for the causes they want to work for, the understanding of the society that they had constructed through their socialization³⁶.

³⁶ Socializing agencies here are the campus interaction, their families, the socio-economic conditions that they have been to, the injustice and social evil that they have seen around or have read about, the understanding of the society that they have understood and the idealism and change they want to see in the society all these contribute to formation of understanding and need to work for that.

Table 3.2. If you are not member of any student political party how do you see student politics on campus?

No.	View about student activism Criteria	Number of responses
1.	Positive a) Platform for raising students Issues	7
	b) Platform for Learning	3
	c) Positive political atmosphere	35
	Total	45
2.	Negative a) Not raising students Issues	4
	b) Self/Political interest driven	11
	c) Negative Political atmosphere	30
	Total	45
3.	Not Interested	7
4.	Mixed/neutrally	7
5.	Not answered	8
6.	Others	3
7.	Not Applicable	10
	Total	124

IV. Becoming Activist

The various modes and methods of activism are important to the political culture of JNU. As mentioned by the students in response to the question about whether they ever felt motivated to be an activist, out of 124 students, the number of students who responded positively were 44 and who responded negatively were -12, while another 12 remained undecided. The reasons for both getting motivated and not feeling motivated involve their understanding of the politics on whole and on the campus specifically, as out of 48 students 23 students have mentioned student activism as the reason for them to get motivated. And as activism on campus also provides space for standing up against injustice and modes or bringing about change there are events for the interest of the rest of the students in the category 1, 2, 4 because their participation may be incorporated and hence a chance of getting exposure or getting involved in political activity.

Table 3.3. What motivated you?

No.	Reason for getting motivated	Number of responses
1.	Social/economic/political conditions/issues/social evil in India	13
2.	Issue based participation	10
3.	Student activism/ their work/ student activist	13
4.	Desire for change	6
5.	Others	5
6.	Not answered	1
	Total	48

The reasons which were explained by them to be motivated to be an activist are classified under the categories listed in the table 3.3. The number of students who did not get motivated to get involved in activism on campus is 12 and number of students who have explained activism being the reason for not getting motivated to get involved in the process is 13. So understanding of the students who have explained the direct impact of student activism on their political activity is significant.

Another aspect along with this is the aspect of understanding of the population³⁷. The number of years spent in the campus affect their view about student activism, as mentioned by a student during the interview where as they have spend more time in the university now they have a different view about campus politics. There are experiences from because of which students have a different understanding of the politics on campus, as one respondent highlighted “campus politics becomes more rhetoric, overtime”, Opinions of other students are as following: 1. “the rosy picture that first appears for the students becomes dirty after some time”. 2. “As I have spend many years here it is my fourth year I understand the politics better now...It is good that they help the students in many different ways...but when you spend some time here you understand negative face of politics...where there is identity politics...where there are student activist who would not let the student activist belonging to a

³⁷ One of the shortcomings of the questionnaire is the fact that it did not include the criteria for knowing the exact age of the respondents. But it includes the criteria to know the number of years that the students have spent in the campus. As explained in the chapter on JNU University (include the reference to that chapter). Of the fact that it is mainly a research university and most of the students in the campus are mainly about.....calculate the exact age. So the broader population could be understood as of in the age group of...and hence they can be understood in the category (include the age criteria from psychology of adulthood) and as them as rational decision makers and also the age 18 the legal age for voting as the citizens being able to make right decisions.

lower caste a better place...”, 3. “JNU have its own problems which the external body cannot remove it the people involved the students who have to change that.”

Table 3.4. Reason for not getting motivated

No.	Reason for not getting motivated	Number of responses
1.	Not interested in politics	14
2.	Lack of role model/leadership/Inspiration	7
3.	Other priorities/studies	3
4.	Negative view about politics	13
5.	Other better ways	4
6.	Lack of time/waste of time	10
7.	Others	2
8.	No response	15

The table 3.4 describes the various reasons given by students to not get motivated to participate in the political activity. As mentioned by the students total number of students who have direct impact of student activism on campus on their non-participation is (clubbing category- 2, 4, 5,6)-34 out of 68. Hence political activity and students activism on campus plays a role in both participation and non-participation of the students.

The prominence of the activism in JNU for political participation may be looked at as a form Total number of students who joined after coming to JNU-10, total number of students who were activist prior to coming to JNU, total number of students who shifted the party- 3. The political culture on campus affects the students who were activist before coming to JNU. Linked with the reason for getting motivated is also the students who became activist after joining JNU and prior to that. table 3.5 describes various reasons given by the students from becoming activists.

Table 3.5. What made you an activist?

No.	Reason for being an activist	Number of responses
1.	Social problem in India	4
2.	Student issues/ to solve students issues	1
3.	Political situation in JNU	2
4.	Others	5
5.	Not answered	-
	Total	12

As the intention is to understand the political socialization process, which is affecting both the categories of students the main question will be how students become activists and what are the various ways in which they are getting politically socialized? How are students reacting to the already existing socio-political environment of the university? Every university has its own unique character, culture and ambiance, on campus. When students coming from different parts of the country and the world join JNU, they come with their preconceived notions, believe and interest. Becoming or accommodating to the condition requires adaptation to the new setting. As number of students who have been activists prior to coming to JNU is almost equal, the interviews and the questionnaires provides different reasons for which and process how they got interested in student politics. Why one becomes an activist? What are the different that contribute to it?

The process of political socialization is not just limited to the non-activist students only. The students who were activist before, when they enter JNU they are exposed to the culture and get politically socialized.³⁸ As explained by the activists who had already been member of the organization and hence as a form of or as an example of unique culture of JNU. Prior to coming to JNU they used to practice activism but have changed and learned new things, ways of doing things and hence being socialized in a process or ways of doing things for a political purpose (for example, activist and activist).

As new students come into this new space and learn different values owing to student diversity and other different factors about JNU³⁹, their understanding of political participation becomes “different” (Activist 6 has described how coming to JNU and taking part in political activity have changed his political ideas, how his coming to JNU have changed his view

³⁸ Give some reference to the chapter 1 for understanding of the unique political culture and the understanding of every university having its own unique character.

³⁹ chapter on JNU

about the work he now wants to do and understanding about his role as an activist⁴⁰). It becomes important therefore to understand what factors work towards making some students politically more active than others.

Factors contributing to becoming an activist

The idea here is to understand how come individuals coming from various backgrounds assume the role of an activist on the campus? How come they happen to participate in this context more than others? What are the factors that affect the individuals to get politically active? The student activists were asked the question during the interview- when and how your political journey began?

As the individuals come from diverse backgrounds each individual has their unique story/journey to tell. There are different factors 1) Larger socioeconomic and political issues, 2) Family, 3) Educational Institution, 4) Media. It is the interplay of these factors which has shaped their identity and self. Based on the narration of their experience the factors which constitute and affect/shape the individual and their political inclination may be expressed in the following manner-

⁴⁰JNU contributed a lot to me before coming into this campus I will always think I will become IAS officer become MLA or I will become now goal had changed I had changed my goal before coming here I always thought AIS MLA now my goal changed to how to go for social change. How to bring power to society downtrodden women social imaginary how to empower. Then I shifted my goal my primary goal which was to be IAS IPS MLA MP had changed to become a good person good activist. Contribute in the society who can change the society. so this is the contribution of JNU into my life JNU taught lot to me before I was just like a person who is looking at success at micro level micro means whose goals are very micro how though we it is not necessary that... so if you are an honest activism in JNU then you will suddenly try to affect the politics at macro level at the ideological level. Not like you want to become MLA or something. So JNU taught me this thing. It is the biggest contribution of JNU in my life. Now I don't look much forward to join a political party rather than I look forward to do a political movement. Social movement so this is the deep thing that JNU has given meMicro is like becoming MLA getting a seat at loksabha or vidhansabha. Macro is changing the structure of politics shifting the politics from like you can say muscle money power centric to the people centric. Getting people in the centre getting the poor or the down trodden in the centre. Rather than big political tycoons in the city this is where I differentiate between the micro and the macro. For me macro means that we should have you know when we are debating on the politics we are debating about the political spectrum the political structure then we try to formulate our policy and try to look at the politics from a very macro angle toward a very country towards the ideology of the politics. So we want to change that. If you strive to become a MLA you don't do the politics from ideological level you do your politics taking the constituency in your centre and then you do your politics so we like today we are trying to build a big move I said that from a right wing I moved to a left wing Ambedkarite left I said Ambedkarite left not extreme left. Trying to look at the politics from the Ambedkarite perspective the left perspective. In which social change and change in class also matter caste and class both considered. Caste is also an issue class is also an issue... and which affect throughout the country this is what I mean.

Social, Economic and Political conditions

- a) **Larger context-** Data pertaining to the motivations of students to become politically active emerged from responses of 13 out of the 48 students who felt motivated to be activist (table 3.3) and out of the 12 activist in the questionnaire 4 students have described the socioeconomic conditions and exposure to instances of inequality and injustice, which has motivated the students to join activism. The exposure is not necessarily firsthand experience or witnessing, it included socioeconomic reality which isn't immediate (as not the experience of the individual/ or say the reality of the other) and even the issues that one gets exposed to through media, or academics about the social and political relevance. In most responses what emerged is that motivation to get politically active on campus came from an understanding of the social-political conditions of the time. The presence of political situation which has made the person to get involved and interested in bringing about a change. These issues and experiences may be categorized in the following manner;

The socio economic and political atmosphere/environment of that time, the major issues which were going on in the society and being discussed in the media played a major role in motivating students to get politically active. As described by student activists this meant staying informed via various media (it is their personal interest and habit of them to be up to date with the help of news channels, news papers and social media) which begins concerning them as they comprehend the ongoing social and political conditions. Activist 1, 5, 7 has described how they being socially aware of the events which are happening around have made them concerned for the society and motivated them to bring about the change. The narrations provide stories around getting involved in the political activity, the issues which they get exposed to have made them aware of the problems in the society.

E.g.- activist1 has mentioned- protest happening in Signor Nandi gram in his college days, Gorkha Land Movement in school days, Anna Hazare movement during early days in JNU and Maruti Suzuki rally are the events which he narrated had involved him in thinking about these issues.

Activist5 has mentioned- Indo-US deal, OBC reservation, resistance for TATA factory During CPM government in Bengal as the issues of that time

Activist7 has mentioned- he has described degeneration of conventional left in Bengal during his under graduation.

However, all these larger events have to be understood in the smaller structures, context and concepts of family and institutions. Because it is not in isolation that these events make meaning to the person, a person having being to a context which form regulate their daily life and instances gets affected by the larger issues and factors. And it is because of them that the person is able to make meaning of the situations, instances and experiences happening around and within.

- b) **Self-**Although self cannot exist in isolation and how one thinks and understands/contextualize, make meaning of the reality is also determined by the social reality around. But there are mentioned the reasons mentioned by the person to be a part of an organization. For example activists have decided/described the reason for participation as their internal motivation and quest for the idealism. The idea of idealism is shaped by other factors also which are mentioned above but the self in that situation needs to be understood. As the reasons and interpretation of reality is also a subjective interpretation but it is the combination of self and the events which have lead to the participation and combination which is unique.

