

The Youth Dilemma in Indian Politics: A Comprehensive Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Youth-led movements in India indicate the effervescent democracy feature of India. The youth of India faces abundant problem when it comes to participating and contesting elections. The paper highlights the youth participation in mainstream politics remains low. Today, India has the largest number of youth. Political parties consider that the youth, having not seen enough of life, are unqualified for the demands of top-flight politics. Youth are the key representative of social change in any country. The country wants some young selected leader with enthusiasm, morality and assiduousness in Indian politics.

Key words: participation, national, mainstream, politics, opportunities, involvement, youth and students

INTRODUCTION

The emergences of youth into politics have brought in new spirit of eagerness and self-belief among people. Today India has the largest number of people of this age group in the country. This is a class that is most powerful physically and mentally. Those who make every effort for the development of the country and their families. The backbone of India is the youth. The youth plays the main role to make the country. The future of any country becomes beautiful by the youth of the country. But today Indian youth has become selfish, he does not think about the progress of the country but only thinks about himself. They are getting enough employment opportunities, but sadly, no matter how much the youth of today have been educated, they are forgetting their rights and responsibilities towards the country and family day by day.

“Only the youth can save India and the world from dismal gloom,” said Jawaharlal Nehru. They are the backbone of a nation. Only the youth can help achieve national objective, make a country great and powerful. It is imperative, therefore, that every young man and woman understands his or her responsibility towards the nation and contribute their mite in the task of nation building.

With the passing of the Constitution (61st Amendment) Bill, which lowered the voting age from 21 to 18 years, the Indian youth cannot be kept away from the mainstream of national politics. They cannot be isolated from the nation’s social and public life. In the past they responded to Gandhidji’s clarion call for joining the freedom movement. Today the nation beckons to them as it stands on the threshold of the 21st century. They are the builders of future India and the future generations look up to them to give them a sovereign, secular and independence India. For this it is essential that they are aware of the prevailing cross currents in national life in all spheres. “In 2004, 50% of the Indian population was aged 30 years or younger; however, only 35 out of 543 Lok Sabha members (6%) were aged fewer than 35. Nevertheless, the World Values Survey showed that the proportion of people aged 18–24 who identified themselves as “very” or “rather” interested in politics was around 50, an increase of 15% since 1990” (Gupte, Pranay 2004)

Education for nation-building should start during our school days. The highest values of ethical and moral conduct in our day-today affairs should be instilled in us to that we do not swerve from the righteous path when we grow up. Petty divisions of caste, creed and community should find no place in this teaching. What we require is a healthy political outlook on the issues that affect us and the nation as a whole. This awareness will stand us in good stead when we grow up and are called upon to help in the task of nation building.

In this fast-changing scenario of events and personalities, the youth of the country have a crucial role to play. The nation appears to be in a state of flux and the youth can certainly give it a positive direction. They can help build an India that is free from any traces of social economic or political injustice. They can work towards binding the people of this vast and diverse land into one single unit. They can be the torch-bearers of our ancient culture and spread the message of goodwill and brotherhood in all corners of the country. They can effectively ward off such evil forces as those casteism, untouchability and communalism with their enlightened outlook. The youth can also crash such fissiparous tendencies as

linguism, regionalism, fundamentalism, terrorism by involving themselves in gainful activities and channelizing their dormant energies in the right direction. Once they take it upon themselves to fight such disruptive forces that divided our nation and threaten its unity and integrity, they will have played sterling role in giving the political life of the nation a new look. It will no longer be denigrated as a cesspool or the refuge of all scoundrels and riffraff from the society.

What the youth of today should beware of is the dubious and exploitative role played by today's politicians in their lives. These self-seekers often instigate the students to go on strikes and sit-ins and also incite them to incidents of violence to gain their own selfish ends. The youth must not fall a prey to such opportunities. They should organize their own unions and present only genuine demands and grievances to the authorities without any outside interference in their affairs. Only then will their initiation into politics be in the right spirit. If the youth allow themselves to be used and exploited by the present breed of politicians, politics will engulf them in its snares and they will emerge no better than what the politicians are today, i.e., corrupt, self-seeking, arrogant, ruthless and unscrupulous. In that case the very purpose of their involvement in politics would be negated. If necessary, legislation should be enacted so that present day politicians cannot interfere in the affairs of the youth. They only misguide the youth and make them work for their own ends rather than the larger interest of the nation.

The youth of today cannot, and should not, close their eyes to the happenings around them. They should be keen and aware of goings on, the manipulations of politicians and the various forces working at loggerheads against one another. Once they have understood the scene around, they should involve themselves in setting things right. This can be possible only if the priorities of the youth themselves are right. For this, their system of education and upbringing has to be in consonance with national ideals as well as their own requirements regarding jobs and vocations. They must be assured of gainful employment once they complete their education. Only then will they wholeheartedly devote themselves to their studies as well as nation building tasks, and only then will their participation and involvement in politics be meaningful.

