

# Students Political Activities in Transition

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## *ABSTRACT*

The present paper analyses the nature of students' political activities in India during freedom struggle and qualitative change in their activities after independence. The political activity and ideology on any campus is not isolated from national political main streams." Its main aims are to create a healthy academic atmosphere on the campus, struggle for student rights and to campaign against social evils like drug abuse, drug trafficking, dowry etc. It also aims to strive for achieving a socialist pattern of education, inculcate sense of universal brotherhood and to support the International Student Movement engaged in their pursuit of peace, disarmament, national sovereignty etc. There is a long tradition of student involvement into politics in India. Students played an important role in nationalist movement and today they continue to be politically active. Lord Curzon's administration (1898-1905) and politics gave rise to new militant nationalism which also involved students. The earliest evidence of direct political activity on the parts of students is an incident of 1905. Students in the even Hindu Hostel Calcutta burned the effigy of Lord Curzon and boycotted college examinations to protest against the government's decision to partition the province Bengal. Perhaps it is not just a coincidence that the Swedish movement was born immediately after the Partition of Bengal. The Government made every attempt to suppress the students. Orders were issued to penalize those schools and colleges whose students participated in Swedish movement. These institutions were stopped grants in aid and other privileges. Disciplinary action was taken against students found guilty of participation in the nationalist agitations.

**Keyword:** National, Main streams, Movements, Tremendous

### **Introduction:**

In 1920 Indian national congress (INC) started mass movements in different parts of the country. The INC passed a famous resolution at Nagpur in 1920 calling for gradual withdrawal of boys and girls from schools and colleges and earnest attempts to establish national instruction by a national institution is meant any education instruction that does not receive aid from government is not in any way controlled or inspected by government In fact the response of the students to the call of the boycott of schools and colleges was famous successful than any other

form of boycott or non-co-operation suggested by congress. The first to come in the field were the students of Aligarh University When Mahatma Gandhi and Ali brothers (Maulana Saikat Ali and Maulana Mohamed) visited Aligarh and addressed to students, a tremendous response came forth and students decided in favour of non-cooperation and refusal of all government assistance They passed a resolution demanding that University should be nationalized by disowning all connections with British government and revising its curriculum on national lines. But unfortunately, the unity among the students did not last long. A large number of

students were persuaded to change their views or were withdrawn from the university by their parents. A small number of convicted students continued their fight for the nationalisation parents. A small number of convinced students continued their fight for the nationalisation of the University. They when the Trustees of the University did not relent, they established a new university Jamia Milia Islamia at Aligarh in October 1920 itself. This lead given by Aligarh was soon piked up in other parts of India. Within four month of opening the Jamia Islamia. Several national universities came into existence for example, National College Calcutta , Bihar vidyapith, Kashi vidyapith and Tilak Maharastra Vidyapith Jamia Millia Islamia was shifted from Aligarh to Delhi in 1925.

Gandhi's non-Co-operation movement was the first mass movement in student were involved in a large number. Students helped in congress campions and meetings, when congress leaders were arrested, students assumed the leadership of the movement in some areas. Although the non-Co-operation movement did not succeed in expelling the British from India it provided university and college students with political experience and made political activity a vital and an integral part of campus life in India.

The non-Co-operated movement stimulated the students to join a single platform to fight against British rule. The first all India students conference was held in Nagpur in 1920 to provide Co-ordination for the growing student political movement. Similar student meetings were held in different parts of the country during the 1920.

In 1928 when simoon commission visited India to look into the problems of Indian self-government, the Indian students orgained a series of demonstrations on a national scale and demanded independence for India. In 1930, Congress socialist party was formed and it had a

strong influence on students. The ideas of radical nationalism expressed by socialist and communist elements within the congress party had a strong appeal on the students. The influence of radical nationalist and socialist ideas spread by left wing leaders, prepared the students for more active phase of nationalist struggle. As a result Gandhi's civil disobedience movement of 1930 involved students on a much larger scale than before. Many militant activities were carried out to impair British administration Infect it is clear that the Gandhian concept of non-violence was never fully accepted by the students. On of the results of agitation of the early 1930's was the creation of all India students federation (AISF) in 1936. From the beginning the AISF was strongly nationalist and radical in its approach within two years, the new organization was able to claim one thousand affiliated organisations and fifty thousand members. By 1938, Indian congress were highly politicized and students were involved in a variety of agitational activities But all these activities were related to the freedom movement. The revolt against the British rule and joining the nationalist movement was ideologically very sophisticated. But ideological sophistication also led to factional fighting. The moderates and extremists always criticized each other on the basis of their ideologies.