Activist 5- “I think that one is when you are of a particular age then you naturally have an idealism and everyone has that then and at one point I felt that if there is idealism then I should engage with it... if I have an idealism if there is this churning this desire then definitely I should give it a shape. And it should be shaped in order to have a lasting impact in my life. It should not be like a fleeting movement that I have it today then it vanishes tomorrow. It should not happen so. That is why I felt it should be given a particular direction... you would think that you want to change the world that is why you did that. I thought that and sometimes what happen is there is particular feeling that even if that is for a short period but feel that it is very trivial feeling. That is why I felt that ..”. Activist 7-“... a simplistic explanation can be that I was always drawn to certain my social my realities around me, what was happening around me ...despite all my privileges... I mean even movements when I myself was a part of a structure I knew that it was not right. It was just a matter of accident that I was born in into a certain family that I could take the benefits of certain privileges but largely I could see around that people had to struggle and even I had to struggle at the student level but there was something very wrong in the kind of society we were living so that kind of always made me aware and I use to read newspaper a lot since childhood so right from my childhood I was very interested in the political affairs

because I thought that it was one way in which certain changes could be put in place...”

- c) **Family**-The socioeconomic conditions of a person also play a role in deciding and getting a person inclined towards a particular kind of thinking. For example mentioned by-This category may also be understood in terms of how they became activist- First generation activist⁴¹ and second generation activist⁴².

As mentioned by Langton family plays a big role in political socialization of a person. The role of a family may be understood in different ways-

- 1) **Attitude towards politics**- As mentioned by the activist 10 the family plays a role in the process of getting a person politically socialized. As a means of learned behavior, values. The person forms an attitude towards politics which in turn also affects political involvement of the person. Also, different attitudes towards politics are also formed in relation/due to the family. Attitudes like – considering politics to be a bad word, trying to stay away from politics as much as possible, politics as not for the people belonging to middle class and is only for people from political background and rich families. As mentioned by one of the non activist student11 in the interview- “...I use to run away from politics...if it can’t be changed...it should not be disturbed...it is not for your category...people from my house also think that we have nothing to do with politics because we are from middle class..it is something for the *gundo*(goons)...JNU changed that myth”.

In contrast to the examples discussed above is the example of activist 10. His family as discussed by him being affiliated to liberal congress background has provided the appropriate context for his initial political socialization. His family has in fact supported political involvement through mediating discussions about various leaders and events happening around making him politically aware. Initiation in this case could be understood through direct involvement of the family in politics. One such example is of Professor Anand Kumar former Student Union president in the interview who has described his involvement from the childhood as-“... I was born in the family of freedom fighters and socialist leaders. So since childhood I was socialized and in a way there was admiration for freedom struggle and my own grandfather was one of the leaders of Varanasi

⁴¹ The activist who have decided to become an activist and did not have any political interest due to family.

⁴² Their family provided a ground for them to become politically engaged. As the family is also involved in or particularly working for some party the student is also involved and is appreciated to be politically engaged.

...and my house use to be frequently visited by heroes of freedom struggle like Jai Prakash Narain, Lohia and many others...my own maternal uncle was union president...my father's youngest brother also was a socialist candidate in the presidency so all these stories prepared me mentally to be an activist..". Such are the examples which make look the involvement in politics natural to the individual. But there is also a role played by institution along with this which has affected the person. Hence the role of family played in political involvement cannot be looked in isolation it has also to be related with the structure and the institution which is discussed later in this chapter.

- 2) **Situation/conditions of the family/daily life struggles-** the socioeconomic conditions of the family also form a perspective toward the society and politics. The kinds of issues and conditions that they can immediately associate with as they have had lived that reality, the kind of politics which they want to adopt in order to bring about the desired changed have been shaped by their immediate reality which is shaped by their family the conditions which they were born in-

As mentioned by activist 1- "...my subjective experience have been that I have seen my lot of people's life- my mom my dad and my whole community and all of that the kind of society that I grew up in. The conditions in chichi grew up were also challenging and I had seen a lot of people struggle against deprivation. All of this experience of deprivation and struggle in life somewhere moulds your choice of politics and ideology also. So for me, my engagement in politics is because of my own life experiences. I have seen oppression and that kind of deprivation from those quarters and in those quarters the way I saw my own people struggling and the way I also grew up. It was a huge struggle to come to JNU was not an easy task for me. You need certain kind of struggle and so those experiences also helped to inform your choice of politics and all that. So JNU in that sense for me was important..."

Activist 4- "...second reason was that when I came here I found similarity in that is that my family I come from, may father sells fish. It is our only source of income, my life was getting effected through that. So like that despite being an individual how it is linked with my father's income, their behavior all that affect me...all these affect me irrespective whether I want... among the organizations, their specialty is that there is different forum and wings which work

together...there is for example one which work with farmers...front for labor/workers issues...front for female issues..”.

Activist2-“...I use to activism in Allahabad also. But we had a small group...I use to work independently there.....in activism what happens is it is your experience. Because I come from a context and the society where I can understand the pain of the worker...*Worker ki pedako, karamchario ki peeda ko to use hi experience par ham logo ko lagaki ham logo kookarna chahiye.* The people who cannot get admission in universities, don't get paid on time to provide for their family, resonate with me and my situation in my village.... That is what has prompted me...and that is the work I do here also...”

These examples explain how their family life has influenced their choice of politics. The kinds of issues with which are being raised in a context (JNU) by organizations and politics have prompted them to take part in that because they can relate to them. The issues that they can feel for the changes that they want to bring in are related to their immediate reality. Another example is of-

Activist 7- “...that I was always drawn to certain my social my realities around me, what was happening around me I always felt that if something is wrong that is something that was there despite all my privileges despite I mean even movements when I myself was a part of a structure I knew that would not it was not right. It was just a matter of accident that I was born in into a certain family that I could take the benefits of certain privileges but largely I could see around that people had to struggle and even I had to struggle at the student level but there was something very wrong in the kind of society we were living...”

Here in this case the awareness about one's own privileges and the deprivation of the other along with awareness through media is something which has made the person to from certain views about need for a different system.

Activist 6 has described it as- politics in my life is involved from my childhood when I want to change the system....first was when I started looking at political parties...being a Dalit person I am a Dalit boy... I was in dalitfamily...from childhood I always had one thing in my mind I want to change the system....change this exploitation in society...I am from Haryana.... there is a friend of mine who is a son of a minister and he was my neighbor he use to take me to party meetings...that is when I got in touch of politics... and there are only two main party there congress and BJP... so when I came here it was my natural

choice that I joined XYZ among them...but when I saw that they are not working for the change and when I came here after some time I left the party... because I want to work for change..”

Here in this case is the role that a friend has played in getting a person exposed to politics and the family (being a dalit) which have lead to a need to take part in politics. The kind of politics is getting shaped by the context ad structure in which the family is situated.

- 3) **Inherited Identity-** as mentioned by activist 7 in previous section the identity of being a dalit, as mentioned by activist identity of being from north-east background and hence being able to relate to Gorkha Land Movement, another similar example is of activist 9 who have seen the issues and instances of violence happening around. Understanding of which is mostly mediated through the institution which is discussed in the section role of the Institution.
- 4) **Behaviors/ attitudes/values/norms-** another aspect of family is of the practice of the daily behaviors, rituals traditions of the family. All these affect the person in terms of making meaning, deciding and formulating the reality and the things to be valued. Hence, deciding the values, priorities and attitudes. Religion, faith and traditions constitute it, person being socialized in a manner due to the family and structure have norms of behavior, and carry norms of appropriate behavior and values. Hence the society, family, religion are controlling and affecting the thought process of a being. Change in context may be perceived as a culture shock. Such is the case which is discussed below in which an instance of opposite behavior has prompted the person to assert for her right and stand up for values that that person was raise in to follow the confirmatory behavior and resist for change/ maintain identity. Which became the reason for become an activist-
Activist3- “When I came here it was a strong no from my side that I am not going to into all this. It was like that I just wanted to do my academics and I will just leave. But gradually what happened when I came the year in which I came here it was in 2012 I saw people making fun of Goddess Durga. It was being said that Durga is a prostitute and that she was weaker in strength so she seduced Mahisasur. I mean, it is something intrinsic of me and it has got into my DNA we have given example from the childhood that we become like Durga it was like, so I was very astonished that from where have they got this theory?! You must have some evidence to prove that. That was the like click movement for me I was

looking at many things from before that too but this was something where I was like I cannot keep quiet so I even told a lot of people who were involved into that lets come and sit and I read Durga sabstasathi every year like two time or three times in a year they were not ready for that and that provoked me that enough is enough and after that when this 9th February incident happened I got involved in full-fledged manner”.

All these cases have mentioned the role of family conditions in deciding the politics. Ideas which are drawn from the immediate reality shaped due to family conditions. And it is the need for change which is provided by politics present in the structure that these students have decided to participate in. The last example also indicates toward the change in thinking which has happened due to structure and change in the experiences of the individual. Discussed in the next section is the role that the structure/institution has played in their becoming and taking part in activism.

d) **Institution- The Institution/The role of the structure-** Mentioned above in the first category is the role that the larger social-political-economic conditions and the situations play in the political journey of the person. But these larger issues and the family incentives could not be understood in isolation. The role that the institution play is also important to understand the factors mentioned above. The institution could also be understood as a channel through which these individuals are mediated to participate and it also help in making meaning of the instances happening around. There are various ways in which the educational institutions play a role in the political journey of a person as mentioned the examples discussed above. As the institutions (specifically JNU) as discussed in the chapter 1 are the sites to get exposure to the diversity. They become the sites for learning about the other and self. There are various ways in which the role of the institution may be understood.-

1) **Role of structure and culture-** as mentioned in chapter 1 and starting of the chapter, JNU as a university has a unique political culture. When the students join the university they get exposure to the vibrant political culture of the university. University politics as mentioned by many students and in the literature is broadly left hegemonic. A place where there is contestation in ideology among the left. University also having the culture of dissent and debate provides opportunity to look at one issue, instance from various points of views and ideology (as mentioned in the section on methods of activism). Individuals having their own

experiences, personal interests and ideologies get exposure to the political culture of the university.

2) Role of academics in activism- mentioned in table 3.4, are the students (4 in number out of 53 students) who have mentioned that there are other better way for doing activism. Two of whom have mentioned academics as the mode of activism. As the student have mentioned “for one of my project I worked in Himalayas, there are people who actually struggle to meet their basic needs, I consider my work as a method to help in such condition, I want to use academics to present the situation to the wider public I think it will help them more”. As also mentioned by student activist are the responses that they feel their activism as an extension of their academics. One of the students who is working on Marxism for his Ph D described how his work as an activist is also coming from his studies (the way he conceptualizes and understands the power relation and modes of production are related to it) the organization that he is associated with is based on Marxist ideology.

Also mentioned by students are the trajectories of their educational involvement, activist 1 narrated his beginning of political involvement is during school time when he changed from science background to humanities. “the subjects like economics and history and political science geography and others I was heavily interested in these issues...I got in study groups, philosophical debates and all of that theoretical kind of interest starting happening there... then there was Gorkha Land Movement which was happening when I was in 12th I was immediately exposed to politics at time ..my hometown there were political discussions on Gorkha land Movement and the kind of mobilization going around...discourse on statehood and demands of nationality so that was the stepping stone...when I finally came to JNU I became an activist...”. Role of the kind of subject matter that one studies is shaping the awareness and understanding of the events which happen around. Described by activist 7 is the understanding of his education as needed to be socially relevant, being from a political background the activist felt the need to apply the theories such as Marxism to his understanding of the world around and the instances of injustice that they had seen around, is something that has provoked the person to get more politically aware and get involved in politics. Another student activist has mentioned how the field (social medicine) that she

working in is making her more interested to get involved in politics to bring about the desired change.

