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Is Getting into Student Politics in India A Waste of Time?

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Abstract: ***"Anyone who says they are not interested in politics is like a drowning man who insists he is not interested in water," Mahatma Gandhi.***
The students of today will be the future stewards of our nation's destiny in the future. In order for future leaders of the nation to grow and develop a healthy public opinion, political consciousness must be instilled in them as early as possible as a matter of course. But these young men and women must never be allowed to become the pawns of selfish and self-centred shoddy politicians who have no regard for the general public. As one of the first and most important requirements of democracy, students must cultivate a sublime sense of discipline in themselves. Should students participate in politics or not has long been one of the most perplexing questions facing governments around the world. The Lok Sabha had recommended several years ago that the voting age be lowered to 18 years in order to provide students with an opportunity to participate actively in politics and, later, in activities involving the entire nation. The recommendation was accepted by the government. This issue, on the other hand, has been debated in the parliament for quite some time now. The purpose of this research is to examine the role of student politics in India and to discuss the pinnacles of student activism in the country.

Keywords: Student, Politics, Democracy, Movements, Unions, Pros and Cons etc

1. INTRODUCTION

Political, environmental, economic, and social change are the goals of student activism. However, student groups have influenced larger political events. Politics is a science when it comes to a nation's overall health. It follows the same rules and laws as any other scientific discipline, and when put to use, it produces specific results. Some argue that students should not be involved in politics, but the truth is that they should be educated about the laws and regulations that **(Altbach, P. G. 2007)** govern their country's prosperity. However, it is important to remember that one must first learn to walk before one can run.

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Politics has earned a bad rap for being associated with only bad things. To see members of our parliament berating each other on national television is not a good thing. Distinction has been lost. What has happened to adherence to the law? It's common to think of politics as a form of agitation, whether constitutional or not. When the message is spread through a variety of media, it takes on a much larger impact. Bandhs, stone-throwing, and unrestricted violence are then unleashed by the escalating drama. Death and property loss are almost always the result. Students have no business getting involved in this type of politics. In order to engage in constitutional agitation, one must be well-versed in the country's governmental structures and socioeconomic dynamics. It necessitates educating the populace in order to better understand their needs. It urges nonviolent pressure on those in positions of authority as well as education about the need **(Altbach, P. G. 1984)** for change. Students, on the other hand, have no place in constitutional protests. This necessitates familiarity with the constitution as well as life's conditions, both of which the student has not yet encountered, as well as an appreciation of the flaws in current forms.

The student's mind isn't mature enough to handle all of this work. In addition to youth, this is the era of fervour. Learn and soak up the experiences. Gather information during this time. With no experience or knowledge, a young person is only going to perpetuate other people's ideas. In order for him to form an opinion based on the facts, he must do his own research. When a person is young, he or she is prone to rash outrage because the mind is inexperienced. Yes, there is a lot of energy. Ultimately, he and his country will benefit if he can keep it focused and turn it into wisdom.

Students, on the other hand, can get ready for their time in politics. They must make the most of the free time they have now that they are no longer burdened by family obligations to further their education and knowledge. The principles and history of government should be presented to children in accordance with their ability to comprehend, according to political science. Attendance at political meetings should be permitted for college students so that they can gain first-hand experience with the events that take place there. But they should be barred from **(Altbach, P. G. 1981)** participating. Assimilate and harness knowledge now so that you can put it to good use later on, when you have the foresight to do so. Students may be allowed to assail roles in a mock parliament held at their college. Students will improve their communication skills, develop their ability to take criticism in stride, and most importantly, they will come to terms with the possibility that there are multiple ways to accomplish the same goal. When they do decide to enter politics, they'll have a better grasp of the issues and be better prepared to make well-informed decisions.

Research Objectives

1. To shed a light on student politics and its pros and Cons.
2. To explain the student movement, student unions and student protest.

Tools and Methods

Primary sources are used to gather information for the current study, and the main principles of data collection are a face-to-face interview with the national community to explain the importance and necessity of student activism. Additionally, the perspectives of respondents were recorded using methods such as telephone meetings, emails, and other social networking sites in order to arrive at fair final results. For the current examination, secondary

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data is to be gathered from books and diaries that are published every day, weekly and fortnightly, as well as from the Internet.