Ideological differences led to the split of AISF. Differences between the communist on one side and socialists and Gandhian on the other came into the open in 1940. AISF which was communist dominated strongly criticized the conservative elements of the congress. In 1945 socialist elements of AISF formed a separate organization all India students congress and AISF become a communist organisation . All India students congress (AISC) like AISF continued its struggle against the British while at the same time it continued to oppose the communist.

By 1942, the student movement was highly organized and extremists factions usually dominated in spite of congress leaders' call for non-violent movement. Students invariably participated in various strikes and demonstration called by the congress party. The percent of the student population (about 15000 students) was involved in the organized work of the national movement supported the strikes from schools and colleges.

After independence many qualitative changes came in student politics. The first thing is that before independence the student politics was value oriented politically conscious students believed that the caste system, communal animosities, the food problem, and other social ills would be eliminated when India achieved independence and could guide her own affairs. After independence the student politics became more and more norm oriented i.e. it aimed at the correction of particular grievance of the campus. It is generally not related to ideological issue aiming at the social and economic reformation of the country. Before independence respected nationalist leaders encouraged students to take active part in political struggle. After independence congress leadership has been divided on how best to deal with India's social, economic and other problems. Conservative elements in the nationalist movement achieved substantial power after 1947 and many radicals were forced into opposition. Congress leaders themselves urged the students stay out of politics, reversing their former position. They denounced the direct role of student organizations in solving the social and economic problems of the India society. They suggested students need not give any advice to the congress leaders since they are more experienced than them (students). Prime Minister Nehru stated- "Students are inclined to think that the main object of their organizations is to hurt gratuitous advice at the government, the united

nation, and the world at large.

In, 1948, All India Student's Congress (AISC) was formed and congress leaders expressed interest in the formation of a non political student organisation. As a result National Union of students was formed in 1950. But National Union of Students (NUS) could never become the nonpolitical student organisation. Political groups tried to use NUS as a means to control the student movement against the ruling government. Factional disputes caused several splits in the organisation and by 1958 the NUS was dead.

Then another organisation, the National Council of University students of India (NCUSI) was formed subsequently to fill the vacuum created by the disappearance of NUS. The NCUSI differed from other student organization in that it had not sought to create a mass based student movement, but was rather a representative body of student leaders from Indian universities. NCUSI had a moderating influence on the Indian Students by encouraging them to work with administrators rather than resorting to immediate agitation.

The ruling congress by Mrs. Indira Gandhi formed a student organization called National Student's Union of India (NSUI) in 1973. The main aim of NSUI is to perform constructive work in the society. But at the same time it claims "The political activity and ideology on any campus is not isolated from national political main streams." Its main aims are to create a healthy academic atmosphere on the campus, struggle for student rights and to campaign against social evils like drug abuse, drug trafficking, dowry etc. It also aims to strive for achieving a socialist pattern of education, inculcate sense of universal brotherhood and to support the International Student Movement engaged in their pursuit of peace, disarmament, national sovereignty etc.

NUSI is the largest national Student Organization in India with units in 25 states, union territories, 438 districts and blocks; 177 universities, about 30,000 colleges and schools and active membership of more than 15 lakh students.

The oldest National Student Organization in India is the AISF, which has existed without interruption since 1936. As we have already seen, socialists left AISF in 1945 and formed a separate organisation AISC. From 1945, it was the communist organization AISC. In 1964 communist party divided into CPI and CPI (M). AISF remained attached to CPI. But in 1970 some members who preferred CPI (M) ideology left AISF and formed a new organization, students Federation of India (SFI). SFI became the student wing of CPI (M). The present membership is not available. Like NSUI recently the AISF and SFI have put more emphasis on constructive work. AISF and SFI are almost non-existent in areas which do not have communist strength. Major centres of their strength are west Bengal & Kerala.

Another Important student organization the Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) was founded in 1955 by students and leaders who had been involved in the Rashtriya Swamyam Sevak Sangh (RSS) a militant right wing organization centred in north India. ABVP made a concentrated effort to avoid militant activism. ABVP was affiliated to Jan Sangh. Now it is affiliated to BJP. The organization has a strong base in north India. The organization has claimed to be non political despite strong evidence of political affiliation with BJP.

The Gujrat movement of 1973 and Bihar movement of 1974 are two examples of such movement. Students were mainly instrumental in forcing the elected representative of Bihar and Gujrat Assemblies to resign their offices. The movements were directed to check the rampant corruption due to the inefficiency of the state governments.

## Conclusion :

Most of the political parties have their student wings. Although these wings have been formed to perform constructive works in the Society they mainly perform party works. These student wings participate in the student union elections of the university and colleges. The political party provides financial and organizational to student contestants during union elections. Student leaders of the different student wings are the student representatives of the political parties in the campus. Although student movements are generally related to campus problems there have been occasions when students have started movement on the basis of broad social issue and have played leading role.

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