Hence academics and educational institutions as platforms (specially research) allows person to visit different realities, get exposure to different thought ideologies, discussions and varieties of experiences which allows a person to see the reality in a different perspective, allows the person to understand the structure, question the given norms and plays the role of an informant, which have helped the students to work for the changes that they want to see in the society.

Here, there is a role that the discipline play in the activism also, in order to allow for the time to think about such issues. The people from social sciences get ample time and the understanding that their work in some sense in also linked with the activism that they are doing research about the understanding of the society, relations and power structure. Also as their 'research field' is the society as described by activist 10, they get to understand and look at the society and involve and interact with the people more, whereas the students form the science background do not get ample time to invest in activism as described by the students they spend most of their time in the labs doing experiments.

3) Role of institution in socialization and hence providing opportunity to politically socialize and socially politicize- mentioned by activist 7 is the event that happened in his college banning a movie by Sanjay Kant about Kashmir. The respondent felt the need to understand what is being allowed and not allowed in the institution as a thing to be questioned and he mentioned that event as his first step towards activism. Mentioned by activist 12, 1 and 8 is the political situation in the campus when they joined the university. The debate, discussions and protests happening around Lingdoh committee report was something that drew their attention towards activism. The politically vibrant culture acted as motivating factor for their further involvement in political activity.

Activist8 has also mentioned how a situation of conflict during presidential debate handled by an organization drew her attention, which along with other reasons (her observation of the work of the organization throughout the year) became the reason for joining that specific organization. All these cases present the importance of vibrant political culture of the university got them politically active.

4) Government institutions as sites for protest ‘nurturing ground for activism’⁴³-

as mentioned in the earlier sections is the role that the institution and their cultures have played in the lives of the activists described by them. Are there any other way that the students and the character of the institutions developing the need to be an activist? As mentioned by activist4 is the role that JNU have played in getting him politically involved. He attributes the need to join a political organization as something which happened due to JNU. JNU as a public university has provided him an opportunity to access high quality education at a low cost which was not possible at the context where he come from. Similar is the case with activist 1and 2. Their work and interest for political involvement is also for providing such structures which may allow such possibilities. That becomes one of the reasons for them to get involved and stand against the new policies which are taking the universities towards private sphere, increasing the cost of education, and lowering the scholarships etc.

As also mentioned by Anand Kumar in the interview is- the students come from various socioeconomic backgrounds in this university. When a student is coming from rural background sees the range of opportunities and possibilities luxuries, a student from an urban middle class background is able to afford, sees the need for change. Why would he not want to work for change!

Another aspect about the university is the diversity.

5) Exposure to the other –as described by activist 8 is the fact that students come from diverse background to study in JNU. This allows for possibilities to see the reality which they have not experienced themselves. When the students get to interact with the other students it provides an opportunity to come across ‘lived experiences’ which they may have only read about in the newspapers or the textbooks. The experiences of injustices- caste, class and gender based discrimination, harassment etc. all these become more evident when the students share experiences. The possibility of them as still existing in the society which they could not even imagine may happen to them becomes a ‘reality as experienced by other’ which they also know about.

⁴³ The quote taken from a website Jantaka reporter ‘universities like JNU are becoming nurturing ground s for activist: New ICSSR chief. It describes the role of the university curriculum in getting a student politically involved. One of the reasons being misinterpreted facts and the content of the textbooks. *JantaKa Reporter* July 2, 2017 retrieved from www.jantakareporter.com/india/icssr-chief/134069/

Summary

As mentioned in the chapter there is a contribution of the university in making of and providing space for expression, raising voice and allowing/accommodating/channelizing/ space for practicing activism and existence of the activism on the campus, the university and activism become complementary. As the quality of the university also gets affected by it both positively and negatively understanding the role of the activism in a university, role of university in the society, and hence role of activism in the society, because in this manner university is also becoming a channel to bring about the change in the society.

Institution as a factor should not be considered in isolation because the institution along with family has played role in it. And academics and discipline as also a very important factor in deciding the exposure to the events of injustice and justice denied. As discussed in the chapter 1, political, social, educational exposure playing a big part in it. Which is largely due to the institution and academic involvement played role in it.

The various factors have affected the activists in various ways it is not just one factor which lead to participation or in making of the activists but the amalgam of those. Each and every story has a unique blend of factors playing the role which in turn have shaped their thinking and worldview.

Finally, another aspect of activism is the posters which are there put up by different students organizations. As mentioned by both activists and non activists. These are one of the first encounters with student activism on the campus⁴⁴. Other than that the student political parties organize different events throughout the year. Specially in the starting of the semester as the old students get to meet the new ones. It is seen as the opportunity to mingle with the new students or the new possible candidates/pray for the political socialization process. Why do the various student political organizations make those posters what is the process? And how do students as view them? What is the significance of existence of those in the campus? All these questions are discussed in the next chapter.

⁴⁴along with the news and social media. Include the comments of the students who have mentioned JNU activism as one of the factors which have attracted their towards JNU and that being the reason for applying for the same.

Chapter 4

Wall Posters as Public Pedagogy: The Making of the Politically Active Student

“Posters are not only about the ideas they try to propagate but it also about occupying the campus as a space as political assertion”- Student Activist.

The previous chapters have captured the idea of a space of the university which allows political engagement of the students in and outside the classroom and on the campus. The idea that the students have formed informal (as it was not originally a part of the curriculum or structure of the university), a little like Ivan Illich’s De-schooling society. Where students with some capability and experiences meet up with the other students, they join in with their intent of working with the organization for some cause (may be personal or societal gain).

As discussed in the previous chapters there is a process of political socialization happening in on the campus. There are various means and methods which are presenting the possibilities for them. Posters may be considered as one of these methods. Posters may also be considered as the one of the methods employed to provide a platform for practicing democracy. What is the intended role of these posters? Are these posters a means of political socialization? How are these posters perceived by students? How are they produced? These are some of the questions which are addressed in this chapter.

I. Understanding the spectacle of Wall Posters on JNU campus

As these posters are produced by different organizations in the university (both political parties and the other student’s groups) these posters may be considered as the spectacles/lens that these organizations provide, in terms of ideological perspective. Providing pictures, these pictures are not the reality but the colored lenses to look at the world from. The representation of reality is colored by the organizations’ ideology, party line, vision (of how the society should be), what is wrong in the society, how the situation may be looked at, how and why is the reality getting shaped from the lens that these organizations provide. As described by one of the activists-“it is like a public declaration of your politics so one thing of different kinds of posters in line of the politics you want to do and the kind of positions that you want to take...”

There are different aspects to the projections of these lenses. Starting from the allotment of the place for putting up the posters to making and putting the posters in into its place there is a process for them.

Process of Making and Showcasing the Posters:

In JNU, there has been a process of allotment of place for the posters. As the place is not given by the administration for putting up the posters the students/organizations have been deciding the place for them, the place which is decided through unwritten rules and understanding of democracy. What is interesting about this process is the capturing of the place. Although how and when did this process begin, it is still unanswered, but the present process and the changes which happened in last few years were mentioned by the students.

Wall Capturing

The wall capturing process as mentioned by the activists and the party members use to be physical capturing of the place. On a decided date the students will sit at a place till afternoon and then paste a sticker on the place mentioning the name of the organization and the year of capturing that place. Once reserved, other organizations cannot claim the place for a year and then the following year, the place will be reserved through the same process. What is interesting about this process is the understanding of the place for all and the place for negotiation and mutual understanding which allowed a space for co-existence. As mentioned by a student activist who have 7 years in the campus

“What happened in starting is by anytime between 1st of May or 4th of May you take a place. And it was an unsaid understanding that ok if there are three prominent spaces at a place then you take one and leave the others. It was an unsaid understanding”

But there have been different understanding and factors which affect distribution the space, lately. One of the factors as mentioned by an activist is the increasing number of the organizations. As one of the important aspects of making of these posters is making the work of the organizations visible in the campus, there is a need and demand for the organizations to capture the places. Followed by the idea of contested political space⁴⁵ is also getting applicable here, the organizations intending to capture as many places as possible. Wall capturing process has been questioned and changed in last year. There was idea of lottery system implemented in 2016. In which the places were allotted through lotteries or the chit

⁴⁵ Contested space- the space may be understood in different manners here- 1st in terms of the physical space contestation for allotment of the physical space for putting up the posters for all organizations. Another is in terms of the ideological space, provision of space for all kind of ideology and ideology. The organizations are also contesting on the ideological spaces for the university. As mentioned by the student activist is the case in which an organization brought number of other sister organization to claim for place, clubbing together to save space for a kind of ideology in the year 2016.

system. The chit system again in 2017 was modified so as to make it more democratic. In 2017 the places were given categories P1 and P2 (P-prominent places, idea of priority and prominence which is discussed later in the chapter). And then the places were allotted. This again is getting questionable as one of the worries as described by one of the activist is of an organization ay demand to leave it for the administration to decide. Even here as discussed in the chapter 1 may be seen the reduction in the space for understanding and the internal attack for the ethos and culture of the university, a depleting culture in which the students are giving power to decide to the administration rather than working them out amongst themselves and hence lack of understanding and trust among themselves. Also leaving it to the administration is seen as a threat (as it may decide to not allow these as the posters at the admin block). How will it happen could not be captured due to time constrains, but the idea that there has been intention to make the process more democratic.

The final resolution to space allocation for posters, among competing political organization on campus hasn't been reached. The issue still remains and is being decided year to year. Posters, however remain questionable and important for the culture of the university as these are shaping and getting shaped by the ethos and behaviors.

The Wall Poster Makers

All the organizations have their own internal mechanisms for coming up with the different processes for making these posters. One thing as mentioned by all the activists is the fact that they are made by student activists only. There are in some organizations also people involved from outside,⁴⁶ (people who presently not the students in the university but are alumni, or artists who are members of the organization). Organizations who make these posters decide the content of these posters. The content is decided by the organization members, which also doubles as a platform for different students to take part in it. It also is the space for discussion and providing ideas.

As described by an activist it is a long drawn process. The students sit together and multiple ideas about the content of these posters are shared through different media (in person, in meetings and social media). Students come up with some picture that may have come in the newspaper which they liked, some quote from the book they read or some poem. These ideas

⁴⁶ They in some cases provide poster making workshops to the students which are held during summer vacations and it depends on the organizations also. In which the artists interact with the other student members to provide skills and help in painting these poster.

are discussed in the organization meetings, as the idea is also to make posters according to the organization ideology. Which idea which will go better with which picture and what place should it be put at is also decided in these meetings.

