



EMERGENCE OF A NEW FORCE: ACTIVISM OF STUDENTS IN KANPUR AGAINST THE BRITISH INJUSTICE

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Students activism in India which the country is witnessing present days is not a new phenomenon, it goes back a long way. The student movements in India have emerged in critical historical junctures responding to issues and challenges faced by the society of the respective phases. The Indian youth has always made its presence felt whenever country has required them to voice their opinions (either for or against) on various prevalent socio-political issues and has never shied away from expressing their concerns. This raw force has refused to work only within the realm of issues facing the students but went ahead and participated in steering the ship of the government and agitated in the forefront. This paper intends to focus on one particular incident of our freedom struggle in which students participated with extreme enthusiasm; i.e. the appointment and boycott of the Simon Commission, which was termed as one of the most miscalculated moves by the British Government that infuriated Indians to no end. The exasperation of the young people of India was at display.

To trace the origins of social consciousness among students we must go back to the age of the Renaissance – to Bengal in the first half of the 19th Century. Exposure to modern literature and sciences at the newly established colleges of British India paved the way to rational and progressive thought among the educated youth. In 1828 the first students' group of India, the Academic Association, was founded in the Hindu College under the leadership of a young teacher Derozio (Young Bengal Movement). Around the same period many other organizations also came up which contributed into the new awakening all over. The seeds sown by the renaissance period led to the rise of the national consciousness amongst the Indian student. Now the conditions were perfect for the emergence of an educated class which later on took over the leadership of the national movement. It was the universities and educational institutes which ignited the minds of youth and turned them into potential leaders to lead the freedom movement in the times to come. Their struggle was not limited within the campus for academic demands but Indian youth marched on the streets hand in hand with the common people of the country for freedom against the exploitative British rule, and later on contributed in the struggle for equality, democracy and progress in Independent India.

Though various platforms were already there for the students as a forum for discussion but it was Bang-Bhang (that triggered the Swadeshi and Boycott movement in 1905) which has been treated as the beginning of the Indian Student Movement. This gave students a revolutionary outlook and called them to boycott colleges as well as British Goods and Student



clubs. It grew all over introducing students to active politics. Between 1906 and 1918, a number of students were convicted in Bengal in connection with revolutionary activities. The students were fully committed to work for the freedom of the India and gradually became a formidable force.

When Gandhiji launched his campaign against the Rowlatt Act, 1919, and the Jallianwalla Bagh atrocities, students participated in big numbers. Gandhiji called upon the students to withdraw from government schools and colleges and students from all over the country responded promptly. The First All India Students Conference was held at Nagpur in 1920, the resolution on non-co-operation and boycott of schools and colleges was passed with an overwhelming majority. For the first time, student force was organized and mobilized against the British rule. 'Charka Swaraj First and Education after' was the main motto of students at that time, who in large number joined the movement.

After the withdrawal of this massive movement when the Indian politics and spirits were lying low on the national front, appointment of the Simon commission gave a great impetus and perfect opportunity to channelize the energy of the countrymen into one definite direction i.e. to protest and show their resentment against it. No single act of the British Government must have offended and infuriated Indians more than the appointment of this All White Statutory Commission. The reception of the appointment of the Commission (under the chairmanship of John Simon), which was announced simultaneously by the British Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, in Parliament and the Viceroy, Irwin, in India on November 8, 1927(to examine and report on the working of 1919's Act), was extraordinary in its nature. Indian youth also did not lag behind and took part in the protest demonstrations nationwide with the greatest zeal; their anger vent out into the full blown manner.

The seven membered Commission was regarded as a national insult and shame as not even a single Indian was considered worth enough to be the part of it and most importantly then, when it was appointed with an aim to recommend and decide about the fate of India and its constitution. It raised a veritable political storm and also evoked universal protest, criticism and dissatisfaction in the whole country. The leaders of each and every stream of Indian politics regarded the exclusion of Indians from the Commission as the direct insult to the intelligence of the Indians and joined hands in denouncing it and advocating its boycott in each and every form and also at each and every stage. Moderates and Extremists, Swarajists and No-changers, Congressmen and some of the loyalists - all stood on the same platform. So the protest movement against the Simon Commission united all the Indian political parties which were poles apart, at that time. Meetings of protest were held in almost all the towns and cities, throughout the country, in order to record their emphatic protest against the Commission. All these factors



had aroused and intensified the consciousness of the people of India. People of all ages came forward to show their anger.