Once the youth are guided in the right direction by involving them in the national politics, the possibilities of betterment of their lot are immense and vast. This is not to suggest that they should give up their studies for the sake of politics. The point is that their potential energy should percolate down to other areas of life. That is why Swami Vivekanand said, "my hope of the future lies with the youth of this country, youth of character and intelligence, renouncing everything for the service of others, who can sacrifice their lives in working out my ideas and doing good to themselves and to the country at large". It is this all-round growth and involvement that the youth should aim at, instead of mere lopsided involvement in politics during their impressionable years or mere love of books or sports, while wearing blinkers where the political happenings round them are concerned. If taken in this spirit, the youth of the country certainly have a positive role to play in politics. The need is to educate and train them properly to understand their responsibilities towards the country and the world at large.

The question of the participation of students in politics has always evoked a lot of discussion. It has been a very controversial subject. Two contrasting opinions have been expressed by the two groups of people. Both the groups are equally convinced of the merits of their cases. The discussion goes on between the students, teachers, politicians and other well-wishers of the student community. In spite of their best efforts, no satisfactory or convincing solution has so far been found out.

Those who oppose the participation of students in politics put up a strong case. They argue that politics is a dirty game. It creates groups and parties and leads to permanent enmities. It disturbs the peace of mind of the students. The primary duty of a student is to pay single-minded attention to his studies. He is supposed to lead a life of penance or Tapasya. He cannot afford to take part in the luxury of politics. Politics causes a great interference in the studies of the students. Interest in politics leads students to an active participation in strikes, demonstrations and processions. At times, it brings him into a serious clash with the college authorities or the police. May be, he lands himself in jail. All this disrupts his studies and he is pushed off the rails. He loses his real purpose in life and goes astray. Participation in politics thus spoils a student's career and makes him useless for any purpose other than strikes, demonstration and slogan-shouting.

Those who support the participation of students in politics make out an equally strong case. They argue that education does not mean mere literacy. It means a total and all-round development of a student's personality. It makes him aware of what is happening in his country and in the world around him. It also develops in him the qualities of leadership. Instead of being a timid, shy bookworm, he grows into an aggressive, dominating and alert young man who knows how to fight the battle of life.

Participation in politics trains a student to be a good citizen. It gives him training in the democratic way of life. He grows into a responsible and cultured citizen who is an asset to the nation. It creates in him a sense of patriotism. He knows his duties towards his country. He has a fair knowledge of the world. He develops debating skill and he can always put forward

his point of view with force and conviction. He develops all the qualities of head and heart. He is trained for leadership. As a leader in the making, he develops such qualities as courage, sincerity of purpose, a spirit of service, sympathy for the fellowmen, self-discipline and devotion to duty.

Student period is the formative period in one's life. A student must develop all such qualities in him during this period as enable him to lead a successful life. If we study the lives of our great leaders, we shall find that most of them did take an active part in politics even during their student days. All major political parties have youth and student wings, such as Indian Youth Congress, Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, and Democratic Youth Federation of India. A campaign by Young India Foundation has been raising awareness on the importance of youth rights and the essential representation they need in a country with over 670 million people below the age of 25. YIF is also leading in the Age of Candidacy campaign which is working on decreasing the age of candidacy in India from 25 to something lower" (Dutta, Medha 2014) The Rising stars of Indian politics like Tejasvi Surya, Aditya Thackeray, Tejashwi Yadav and Many such leaders who are constantly working for the public and one of these names is Rishabh Mukati who is India's Youngest Politician and is working with the slogan of public service first.

Youth politics is a category of issues which distinctly involve, affect or otherwise impact youth. Youth politics encompasses youth policy that specifically has an impact on young people (for example, education, housing, employment, leisure) and how young people engage in politics including in institutional politics (elections, membership of a political party), youth organizations, but also in protest movements and lifestyle.

CONCLUSION

Most parties are reluctant to alter the status quo, leading to these young aspirants feeling gradually more misplaced and inaccessible. Now, it is difficult to pronounce any verdict in favour of one or the other point of view. The golden mean would probably be the best way out. A student should take part in politics, but is should not be an active participation. All activities are good if one remains within reasonable limits. Students should, therefore, pay attention to their students. They should at the same time, keep themselves informed about what is happening around them. They should not hesitate from jumping into politics if the situation threatens the unity or the freedom of the country. Many initiatives were taken in many schools to develop the interest among students to enter Indian politics. The field of politics in India is usually perceived as something that is not suited to the educated masses and this perception is being changed by many school students who take up the idea of politics as their career and help promoting the cause.

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