The activist highlighted, “Let’s say in our time in our primary contradiction is the ABVP. So you will have DSF posters which are expressly against the RSS BJP politics and the number of that has increased or you see there is one poster of Rohit Vimula here, so Rohit Vimula is an inspiration I think that is why we put up his poster and contemporary issues also have a major appeal and then you have major poets and revolutionary”

S/He further added, “If you see the posters are made by hand, by hand because they are symbol against capitalism. All the capital they have is on these posters nothing else...they believe in working in least amount of money...putting up wall posters is a culture that anyone coming from any place can see them...the posters here anyone coming from outside may see them..there are people who make movies make documentaries they take cover of these...one of the reasons is also that the people should know that JNU is a place which don’t do much for itself it do more for the others...the Nirbhaya case that happened did not happen in JNU but people from JNU went in the large number ...there is a process for putting up these posters...there is a process even for removal of any displayed picture from the office. There are rules and regulations. JNU is a democratic space even if you cut a tree you will have to take permission from CD. If there is a picture put up then you will have to take permission to remove it...there poems, quotes and messages written on these posters for people to read...book suppose there is a book on Foucault or Derrida the you have put it in your room how would I know which book do you have! if you write a quote by Derrida people will read it, means education for all that is a part of it”.

II. The Ethos of the University and the Spirit of the Posters:

“Posters are the first conversations that you have in campus. And if you are a new student and you do not know anybody then you look at the posters then posters are the first thing that talk to you in this campus....and a lot of people I have heard that when they came here and having a tea after taking admissions they sat and looked at the posters...”

The above mentioned quote is by a student activist. She is one of the artist (student) working for an organization. She has mentioned this as there are many students who come up to her and share the fact that they are attracted by posters. As mentioned by students in the

questionnaire when asked the question- when you entered JNU for the first time what did you notice most prominently? 23 students out of 126 have mentioned these posters. And when asked the question did these posters attract your attention 107 students answered in positive. As discussed above the making of these posters involve discussions such as following:

“So deciding is like, most of us sit together. And there are some people who engage like for me like... a lot of people sit down and read no... this one is good we should put this. New themes come up people read poems from across the country... revolutionary poets new writers everything and that sort of engagement... we get to sit and go through you know tons of books and internet and everything. You want to draw everything but there is less space. That sort of engagement happen and a lot of people a lot of people across years from bachelors to PhD even beyond PhD because they are there and you know they said we should do this... you start and that is also the process in which you become engaged in the organization. Because what sort of poem you are putting up what sort of seen that you are putting up also depends on the ideology that you follow the thinking you follow you can't just put up anything so...”

As mentioned the making of these posters requires discussions among the members of the organization. These meetings have students with various degrees of involvement in the party organization. As mentioned by a student activist these posters also become sometimes a factor for attracting the students towards the party. “Many students when they know us that I am from this party, they share how they like our work that we do specially these posters, how they like certain poem or some quote or some picture displayed, what they don't like...” These posters are collective work of the organization. So, the discussion process as mentioned above becomes a platform for getting a student familiar and engaged with the organization's ideology. They also become a possible space for learning. Learning which is also getting them socialized according to the organization ideology.

After being put up, these posters also provide possibility of discussions to the audience who is observing these. As when asked the questions do you discuss among your friends about the posters? 69 students answered in positive. Did the posters get into classroom discussions? 29 students answered in positive. Hence these posters also provide a possibility for a discussion on various issues, the issues, which are related to both the ideology and the interpretation of the events happening around. As mentioned by a students in the questionnaires- “I use to discuss most of the issues through posters as many students can themselves be in dialogue with politics through different posters”... “I have discussed almost every poster because without discussing these you cannot understand clearly”. As mentioned by students, these

posters sometimes also get into classroom discussion especially in Sociology and School of arts and aesthetics (And some students have also chosen as an object to write their term papers, assignments on)

III. The Words and the Visuals: Understanding different aspect of the posters

There are different aspects about these posters mentioned above is the making of these posters. What are these aspects? How these posters are being perceived by the students?

The content

The content refers to the pictorial representation (pictures of idols, cartoons, and symbolic representations) and the text (which may be a poem, message, some slogan or some quote) in these posters. These contents may also be understood as the representation of the ideology and the events. When asked the question what in the poster attracted your attention these are the results as shown in the table 4.1 below. Just the visual representation attracted most of the attention (57 students). Another aspect about these posters is the text calligraphy is mentioned by (37 students). And the category both is mentioned by 27 students. Along with the students who have mentioned both is the number of students who have mentioned some other criteria, the criteria mainly being the idea represented and the overall message⁴⁷ which is being conveyed by the poster. There are 11 students who have not answered this question.

Table 4.1: Classification of content of the posters by students

Si. No.	Criteria	Number of students
1.	Visual	57
2.	Calligraphy text	10
3.	Both	27
4.	Other	18
5.	Not answered	11
	Total	124

⁴⁷ It is the subjective interpretation of the poster by the observer of the ideological representation provided by the organization.

The perceived reality of the Posters:

According to students, posters reflect lived experiences that are talked through ideological lens. Mentioned in these posters are some of the events which occurred, representation of the issues that are there- issues related to gender justice, caste discrimination, class hierarchy, racial discrimination, policy etcetera at both the national and international level. Can they be understood as the reality? How is it being perceived as?

When asked whether they think posters reflect lived experiences? About 79 students answered positively. An understanding of the audience/students which is discussed in the second chapter is of the audience as an informed audience. These students having being exposed to media newspaper, (as the students have habit of going through news channels, social media on the regular) and the students as research scholars, and being young adults also affects how these posters are perceived as. The contents presented in the posters however are not taken at its face value by students.

As the comment from a student in the questionnaire quoted above captures, the posters are being perceived as- 1) tools to inform what is happening around the world and nation (hence as representation of the reality), 2) as a medium to communicate the ideology of the party organization, hence may also be perceived as an ideological tool. As students who perceive them as reality have mentioned- “they are reflections of the social problems and phenomena”, “The posters are employ caricaturing as well. The drawings especially are enhanced or sometimes skewed for humor and added drama. They are drawn or painted in such away as to catch the attention of the passer by. The nature of these visuals is not realistic, but the messages behind them reflect lived experiences”. As may be seen through these comments is the understanding of these posters as also not taken for as a fact or truth. These posters are criticized, analyzed and discussed by the students. Rather than being taken as facts they are seen as- ‘representations’, ‘symbolic modes of expressions’, ‘depictions’, ‘exaggerated forms’, ‘reflection of society’ and ‘creative expression through imagination’ by the students who perceive them as reflecting lived experiences.

IV. Posters and Political Socialization

Upon being asked the possible purpose of having these posters, 32 students responded by saying that these are for spreading awareness⁴⁸. As mentioned in the section above, posters are seen as representation of reality, an understanding of reality which is perceived by students as colored by the ideological group that presents them. In the same vein, 44 students have mentioned them as a means for political awareness and as a site for presenting political propaganda⁴⁹. Another 16 students thought that these are means for representing and expressing social reality.

Posters in this context become means of spreading awareness and politically locating and representing the issues happening around. When asked the question do the posters represent lived experiences 79 students answered in positive upon being asked if posters made them politically conscious, 75 students answered in positive. Further, when asked if the posters played any role in changing their political outlook, 54 students responded in affirmative.

Hence, these posters, by representing the issues and depictions of the situations, are also making the students more politically aware. As also mentioned above in case of 69 students these have become the topics to be discussed among friends and 29 cases for discussions in the classrooms. Which may be the reason contributing to the campus being politically charged.

It may seem that these posters are means to incline students towards a particular ideology, but the idea along which they are likely to be discussed cannot be controlled. The audience is just as likely to see the work critically, as they also have their own ideologies, beliefs, and inclination. They are not likely to simply take all of them as reality. Given this, does it then, mean that the posters are taken at their face value at all? Do the students accept whatever is depicted in these posters, as it is?

⁴⁸ Awareness about what is happening around in terms of socio-political and economical in world and the nation. For example some of the examples are- "to impart information and reality", these posters make people aware about the things going in campus and national and international level, which affect population at mass level", "to aware be aware of the political, economical, social situations all over fight against injustices", "to draw attention to many problems that exists but no one is willing to speak about it", "these posters are expressions of consciousness among the students about the outside world. It reflects the interpretation of various political parties on the same issue which also helps in broadening our knowledge base", "these posters motivate and create sense of consciousness in issues which were sidelined or not much paid attention to. A sense of civic political consciousness gets generated with the help of these posters".

⁴⁹ "propaganda or tools for understanding ongoing context through ideological understanding", "these posters help the political wings to convey their ideologies and thought simply through these to students", "to present the atmosphere in terms of politics that the campus is occupied in nutshell. It presents a compact view for anyone, which can visit the campus for a day".

When asked if they remembered a poster that they had not liked, 47 students responded positively. These are the cases where the posters were criticized by students for its content or the idea that they represented or misusing the means for presenting wrong data or wrong ideas⁵⁰. When they are perceived as presenting distorted version of reality, they are understood as presenting, half-truth or not providing the whole picture. The posters are looked upon as driven by an agenda, in order to represent a situation in service of party ideology and hence are seen as manipulated realities⁵¹. Another aspect for which these posters are criticized for is the use of the motifs or the symbol for the identity⁵² (religious in particular).

As mentioned by the student activist, one of the reasons for putting up these posters is political agenda and getting students to know about, notices, and develop perspectives to see the events happening around. These also become as an intended tool for political socialization.

As mentioned by the student activist, above, in the course of making of these posters students get the exposure to the political party's ideology, described above is also how a number of students have got influenced by these posters. In this sense these poster do seem to be the means of political socialization⁵³ on the campus.

Further, the space occupied matters a lot as it decides the visibility of the poster. There are two aspects to the visibility as understood by the activists. One is the physical aspect- which decides the color and the content of the posters- aspects like light balance, size of the text,

⁵⁰ Some examples are- "ABVP poster on my home my India misappropriating leading revolutionaries like Ambedkar on freedom fighters. In SIS2 and many other posters of certain Indian leaders, misquoted, misunderstood certain freedom fighters from regions, not fighting for India but for their regions it silences the fact that history and misconceptions facts they don't give out details hence a very limited depiction", "some Ambedkar appropriated poster by ABVP near library canteen Ambedkar's quote misplaced at the time of the election".

⁵¹ Some examples are- "some posters always talk about development, Near SSS operation green hunt and Naxalbari, it was only one sided view selling land to the foreign investors not talking about development, schools, panchayat, idealization should happen which never happen", "one on nationalism gave very vague definition of nationalism that should country in the manner people think".

⁵² "the one by ABVP which communally profiled people belonging to a religious group or terrorist", "the poster in which India is seen as mother Durga this poster ha posted on library building...", "one man is cutting the choti of a brahamin (Library building). Because it hurts someone's faith, "I have seen a poster against castism near library building in that often related to destroy Indian Culture (*Bharatiya Sanskriti*), and increases religious violence", "there is one poster in which names of all the militant groups have been mentioned along with one person representing each group the tagline was something like 'they all are the same in different names'. I don't understand the purpose of this poster other than generalizing the idea that all Muslims are terrorists which is very derogatory to me", "stigmatizing Muslim to their look of staling habits. Poster besides school of language Muslim Killing a cow ABVP.