The Commission in spite of all the protest on its appointment visited India twice and commenced its work; firstly on February 3, 1928 to March 29, 1928 and secondly from October 11, 1928 to April 13, 1929. During these visits it went to several places but was boycotted everywhere and had to encounter protest meetings, hartals, processions etc., by the masses, in general and by the members of various political parties, in particular.

U.P. (known as United Provinces at that time), where the Commission visited and stayed from November 28, 1928 to December 11, 1928, was one of the most disturbed regions, along with Bombay, Madras and Lahore, where the agitation against the Commission was so great that the police had to open fire and lathi charge on the demonstrators. Especially in Lahore where during a peaceful procession, ‘some police officials used their lathis on the first row of the procession, which included Lalaji (Lala Lajpat Rai, was leading the procession). One of them struck him hard in the chest, which proved fatal after a few days.’¹

U.P. where the Commission visited three cities i.e. Agra, Lucknow and Kanpur, was not far behind and in each of these cities it had to face a very highly charged boycott movement, particularly in Lucknow and Kanpur. In Lucknow two of the most prominent freedom leaders Jawaharlal Nehru and Govind Ballabh Pant faced lathi charges while leading the demonstrations(on 28, 29 and 30 November). Police assaults on the peaceful demonstrators (which the authorities held were hostile and the newspapers and leaders, in their speeches held were purely peaceful) led to a severe criticism all over.

In Kanpur where the Commission visited on 3 December, stones were thrown at Commission’s cars when it was passing through Agriculture College. The anger especially amongst the young students exhibited itself in the full scale in Kanpur. The matter got so flared up that the Director of Agriculture, U.P. was asked to make a full enquiry into it. These facts make the Simon Commission’s visit in U.P. very significant and historical.

Kanpur’s Agriculture College which later on came to be known as the Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture & Technology was the premier Institute in India back then also. Disturbance to this extent coming from the students of a renowned Government College was highly unpredictable and shocking for the authorities especially then when presumably, to large extent the students were maintained there by scholarships or other assistance provided by the government.²

As per its pre arranged schedule the Statutory Commission, in the midst of its prolonged visit in Lucknow, went to Kanpur (known as 'Cawnpore' at that time) on 3rd December, 1928.³ Before proceeding further the certain facts have to be kept in mind that even before the



commission could reach Kanpur, the news of the death of Lala Lajpat Rai, who had died on 30th November and whose death was attributed to the blows he had suffered at the hands of police while leading protest demonstrations in Lahore, had already arrived everywhere in country. Along with that the baton blows inflicted on G.B.Pant and J.L.Nehru in Lucknow had also infuriated the people. Being all white in itself was the reason enough for the public anger, the two above mentioned facts added fuel to fire. Indians had their sentiments attached with their leaders hence the protest demonstrations wherever the commission visited later were not merely all about the self respect and pride of Indians but also about their sentiments, love and respect they felt for their leaders who were injured at the hands of British authorities. Somewhere in their minds Indian masses wanted to avenge it, especially the young minds which are most of the times driven by the impulse. Kanpur's youth was also no different.

Though the Commission's visit in Kanpur was an informal and very short one and was more by way of sightseeing, but it anyhow gave opportunity to the people of Kanpur, who tried their best to utilize even that minimum time also to the maximum to demonstrate against the Commission. But the Kanpur authorities were not at all expecting and were not at all prepared also for that much big scale and manner of demonstrations that took place in Kanpur.⁴ No matter how short the visit was but the fever amongst boycotters was high, mainly amongst students. The administration probably underestimated the extent of the possible number of demonstrators. Later on It blamed itself for not taking precautionary measures by keeping the crowd far enough from the Commission in Kanpur.

