

Student Protest Politics in India

Pramod Kumar*

Abstract

Dissent, debate and argument are the core concerns of a university. The university performs as not just a single entity. It has multiplicity of functions and it is these relationships that determine the functions. Firstly, at the structural level the propensity to engage in political activity. Secondly, the political consciousness of the institutions and its members are determined not merely by their roles within the university but by other roles they held in the past. Thirdly, the outbreak of student protests must be understood as the outcome of the interaction of a specific student consciousness and the structural contradiction which are inherent in the functioning of the university.

Study because we will need all your intelligence

Agitate because we will need all your enthusiasm

Organize because we will need all your strength¹.

Dissent, debate and argument are the core concerns of a university. According to Jawaharlal Nehru "A University determines stands for humanism, for tolerance, for reason, for the adventure of ideas and for the search of truth. It stands for the onward march of the human race towards ever higher objectives. If the universities discharge their duties adequately, then it is well with the nation and the people"². The university performs as not just a single entity. It has multiplicity of functions and it is these relationships that determine the functions. Firstly, at the structural level the propensity to engage in political activity. Secondly, the political consciousness of the institutions and its members are determined not merely by their roles within the university but by other roles

* Ph.D research scholar, Department of Political Science, University of Delhi

¹ The motto of the first issues of *l'ordine Nuovo* the Italian revolutionary left newspaper organized by communist leader Antonio Gramsci, in 1919.

² Speech at Allahabad University, December 13, 1947 quoted in Government of India, Ministry of Education, *Report of the Committee on Model act for Universities*, (Delhi: Government of India Press, 1964), p-5.