⁵³ Political socialization which do not only mean a means to get to adopt or get inclined to a party line, but also to the ethos of the political process/political culture in the university- which is discussions, expression and questioning.

size of the picture, picture text ratio depending on the readability and visibility of the place. Another is the understanding of the audience. Include here idea of some desired places P1 category that is the big walls which are considered as important by the activists. These are the big places outside and inside the buildings around which the students spend their leisure time and where the students pass through- walls around library, school buildings inside and outside. The P2 category is the small places on the walls- the pillars. The desirability is to occupy the big prominent places, the places which are more visible and at the places where students spend time or cross by.

Since, these posters are considered a means of attracting students and also conveying ideas and information to the students, understanding their reception in their audience is also important. As mentioned by an activist, who will see the posters matters. “we try to put most of our anti XYZ party poster near SL so that the students can read them there... the students who come there are youngest and have innocent mind (*kachcha dimag*). We think that they must not take everything that is considered in the popular media as right as the right thing we want them to not take anything for granted... make them other possible understanding of the events which are happening around...get them familiar (*rubaru*) with the possibility of existence of different perspectives”. *School of Languages* is considered as one of the important place. As the center also have students at undergraduate level they are considered as students who require more attention in terms of making them think about what is happening around critically, to not take anything for granted.

Another aspect is of deciding the content, the content also depends on the audience. As mentioned by an activist is the understanding of the schools. “...we try to put science related posters near School of Sciences...some quote by Einstein...some issue at international level and policy near school of international studies and issues around inequality and social injustices around the school of social sciences.” Who will be attracted to what? What place should have which poster? What are the issues that they think will appeal to certain audience? The place is also based on the judgment of the audience by the student activists.

Another interesting aspect is the formation of ‘Modi Gallery’ in the place between SL new building and SIS new building. Where the student organizations have put the posters related to the policies under the new government. An activist referred to it as ‘Modi Gallery’.

The other manner in which the idea of space may be considered is as all these walls occupied by different student organizations with diverse ideological inclinations these walls also may

be seen as places which are allowing a multiplicity of reason, logic, understanding, views and space provided for opposition. As one student activist put it “I respect all the art work I even like the work of ABC party, which I don’t conform to and I am against their ideas...but I respect the amount of effort and the hard work which goes in making of these... I respect that they have put in efforts to represent a thought”, “although I am completely against them (ABC Party)... but I like their posters they are aesthetically very beautiful they make the campus very vibrant... say for example there is a poster of Che Guera near SSS building I don’t like him, I think he is a killer...but I like how that poster is using the space...for that reason I want it to be there for its aesthetic beauty”.

Along with the examples discussed above, there is also the incident happen this year (2017) in which a poster was portrayed as antinational and hence it was being argued that it should be removed from its place. What is interesting the answers of the different student activists about the incident- “...I think all the organizations have a right to assert their space in the campus...when the people came to remove that poster even students from opposition organization were there ...although that was work of a person from opposition... he also spoke in the media...but the fact that if today one work is being removed from the campus...I don’t stand with that.”, “ the idea that one ideology is not being given space just for it being ‘anti-popular’ conception is not something JNU stands for... it is pity that this thing happened...some such thing although is predictable as in the present regime but...I don’t stand for that and that is why when the people came to remove it was also there.” There persists an understanding of the space for coexistence of all kinds of ideologies. Even the ideologies which one feels need to be opposed, are not opposed by removing it or completely negating it but by allowing a space for dialogue and discussions. Opposition is considered a critical element of JNU’s political culture.

Importance of Posters:

Discussed in chapter 1 and 2, are some of the ethos of the university as described by different students and the alumni. One of the ways in which these ethos are maintained, is by different processes and mediums of political socialization in the campus. Posters as described are also the unique character of the university. That is one of the unique things of JNU culture. As these posters are made by different organization in the campus they may also be considered as the mediums of political socialization in the university.

But how are these posters perceived by students is a question needed to be asked and what is it that attracts students towards them? Do the students actually pay attention to the content and the efforts that are put in these posters?

The representation of reality through these posters, as made by the students is both shaping and getting shaped by the students. Posters are shaped by the students implies how they are being perceived, what meaning is constructed by the mind of these posters and how then, a person relate to it on an individual basis. Conversely the party ideology and perspective defines the manner in which the events are being read, interpreted and invoked/depicted on the posters.

According to a student, “There are thousand students in the campus not all indulge in politics right! So whenever they would pass through this area they can look at these. And push them think around the line....students from Delhi University comes in JNU directly then by seeing that slogan means at lest he will have thought on it and activism that goes in this campus isn’t it that the theory and there will be a good mixture of theory and practice”.

Apart from their political purpose⁵⁴ what is the reason that the importance of these posters may be understood in? Apart from negatively viewing⁵⁵ these posters are also perceived positively and considered as an important part of JNU campus. “The hallmark of JNU student must be based on equality of voices regardless of their merit or non-merit, which is something that these posters promote”. But what is it that students like about them and what are the positive aspects of the messages as perceived by students?

As mentioned by 32 students who have described their presence for informational purpose, 3 students for expression, 15 students have described them as being related to social purpose (standing against injustice and presenting social reality) and 1 as a mode of protest, these are the positive aspects apart from the ones mentioned in the sections above, as perceived by the students.

When asked the question can you remember any poster that struck your mind or caught your attention, 83 students responded with a ‘yes’. As mentioned in the chapter 1, graffiti, public art, and these posters may be understood in relation to expression, awareness and public pedagogy. These posters as discussed above are also means for promoting discussions and

⁵⁴ Which may be desirable or undesirable in an educational institution

⁵⁵ For example views of some of the students about the posters- “mostly the posters I don’t like the public property should not be damaged by posters look at the walls, lifts, and doors of classroom. They have become really dirty. Even the water-coolers of hostels have become dirty because of that”, “I do not believe their poster politics” and also as mentioned in the section above about critically seeing them in section on political socialization.

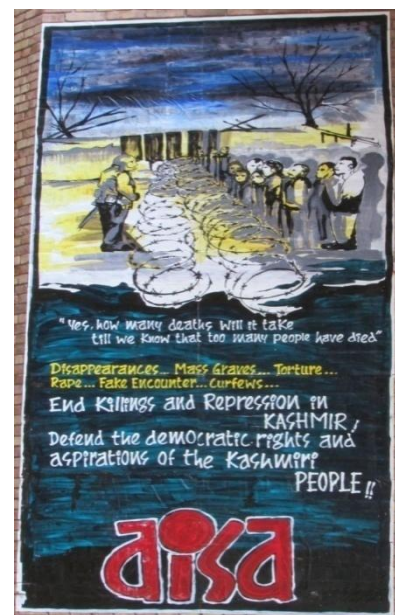
representation of issues in ideological light. Following are the posters that students have mentioned which caught their eyes.

The eye

Presented below are some of the pictures which were mentioned in the questionnaire and the interviews. As mentioned above are also the views and the various reasons for which these pictures have been mentioned by the students. As the students come from different contexts, ideological stand and experiences their views about the pictures varies with that. For example the posters on freedom of Kashmir and situation of people living in Kashmir which often portray the presence of Indian Army in negative sense are both criticized and appreciated by the students. As mentioned by a student who



Picture 4.1) Picture on AFSPA



Picture 4.2) Indian Army

commented about the poster on AFSPA- “what do you think about the situation in Kashmir... I am from Jammu I have seen the situation it is much worse in Kashmir...I do not think that removal of Indian Army can solve the problems of Kashmir issue but I do think that these posters very rightly present the situation in Kashmir...that is why I like that poster in particular”

Comment about the picture about Indian Army– (Picture 4.2) present at the space between SSS1 and SSS2 building. “it was wrongly defaming Indian Army. For the lies propagated in posters of February 9th incident claiming innocence of three students raising slogans as fake, many incidents across India where narratives are distorted.”

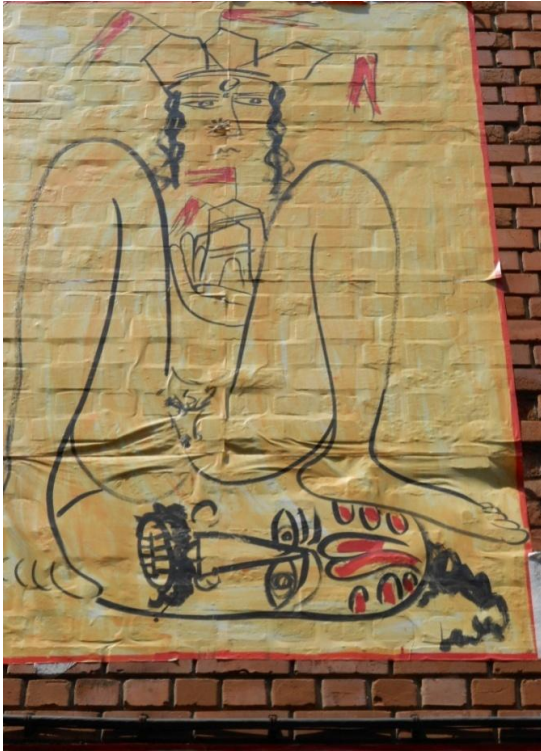
The view about how the reality is portrayed and which posters are being criticized and appreciated is depending of their experiences of the person looking at them. Same goes with the poster mentioned by the students around library building depicting a women menstruating

on a Brahmin's head. By two students both females have different views about the same poster where the poster is seen from a lens of empowerment because the space for that poster in campus is seen as positive. It is allowing for discussion such issues.

"Yes there is one poster I don't know whether it is still there or not but there was one poster which was showing a girl menstruating on a Brahmins' head and also there was one such poster I was very amused by the fact that this is like a taboo in India you do not disclose such stuff ... but here in JNU they have showed that it is a very open space and people are taking it very lightly in a very normal way. So this is very good so people here are mature enough to think in that way which other people don't outside this campus, that you can talk about women's issues which will not be seen as negative".

Whereas the same poster is being criticized by another women who is viewing it from a different perspective analyzing the content of the poster, because of the values that she have had due to her upbringing allows it to be seen in negative manner.

"the poster is there of Devdasi in library entrance Dholpur. At that side there is a poster of devdasi sitting on a Brahmin's head the pandit's head she is bleeding. That is something a trend which is something which is going away I don't know I am not saying 100% away because I don't know but generally it is going away. You must appreciate that something which is going away and you must support that you are trying to show that it is still alive it is same like keeping *satipratha* alive in posters. Same is the case of Devdasi system. It is going away you must appreciate that and make the poster where the Devdasi thing ended and where it is still there so these things I mean it is provokes you if you if seen a nude women bleeding sitting on a Brahmins head it will provoke you...I find projecting a women's body as kind of objectification when you see posters of left lot of posters do have their breasts bare or are being raped or are screaming women are screaming or are laid or whatever something which you won't find pleasant to your eyes. It is not beautiful I mean nudity is beautiful but when you project it in a particular way it is always kind of women will be screaming bleeding nude I mean whatever so that poster maybe I don't like because she is nude as well as bleeding and she is on a brahmins head. And I don't find it good and Devdasi is not only about then they are not only being harassed by brahmins of this society they are harassed by the whole village. ...I can count on fingers that how many pictures have been there which are predicting Brahmins as the predators I am sure that that thing happened in past but it doesn't mean that you will keep making them predators they are also poor they are also being tortured by the society as well as economic conditions."