Importance of Study

Many political concepts, such as power state political commitment and the link between the individual and the societal framework are learned through student politics. As a result, students can examine leaders and the political system objectively and fundamentally with the help of political knowledge. Students are one of the most widely recognised political frameworks that can be used to help the population grow. Students are in a unique position to identify and criticise the flaws in political campaigns and demonstrate the benefits of sound political strategy. Is politics healthy for a student is always a hot topic of conversation?

2. DISCUSSION

'Do Not Be Silent, Do Not Be Violent' is the slogan of the student movement that is currently sweeping across much of India. This slogan **(Kamal, 2020)** has political clout. Students learn about good politics (debate, discussion, tolerance, and democracy), neutral politics (avoidance of conflict), and bad politics (bullying, intimidation, and violence) (use of force, sycophancy, hatred of others, exclusiveness). They are capable of making a choice.

Student politics played an important role in the Indian independence movement. The Indian independence movement re-energized institutions like Allahabad University, Aligarh Muslim University, and Banaras Hindu University. When the Quit India movement began in 1942, university students who joined the struggle were jailed. During India's transition to independence, this tendency **(Kamal, 2020)** intensified and broadened. A number of political leaders have emerged as a result of their involvement in student politics, which may have included prison time. Without a doubt, student politics is an important part of 'learning democracy,' as it involves challenging the status quo and speaking the truth to power.

The politicisation of Indian students began in the 1960s and continued into the 1990s, as many universities and colleges became radicalised. Numerous students became involved in movements on the right, the left, and the centre. Senior leaders attempted to elevate university student leaders to positions of influence in the political landscape. They were in vain. Colleges and universities throughout the world expanded the horizons of the most socially conscious students and instructors **(Kamal, 2020)** during the 1960s and 1970s (for example, the anti-Vietnam War movement). Of course, universities varied in their sophistication, but as the 1980s progressed, political debates and contradictions in universities became more sophisticated and nuanced. The subjects ranged from poverty to development to gender equality and everything in between.

Some political parties, on the other hand, have become increasingly concerned with the interests of their constituents. For example, between 1975 and 1977, the Indian government declared a state of emergency, which resulted in restrictions on civil and political rights, as well as on freedom of expression and the imposition of mass prison sentences. This elicited an outburst of rage. Arun Jaitley, a former student **(Kamal, 2020)** union leader at Delhi University, was arrested and sentenced to prison. As a result, he was thrust into more prominent national politics. During the Emergency, three student leaders were arrested at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), and many others were imprisoned or suspended from their studies. They had all reacted in response to political events.

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Training, education, and an organic relationship with student movements are frequently overlooked by political parties. Seniors are well aware that many of the world's most powerful political leaders are themselves university graduates. A better understanding of the challenges facing the student community has resulted in better books and journals. These developments will increase the prevalence and complexity of student politics. In this situation, a democratic culture should consider a learning process.

A student's mind is more open to new ideas, theories, opinions, and debates from a variety of perspectives, both local and global. They learn to respond to politics and policies as they shape their own lives. Human rights, gender equality, the environment, and other issues are impacted by these policies. They must learn **(Kamal, 2020)** to make their own choices. "The personal is political," for example, states the women's movement's rallying cry. I saw a poster in JNU that said, 'When politics determines your future, you should determine politics.' Students understand the importance of politics.

Pros and Cons of Student Politics

In addition to learning about the framework, students can assess which legislators are acceptable and which are not. Consider Trump. Before the election, everyone at my school despised him for any reason. This caused disagreements and subsequent fellowships to break up due to political convictions. If students can be designers, specialists, or lawyers, they can be good legislators who will make their countrymen proud. Schools and colleges are the future politicians' nursery. Political **(Basics, 2017)** participation can broaden students' understanding of global political issues and encourage them to think outside the box. Kids can organise their ideas and present them well. Student politics influences vote-based culture. It raises their awareness of how democracy works in a country.

A clear goal of student politics was to make students politically aware and actively participate in societal issues. "Anyone who says they don't like politics is like a suffocating man who doesn't like water," said Mahatma Gandhi. Solid democracy requires youth participation. This adolescent force is a **(Dolly, 2021)** strong waterway that should have been channelized and requires appropriate collaboration with the components of politics for a better understanding of politics. In the end, people's shady side takes over and the defects are expected.