Picture 4.3



Picture 4.4

Picture 4.3 is from JNU murals some other time (time and place is not mentioned) the picture is the year mentioned as 2011 whereas picture 4.4 was taken in 2016 by the researcher it is at the Dholpur gate of the library.



Picture 4.5. Taken from JNU Murals not there anymore on campus.

Picture 4.5 about women liberation in SSS3 new building taken from JNU murals. It has since been removed and replaced by a different poster.

Comment about the poster as mentioned by a student picture 4.5 “Poster in SSS3 probably by AISA AISF I don’t clearly remember. Which showed a girl in cage and how she breaks all

the barriers and frees herself out of the cage it depicts the current scenario”, another student- “I like that picture it was I think by AISA, it is not there anymore...but I liked it a lot it showed a women being librated from the cage...there were birds getting out of a cage one of them took a form of a girl... I liked how the wing on women were presented she got out of the cage”



Picture 4.6 near library building

Comment of a student about the picture- Ya imperialism in this the mark on head (*tilak*) is of American flag and something... I mean how is that person involved in imperialism! Bhrahmins are known to be poor. They are known to be poor. I mean in Hindi they say poor Bharahmin (*gareebbhrahmin*) it is a term...so I don't know why do they do that it hurts sometimes that a particular section of the society is continuously being projected as predators which they have not been anymore even if they were sometime back now they are not predators they are I mean one of the section of the society which are now to be noticed because they are economically very really weak society”.

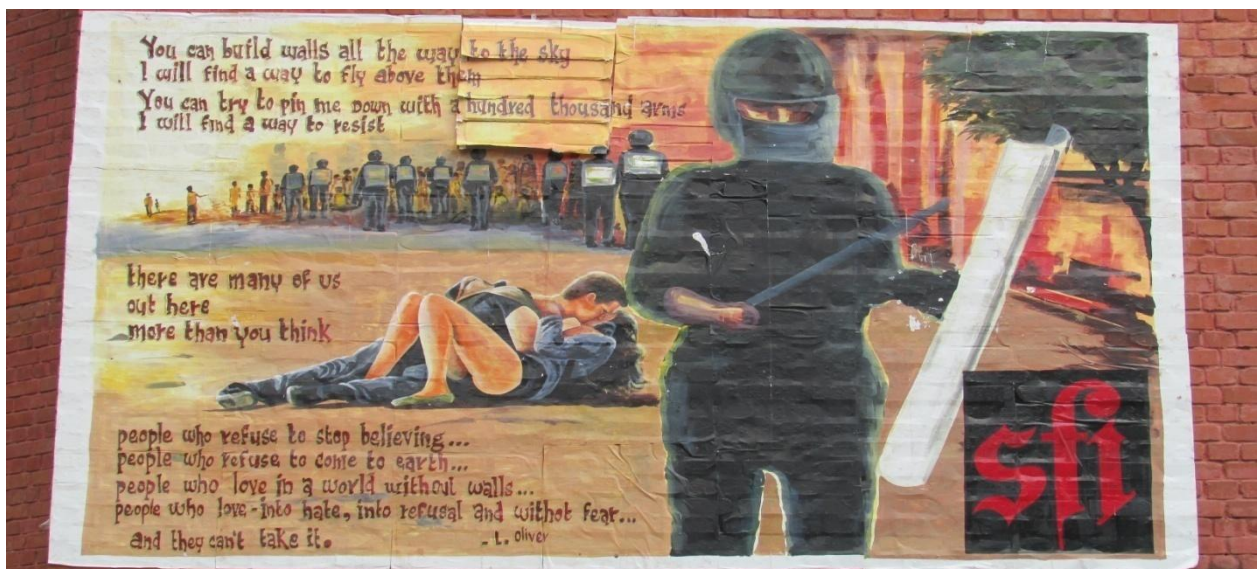
The comment on the same poster of a student- “our understanding is that it is Bhrahminical fudal country it is not really capitalist society and all. You have tendency and it is not domination and imperialism heaves on this so US imperialism is that so that particular figure of the Bharahmin and that of US is the nexus between imperialism and Bhrahminical feudalism in India and unless and until we understand that we cannot fight only Bhrahminism and so there are various debates on that but our take is on that. So that particular picture shows that how a student cuts the pony tail of the Bhrahmin and the destabilising the whole figure you know imperialism and all US centralism and feudalism in India and which is Bhrahminical in character so basically bringing in the question of class and caste together. Fighting against imperialism and Bhahmininsm together”.

The differences in views are because of different standpoints from which the student is looking at the picture. Comment one analyses the picture from religious and identity based understanding of the picture, whereas the second comment has analyzed the picture by locating and relating it in the understanding of theories.



Picture 4.7 a picture from internet of a real incident- “a riot broke out after the Stanley cup tournament in 2011. A team of riot police tries to get the crowd under control. In the process, a woman named Alexandra Thomas was knocked down by a police shield. Her boyfriend, Scott Jones, came to rescue⁵⁶”.

The picture above was recreated and used by a student’s organization and used in a poster.



Picture 4.8. Poster on SSS2 Auditorium wall.

⁵⁶ Picture and caption taken from an online video the real stories behind 20 iconic pictures YouTube

As mentioned by a student in interview- “there is a poster in which a couple is kissing and at the back there is Lathi Charge and all which in itself tells which is an expression of how even during the time of war this expression of love is alive. And it is very powerful medium to keep it alive. Someone may say that it is ugly or absurd but, if that person try to understand them then the message behind leaves an impression”.

The idea of impression which also implies for the poster of the women flying from the cage (picture 4.5). As the poster about cage is not there, still the students have impression of the picture in their mind.



Picture 4.9 in front of School of International Studies

As mentioned by a student comment- The one SIS old building’s wall which says ‘unite against racism’ I specially pointed out that poster because of the recent attacks that happened in greater Noida against Africans”. The person was from Africa, and feels that the race based discrimination still exists. That is the reason that person likes that picture, as portrayal of a problem of a society through the poster.



Picture 4.10 Poster behind SLS building

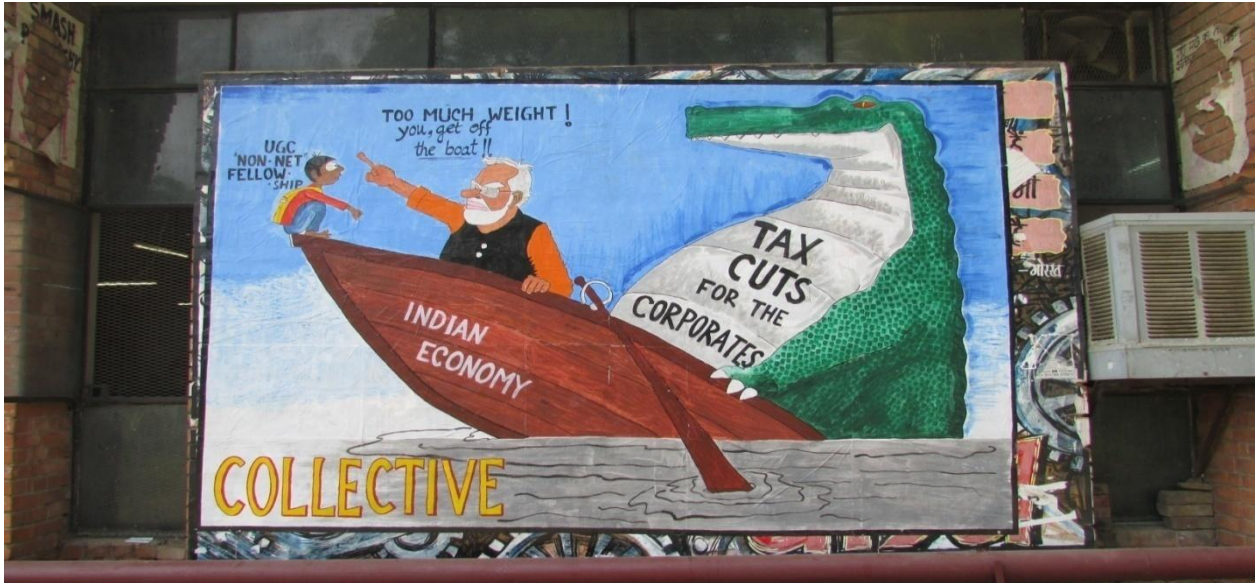
As mentioned by the student is the poster that person like- “Where the government is shown threatened by students with books with a quote look they have a book behind SSS1 building” Mentioned by another student is the same poster who likes the message written on it “oppression is your privilege protest is our right” (Picture 4.10). The importance of the poster as seen by student is the role of education as a medium to bring about change. Government being afraid from the educated individuals which according to him may be located in the present understanding of what his happening in education related policies where education funds are being cut and there is increase in privatization and government is trying to take off the responsibilities of education specially higher education from the government sector. Another poster liked by the students for the same reason is the one mentioned below.



Picture 4.11 In SSS2 Canteen. Having quote- “fight to study! Study to change the society!!” Mentioned by a student in interview-“I like the quote (When she mentions the quote the student made the gesture by hands as can be seen in the poster. The student feel education is

very important to bring about change in the society. ‘That is also the reason that I go for the protest whenever I think the protest is important and if I have time.)’

Another poster related to education is liked by many students; the poster is at the library building reading hall. As mentioned below-



Picture 4.12 Poster behind library building

“One on the library regarding UGC non-Net scholarship”, “A poster outside Dholpur library in that poster we see the privatization increasing by government and cutting of student fellowship”

As mentioned by a student- “Main library Modi boat one it represents own dilemma that government has lots of funds for capitalism but no for education and people for those big industries”



Picture 4.13. Poster on budget cut



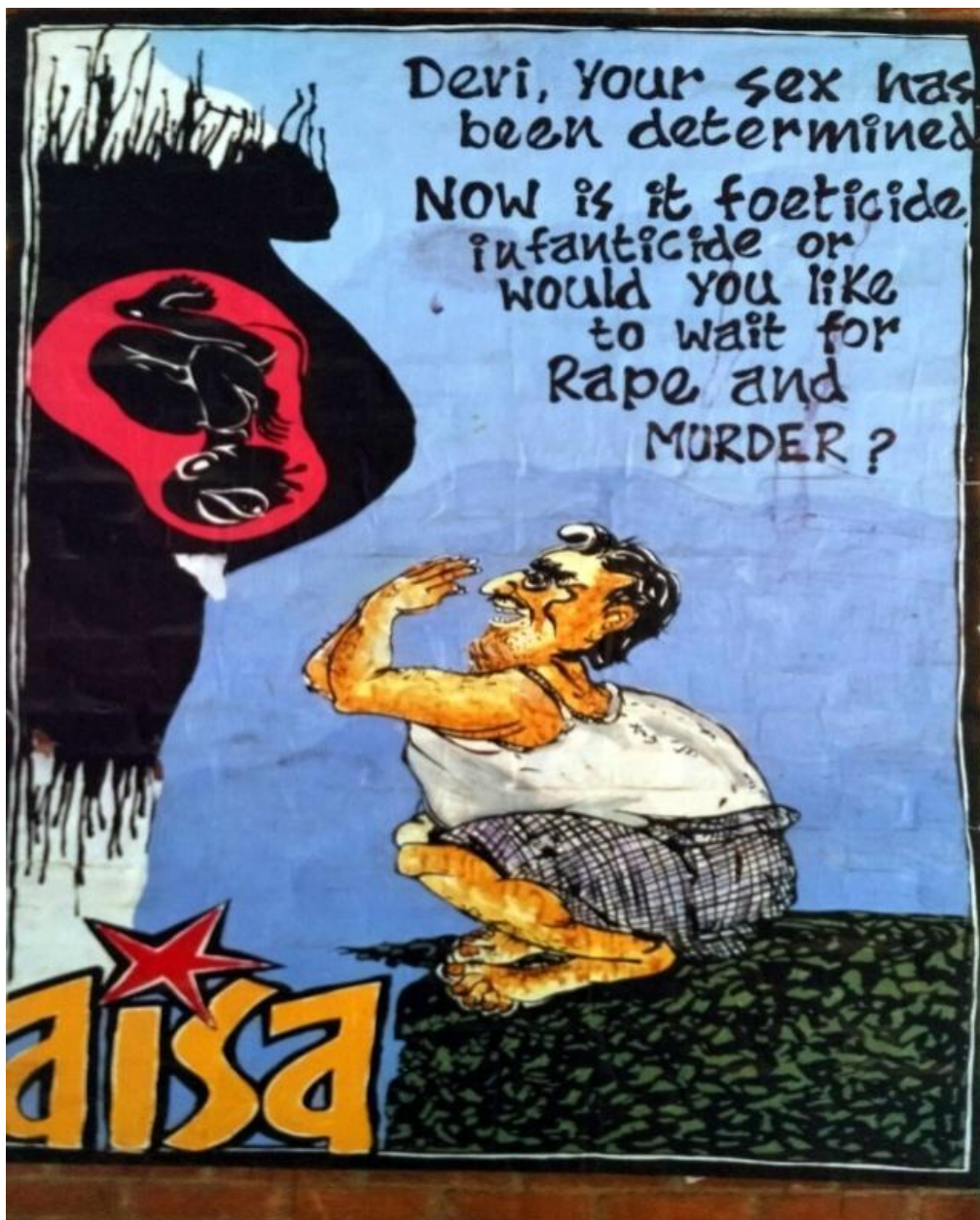
Picture 4.14 Was at admin block now removed.

The picture above was taken around the protest (hunger strike) on seat cut and UGC gazette by JNUSU. All the posters have been removed from there.

The pictures representing how the students through the medium of posters have claimed the right to education and the parties, not only through representation on the walls through these posters but also through the medium of protest. The posters and the remnants of these are evidence of such movements and efforts. The efforts which are through the mediums of these organisations are getting reflected in the posters. These posters also represents the protest culture of the university, protest culture which aims to bring about change in the society.

There are other posters which were mentioned by students-

“the one in SSS1 canteen on Khap Panchayat”, “about female infanticide at the new building. I like it because it shows the practices which are there in our society. Even educated individuals do that and it is a very relevant issue”. These posters as mentioned by students are important as they are expressing and spreading awareness about the problems of the society. As mentioned by the student who mentioned the poster on Khap Panchayat “I come from the rural background...such things still happen there...”. Hence in a sense expressing through the medium of these posters they are representing the problems and situation of the society (lived experiences).



Picture 4.15. Poster on female foeticide



Picture 4.16. Poster on Khap Panchayat

As mentioned by the students, is the poster on the issue of demand for freedom for Kashmir. The incident which happened and also mentioned in a section above is when a poster made by a student organization was portrayed in news channel and was demanded to be removed from the campus.

The poster was also highly criticized in the media as it was making the students ‘anti-national’ and spreading the wrong message to the students. In reference to this poster, one student commented by saying- “A poster near SSS1 in that picture many Kashmiri were standing with red eyes. It struck my mind and realize how the Kashmiris suffered with the pallet”, “Kashmir poster in which Kashmiri was shown as a part of Pakistan whole Kashmir Naxal posters support of Naxals”, “The poster of DSU in SSSIII building which demands freedom for Kashmir and Palestine people took it wrongly. Because it is using the word freedom which is must be debated word for since last year. Though I have a completely different perspective in this regard but it struck my attention”.

The important thing about the poster is that it is considered as the medium of information about the situation which is there in the state. Along with it is the understanding of reality and presence of the poster, or the message that it is trying to convey is seen as a reality which is being perceived by having own perspective about it. Defending, the space for poster as a means of public dialogue while rejecting its specific message as a fact and as content to be discussed about.



Picture 4.17 Poster between SLS and SSS1 building

There are many posters about the policies and the present government. Many of the posters have Narendra Modi (the present Prime Minister of the country) on them⁵⁷. These posters are mediums to critically look at the policies and the politics in the country (as also presented Narendra Modi may be seen as a symbol and representative of the ruling party and the central government). There are present different views about such posters- “in SSSI Modi and common people issues of increasing rate and it was just not art but connected with reality also ‘it is right that the nation is changing’ because now we cannot buy anything under 100 bucks, empty bag and a question by a poor is a satire on the policies of the BJP party”, “There are many posters abusing Modiji. Which... I personally don’t like. These posters makers, I doubt will ever be able to reach that stature, hence don’t understand his commitment and his duties. They are deaf. They are communists”.

All these posters are there about the present government which again is a reflection of the protest culture and raising voice against the government by the students who stand up for different ideas. These are also the reflection of the differences in the opinion about a particular issue that exist in the campus. Although these posters are present in a large number,

⁵⁷ As mentioned by a student activist the Modi Gallery

there are students who see them differently hence representing the multiplicity of views about the issues.

Summary

All these posters as made by student organizations are made with intention of presenting an idea and idea which is colored by its ideology, limited by the issues that their ideologies can allow, and intending to occupy a space in the campus to represent their presence in the campus. There are different ways in which the presence of these posters may be understood- representation of reality, medium for providing information and spreading awareness, medium for presenting ideology, medium to protest, medium to represent the political culture of the campus, the ethos, medium to bring about change in society. The most important aspect about these posters as may be understood is the eye (the audience) to which it is presented, the audience which already have their own views, who can criticize, discusses and do not accept anything presented as a fact but a fact to be questioned and made meaning through discussions and allows for difference in views, a different interpretation, and also accept. The understanding of the audience also in terms of diversity which the campus have which allows for discussions to become more meaningful as mentioned in the chapter 1 the diversity allows students to meet students coming from different contexts and experiences, allowing to understand the different realities and situations to be discussed and be aware about.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The Jawaharlal Nehru University has gained prominence in the entire country for its politically active student body ever since its inception in the early 1970s. It is said to be a hotbed of left oriented political activism or precisely a very critical academic space that has raised the anti-establishment voice even in times of strong state repression such as the Emergency in the 1975. It had withstood several upheavals and engaged the vibrant academic and political constituencies in raising or strengthening debates on issues of national, social or even international issues. The original idea of creating a 'national university with an international outlook' had been fulfilled over the years of its existence on the Indian higher education scene.

While academic excellence had been one of the hall marks of the post-independence university, its academic excellence often got subsumed in the recurring student political movements on and off campus that create some ripples in both the public policy discourses and also in the media. Such high and intense level of political activism makes one wonder what makes JNU a site of such intense political arena. How do students - those on rolls (both politically active and not active students) as well as those who have left its portals view their university and what goes on there. This had been the central concern of this study. Added to this objective was to understand the way a student gets socialized through wall posters that adorn almost all walls of the university, which is again unique to JNU. Such campaign and display of wall posters on campus walls - be it academic buildings or non-academic spaces such as hostels, etc - certainly seem to halt the passers-by and force them to take a look before they pass these displays. Every year in the months of July and August, just about when the new batch of students arrive in the university, a fresh lot of wall posters occupy most of the walls, making one to wonder if the walls were poster-plastered! Such rich and wide display also said to be contributing the freshly joining student into a sort of excitement to join the already charged up political environment in the University. These wall posters fulfill the function of providing a public pedagogy for the students to ponder over the party ideologies, issues of national and international concern, or specific events in the social realm that have made into the Fourth Estate. Thus, what these wall posters seem to be doing, as the data presented in the previous chapters show, is to raise curiosity and provide pathways into their

awareness, conscience, and possible future association with parties, politics, and the political activity.

As we have seen the wall posters display visuals as well as word content. The convergence of both the visual work and the words that seek to describe it is what is interesting to look for as a researcher. We have made to illustrate this by show casing some of the posters and the content that is carried on those posters. As has been seen, inequalities of all kinds - class, caste, race, ethnicity, gender, disability - dominate the theme of the wall posters on campus. While it was difficult to capture the changing nature of themes, over time and historical points as these posters get refurbished at frequent intervals. The change in the set of students who make them, the ideas that stimulate making of such posters, the changing political, economic and social contexts, the changes in the discourses and narratives, etc make these posters also to undergo change. Not only that the way the university had witnessed the regimes of different kinds and the kinds of internal discourses it had led to has also been concern of the posters.

Besides, the distinctive features of academic freedom, democratic traditions and autonomy seem to constitute JNU's uniqueness. Besides, the residential character, the teacher-student relationships, the peer support and the culture of debate and post-dinner talks make the student learn much more than what they learn usually within the classrooms. It is often claimed by the students that they benefit immensely from the off-classroom interactions, which is hardly a characteristic of all other institutions of higher education in the country, including some of the best known universities such University of Hyderabad, IITs, and IIMs.

Thus, as revealed by the students in the study, student activism is a platform for learning and socialization. It is a source of information and awareness. It plays an important and unique role on the campus social life and politics. It does take the idea of learning outside the purviews of the conventional classrooms, makes the learning more realistic to the society in which the University is located and draw its subject matter from its own churnings.

Learning by participating in academic and non-academic events on campus is not just related to getting bookish knowledge through the designed curriculum, but it is an amalgamation of the knowledge shared through discussions with people from diverse backgrounds (both academic and socio-economic), through mobilization for public events and speeches, getting

to interact with people who are directly involved in the larger political spectrum of the country, by helping other students, by sharing ideas and knowledge about different texts that they have read.

The student experiences of institutional life in JNU thus provide them with different aspects of learning, which makes the university an unconventional learning site. The places socialize - classrooms, hostels, canteens - are also the places to learn in the university. The learning is not just about academic aspects of being a student, but also of their being social and political agencies.

Overall, the popular image and identity of JNU of being that which stands for the rights of the marginalized and rebels against the wrong or even the mighty state is therefore a product of the socialization students of various generations have undergone and brought to bear upon their successive generations. The ethos of discussion, debate and value for the ideals of equality is what makes and characterizes such political socialization on campus and that is what makes the student politically active and socially aware being. The diversity on campus which is consciously built through exemplary admission policies that defy even national practices provides it an edge to give students a pan-Indian identity and consciousness which gets reflected even in the wall posters, seek to act as public pedagogy of political consciousness. On the whole, the posters and the platforms that university provides become modes of expression of reality, of protest and resistance.

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APPENDIX-A

Interview Guide

For Student Activists

I-Basic Information

1. Name
2. Gender
3. Course
4. Center
5. State

II-About University

6. How long have you been in the university?
7. Why did you choose JNU what were the other choices?
8. Is JNU different from the other university that you have been to?
9. How has your experience in JNU been?
10. How do you find student teacher interaction in this campus?
11. If we talk about JNU as a space what kind of space is JNU? What are the unique political elements of this University?