Students who participate in politics face the most obvious drawback: a lack of focus on their studies. It is common for students to become involved in politics and neglect their studies when they are introduced to the academic world. Students are dragged into political rallies and debates, wasting valuable study time. While others become powerful and influential, they drop out of school in order to join the ranks of the political elite. Chaos is inevitable in politics. Student activism, when they perceive their liberties are being violated, can sometimes devolve into violence and **(Basics, 2017)** may even be barbaric. Politicians also use students to their advantage when the chips are down in the political arena. Hundreds of students are injured, and a few unfortunately die, when schools are rocked to their cores by such unrest. Unrest and indiscipline in institutions can be traced back to politics. In educational institutions, politics is a major cause of inefficiency.

They avoid taking actions that might be seen as radical because political interference in colleges and universities makes their respective heads afraid to act decisively. As a result, students' protests and demonstrations consume a significant amount of time and resources. As

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much as students have the freedom to identify themselves with any political ideology, some are forced to do so because of their identity. Many students are forced to adopt political identities that they may not be **(Dolly, 2021)** comfortable with when they join the student body. Individuals are guided in their actions, ideologies, and thinking by these identities. Electoral politics is rigged and unfair. Student politicians routinely use lies, bribes, and even assassinations to manipulate students.

In order for politicians to gain more power and fame, they often exploit students' fear and insecurity. Because of this, students end up applauding these politicians while at the same time being abused by them. Politics also has the unfortunate side effect of infringing on students' constitutionally protected right to **(Dolly, 2021)** remain politically neutral. Powerful students at colleges and universities make it difficult for students to maintain their apolitical nature. Being powerless, they are subjected to all manner of political upheavals and pressures.

Student's movement

Student movements are the ideas and actions of student protest groups. Student movements have existed almost as long as universities. Students began protesting professors with unpopular political views as early as the 4th century. Student activism is a great way to stay connected and informed. Activism **(Oommen, 1974)** improves communication, relationships, and critical thinking. Civic engagement is good for life and should be practised.

Remember that the student movement grew out of a desire to end the 1950s conformist culture and free African Americans from social inequality and persecution. The first anti-Vietnam War student protest **(Urvashi, 2018)** was held in 1962. Student activism didn't really take off until the mid-1960s. After the American embassy in Edinburgh, 250 students protested against the Vietnam War in Grovesnor Square.

When did student politics in India begin? In the late 1800s, Western-style universities and colleges arose. To protest the partition of Bengal, students at Eden College in Calcutta (now Kolkata) burned the effigy of then-Viceroy **(Urvashi, 2018)** Lord Curzon in 1905. That was one of the first documented student demonstrations. Students across India protested the implementation of a 27 percent OBC reservation in government jobs in August 1990.

Student protests

1. **The Assam Movement or Assam Agitation 1979–1985:** was an Assamese anti-illegal migrant movement. All Assam Students Union (AASU) and All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) led a campaign of protests and demonstrations to pressure the Indian government to identify and expel illegal (generally Bangladeshi) foreigners and secure and protect native Assamese individuals. On January 16, 2017, over 2 million students protested in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry **(Hazary, 1988)** against the ban on Jallikattu. The Supreme Court of India banned Jallikattu in 2014 after PETA complained about its cruelty to animals. On January 20, a brief mandate lifted the Jallikattu restriction.
2. **Student's protests against CAA across India, 2019:** As of late, the whole country saw monstrous fights over the execution of Citizenship Amendment Act. Assam Students' association, students of Jamia Millia, Aligarh University and a lot more organized colossal fights over the enactment. Circumstance turned brutal in Jamia and AMU as police started shooting inside the University **(Hazary, 1988)** grounds. Student's police conflict left a few understudies injured during the dissent. Area 144 was forced in a few

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pieces of the country and web was closed down. Not simply the understudies of India, more than 400 students concentrating abroad likewise communicated their anxiety over the equivalent.