III-Political Involvement

12. When did you join the party? Why and how?
13. Were you a part of any political organization prior to it here or outside?

14. Can you narrate some incidents or the things that motivated you to join the organization or to become an activist?
15. How did JNU contribute to it?
16. How was your experience regarding politics in other university?
17. Has the university changed in any aspect since you have joined? If yes then how? What about the political culture?
18. What are the roles that you play being a party member? What are the kinds of activities?
19. How do student political parties propagate their agenda? How do you mobilize students?
20. What is your typical day like?
21. How does participation affect your lifestyle?
22. What is the role that the organization played in the kind of a person that you are now?

IV-About Posters

23. When you entered JNU for the first time what did you notice most prominently?
24. Can you elaborate on the kind of roles that these posters play in the campus?
25. How do you decide the content of these posters?
26. What is the intention of making these posters?
27. What is the process of making and putting up of these posters?
28. Is there any poster in particular that you like? Why and why not?
29. Is there any poster that you don't like? Why?
30. How do you relate studies with student activism? or politics on campus?

APPENDIX-B

Interview Guide

For Alumni who were Activist

I-University

1. How was the student diversity shaping the culture of JNU? Has it changed?
2. How was student teacher relationship in your time?

II-Activism

3. When did you start taking interest in politics?
4. How did JNU contribute to it?
5. How do you look at the political culture at the campus?
6. Can you tell about the political culture in your time?
7. What are the various elements of this unique political culture?
8. Why did the campus evolve as a politically conscious campus?
9. What are the factors and elements that keep the political culture alive in this campus?
10. How did students participate in political activities?
11. What issues were at the center of student activism historically?
12. How did student political parties propagate their ideas and propaganda in your time?
13. What was the nature of leadership?
14. How did new parties come into being?
15. How did old parties dissipate?
16. What were the issues and why?
17. What were the methods and tools for expressing activism?

III-Posters

18. Were the posters there in your time?
19. What was the process of making of these posters?
20. How do you think posters contribute to activism?
21. What role do you think these posters play in campus?
22. What were the aims and motives behind the posters?
23. Is there any poster that you like or were there any?
24. Was there any poster that you did not like?

APPENDIX-C

General Questionnaire

1. Questionnaire no:_____ Date:_____ Place:_____

2. School: _____ Centre: _____ Course: _____

PART -I

Q1. How long have you been in the university?

Q2. How would you describe your experiences on JNU campus?

Q3. i) Are you a member of a student political party on campus?

Yes

no

ii) Have you joined the party after joining JNU or prior to that?

a) Joined after entering JNU

b) Had been a member before joining JNU. Where mention-_____

c) Was a member of another party but shifted to another party. When and where mention_____

i)If switched the party then why did you shift?

Q4. i)) If you are **not a member** of any student political party how do you see student politics on campus?

ii) Did you ever get motivated to be an activist?

Yes

no

a)If yes, then what motivated you?

b)If no, why not?

Q5. **For activist-i)** What made you an activist? Please describe instances, circumstances or motivations for becoming an activist.

Yes

No

If yes, which poster? Why?

ii) Does posters get into classroom discussion?(between teachers and students)

Yes

No

If yes, which one and how?

Q6. Do you think posters reflect lived experiences?

Yes

No

i) If yes, how?

ii) If no, why not?

Q7. Do you think do you think the posters made you politically conscious?

Yes

No

i) If yes, how?

ii) If no, why not?

Q8. Did the posters change your political outlook?

Yes

No

i) If yes, how?

ii) If no, why not?

APPENDIX-D

General Interview Guide

For Students

Basic information

Name

Course

State

Gender

University

Q1. How long have you been in this campus?

Q2. Which course are you pursuing here?

Q3. How did you get to know about this university?

Q4. Where were studying before JNU?

Q5. What are the unique features of this campus?

Q6. How would you describe the student teacher interaction in JNU?

Q7. How do you look at student diversity here?

Activism

Q8. How do you see the politics in JNU? Do you find it any different from the University before, if yes, then how?

Q9. How do you see the work of the student activists on the campus?

Q10. Have you ever felt motivated to join any political organization on campus? If yes, then why?

Q11. What are the means that these parties use to attract the students?

Posters

Q12. Did wall posters attract your attention?

Q13. Have you ever do you read these?

Q14. What do you think is the role these posters play? why are they here?

Q15. Is there any poster that you like?

Q16. Is there any poster that you do not like?

APPENDIX-E

Pictures Used

Picture 3.1



An event organized by a student organization in which Irom Sharmila was invited as a guest.

Picture 3.2



gathering of the students who attended the event

Picture 3.3



Irom Sharmila interacting with the students after addressing the event, in the mess hall of Shipra Hostel.

Picture 3.4



Photo exhibition was organized by a student organization outside the Sabarmati hostel as a medium to raise awareness and rights of the tribal communities. The pictures were taken by one of the activist member of the organization. At the back a student activist of the same organization talking to media (Jansatta news channel)

Picture 3.5



Students performing a play just before a lecture organized outside the administration block, lecture and protest was a medium to protest against and communicate with the students and the administration. It was organized to convey the idea of decreasing spaces for dialogue (between the administration and the activists)

Picture 3.5



The event been covered by the media (news channels like NDTV, Star news etc.)

Picture 3.6



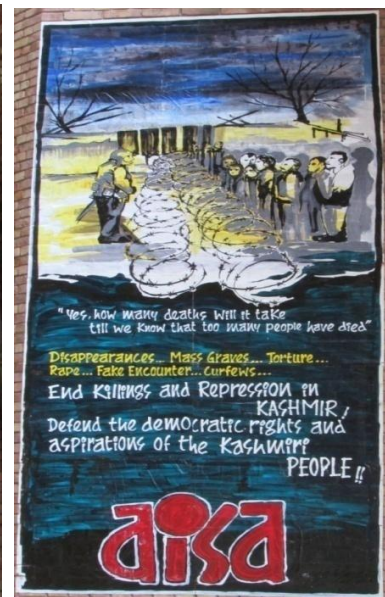
Showing the gathering of students which was there to attend the presidential debate around 3 o'clock at night.

Picture 4.1



Picture on AFSPA

Picture 4.2



About Indian Army in Kashmir

Picture 4.3



Picture 4.4



Picture 4.3 is from JNU murals some other time (time and place is not mentioned) the picture is the year mentioned as 2011 whereas picture 4.4 was taken in 2016 by the researcher it is at the Dholpur gate of the library.

Picture 4.5



Poster which is no longer there but is still remembered by students.

Picture 4.6



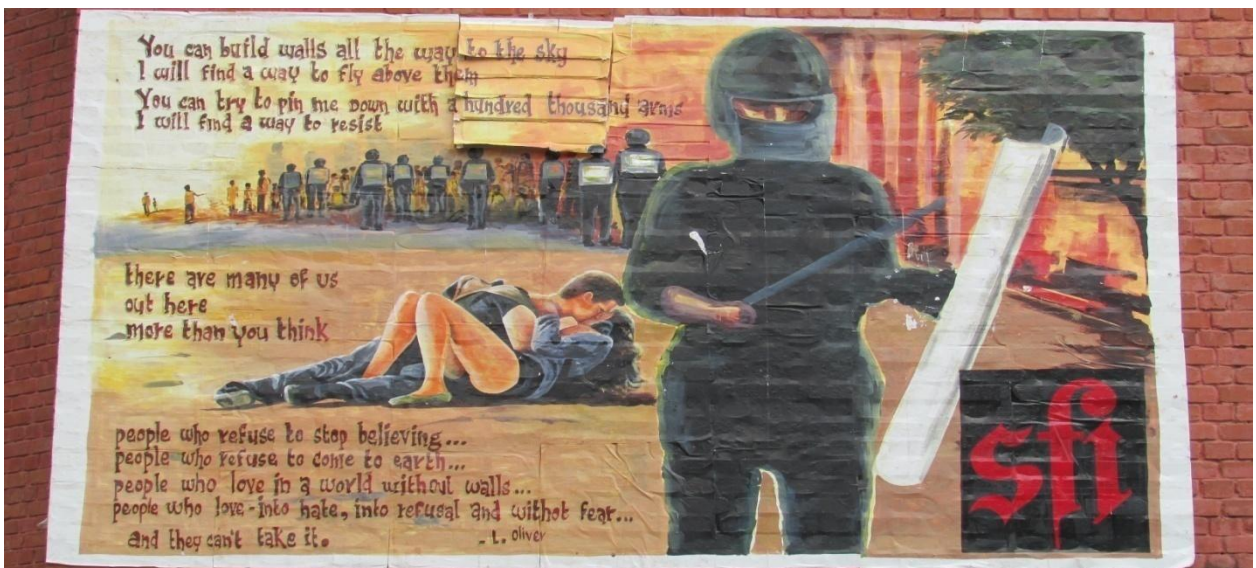
Poster near library building.

Picture 4.7



A picture from internet of a real incident- “a riot broke out after the Stanley cup tournament in 2011. A team of riot police tries to get the crowd under control. In the process, a women named Alexandra Thomas was knocked down by a police shield. Her boyfriend , Scott Jones, came to rescue⁵⁸”.

Picture 4.8



Poster on SSS2 Auditorium wall recreating and using the picture 4.7

⁵⁸ Picture and caption taken from an online video the real stories behind 20 iconic pictures YouTube

Picture 4.9



Poster in front of School of International Studies

Picture 4.10



Poster behind SSS1 building

Picture4.11



Poster in SSS2 Canteen. Having quote- “fight to study! Study to change the society!!

Picture 4.12



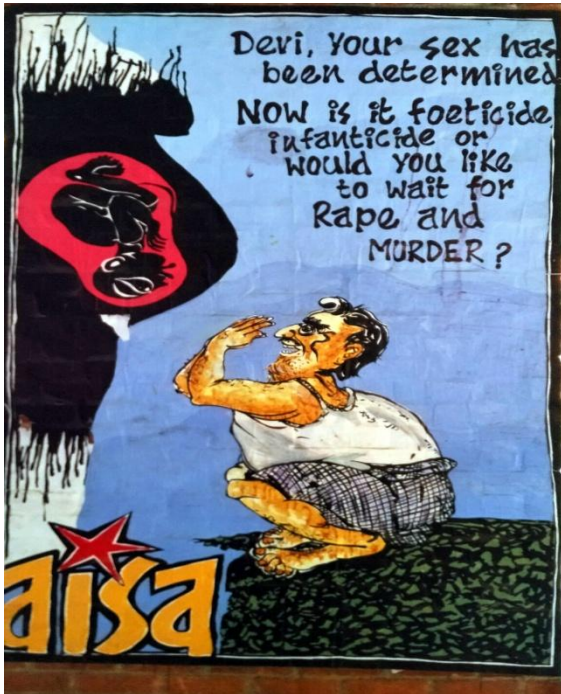
“One on the library regarding UGC non-Net scholarship”, “A poster outside Dholpur library in that poster we see the privatisation increasing by government and cutting of student fellowship”

Picture 4.13



The Poster was at admin block now removed.

Picture 4.14



Poster on female infanticide

Picture 4.15



Poster on the theme *Khap Panchayat*

Picture 4.1



Poster between SSS1 and SLS