3. **Student movement in Emergency, 1975:** As crisis was forced, minutes before 12 PM on June 25, 1975, students' dissent emitted cross country against the equivalent. A large number of students across country organized **(Hazary, 1988)** immense fights and shows against burden of emergency. Late Arun Jaitley, who was in his mid-twenties had moved on from law school, taken part in the tumult. Jaitley additionally drove a few different fights because of which he was imprisoned as well.
4. **JNU protest, 2016:** The Jawaharlal Nehru University ejected in fights over the execution of Afzal Guru, who was indicted for doing an assault in Parliament 19 years prior. During the dissent that proceeded for four days, JNU Students' Union President Kanhaiya Kumar was hit with rebellion charges and later captured. Other students like Umar Khalid and Anirban Bhattacharya were additionally **(Hazary, 1988)** captured for purportedly reciting enemies of India trademarks during the fights. The arrangement of occasions that occurred additionally included suspension of a few students and many were likewise hit with weighty fines.

Students unions in India

1. **Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP):** Conservative All India Student Association allied with Hindu nationalist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). They claim to be India's largest student organisation with over 3,000,000 members. The ABVP was founded in 1948 by RSS dissident Bal raj Madhok and enlisted on July 9, 1949. Mainly to counter communist influence on college grounds.
2. **The Aligarh Muslim University Students' Union (AMUSU)** The Aligarh Muslim University Students' Union is a self-sufficient student agent body. It works as per Amin A. Bulbuliya's Constitution. It is primarily responsible for preserving a solid political culture and an atmosphere of open **(Andersen, 1970)** debate. Students are informed about public gatherings, conversations, and issues via flyers and notes. Public Action, a goal gathering, welcomed columnists, politicians, and academics to discuss various themes. **The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)** is a public level ideological group in India that was framed to address Bahujans (in a real sense signifies "individuals in greater part"), alluding to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes (OBC), alongside strict minorities. As indicated by Kanshi Ram, when he established the gathering in 1984, the Bahujans **(Andersen, 1970)** involved 84% of India's populace, yet were partitioned into 6,000 unique standings. The gathering professes to be motivated by the way of thinking of Gautama Buddha, B. R. Ambedkar, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Narayana Guru, Periyar E. V. Ramasamy and Chhatrapati Shahujii Mahaaraj. Kanshi Ram named his protégée, Mayawati, as his replacement in 2001. The BSP has its primary base in the Indian territory of Uttar Pradesh where it was the second biggest gathering in the 2019 Indian general political decision with 18.86% of votes and in the 2017 Uttar Pradesh races with more than 23% of votes.
3. **The National Students' Union of India (NSUI):** The Indian National Congress (INC) student wing was founded on April 9, 1971. Indira Gandhi formed the association by combining the Kerala Students Union and the West Bengal State Charta Parishad.

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4. **Trinamool Chhatra Parishad (abbreviated AITMCP, TMCP or Trinamool Chhatra Parishad)** TMCP is the student wing of the All India Trinamool Congress, an important political party in India. It was framed in 1998 after Trinamool Congress left Congress. TMC is a major student organisation in West Bengal and has won student association elections in numerous universities

3. CONCLUSION

"I found I couldn't even do social work without touching politics," said Mahatma Gandhi, who famously summarised his feelings on this: As far as I'm concerned, "social and moral progress" should be the primary goal of political action.
Students participating in politics do not necessarily exercise their constitutional right to vote. They get so caught up in the sleazy game of politics that they lose sight of their mission. In other words, their goals become muddled and they end up losing money. Student politics has an important role in developing young leaders who are aware of local issues and can connect with youth. Politicians in their sixties or seventies frequently use antiquated methods of governance. Only young, enthusiastic politicians can change this. Students will only have first-hand knowledge of current events if they are actively involved in the political process. Participation in politics does not guarantee political leadership, but it does make a student a more informed member of society. We need more female politicians who will stand up for equality and human rights. True, students bear the brunt of politics. Affecting and marginalising students, forcing them to align with particular political identities and participate in chaos. As a result, students should avoid politics and focus on their studies. You should not get involved in politics as a student, but you should keep up with current events. The country's youth must understand that they are the country's future and must be aware of its policies and issues. We are sabotaging our own country's future by ignoring politics, reality, and the current situation.

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