As the preparation, a largely attended public meeting was held in Kanpur convened by the leading men of all parties. A resolution was passed strongly condemning the exclusion of Indians from the Commission declaring that the proposed Committees of the Central and Provincial Legislature of India could never be treated as a substitute for the participation of India in the deliberations of Commission on the footing of equality. Advised the non-Official members of both provincial and central legislatures to decline to set up the Committee contemplated by the scheme of Statutory Commission and asked members to decline to assist the Commission.⁵

The Commission was to arrive at Ganges Bridge at 10:30 a.m. in Motor cars and to proceed from there to the Chamber of Commerce, where members were to be introduced to certain of the European commercial community. They were to visit the Kanpur woollen mills, the Muir Mill and Messrs., Cooper Allen's Leather Works in parties. After this they were to lunch at certain private houses, and after lunch to visit the Mutiny sights at the Memorial Church, Massacre Ghat and the Memorial Well. From the last named they were to proceed to attend a garden party given in its honour by J.P. Srivastava⁶ at the Retreat, Nawabganj and on the way to make a visit to the Mc.Robertganj Settlement belonging to the British Indian Corporation. After the Garden party they were to leave by the Bombay Mail from Kanpur city Station at 5:30 p.m. So this was the entire



schedule of the Commission for the day it spent in Kanpur. Demonstrations in the city were allowed but with certain conditions which were accepted by the leaders of the boycotters.⁷

Prior to the eve of the visit, except one or two meetings, no demonstrations by way of procession etc. were organised. However on the evening before the visit i.e. on 2nd December, 1928, a procession consisting at the most 600 to 700 persons was taken out in the city, and down the Mall. That procession impeded traffic though it didn't really attempt to interfere with it other than endeavouring to make all traffic keeping to the extreme left of the road. The attitude of certain of elements forming this procession was however distinctively hostile.⁸ It was certainly the indicative to the District authorities, of the possible hostile intention of the public, on the next day.

As regards the day Commission arrived Kanpur i.e. 3rd December, 1928 the Times of India reported and termed the hartal as a very poor show. Markets and shops carried on their normal business. Mohammedans were generally opposed to hartals and demonstrations. Civil Lines and the cantonment were entirely free from demonstrations although flag parties were roaming from place to place asking and intimidating people to close their concerns. The depressed classes refrained from joining procession or demonstrations. D.A.V. and Sanathan Dharma Colleges and schools where leaders had been concentrating their activities were closed. All the mills were normal in working. Police arrangements had been made at very large scale and nothing untoward reported.

However the paper published another version also, '...as the Commission's cars emerged from the Ganges bridge (as soon as they entered Cawnpore), loud shouts of 'Simon go back' and 'shame' were audible. Both sides of the road were lined by demonstrators carrying black flags and placards bearing "India for Indians" and "Down with imperialism". A few demonstrators had covered a car with black flags and followed the cars of Commissioners until they entered the premises of the Upper India Chamber of Commerce.'⁹

Wherever the Commission visited in the city the visits went without any incident and wherever the demonstrations were held, were without any sort of much trouble. Ganesh Shankar Vidhyarthi¹⁰ was leading the protest movement in the city.

Now during the middle of its visit at around 3.35pm as per its prearranged schedule the Commission had to attend a tea party given in its honour by J.P. Srivastava at the Retreat, Nawabganj for which it needed to pass through the Nawabganj, but near Nawabganj a huge crowd had gathered by that time of the demonstrators. So it was thought risky to take the Commission through that way by the district authorities, so the Commission's route was diverted from through Nawabganj to through Agricultural College gate. Where at the point where the road to the Retreat leaves the college grounds the students (presumably of the Agriculture College) had lined on both



the sides of the road, some of them threw stones at the cars as they passed. Two stones actually fell into the S.P.'s car, one hitting him at the back of the hand and the other on the shoulder. He was looking back at the time and saw one stone strike the car in which John Simon was driving and he afterwards learnt that a small stone also fell in the car in which Cadagon¹¹ was sitting.¹²

Times of India reported, 'An unpleasant incident happened inside the Agriculture College compound. Some students congregated on the roadside which lay within the compound leading to the retreat and yelled the usual cries. It is alleged the S.P. R.N.Marshsmith noticed Zianuddin Kirmani, a student of first year making some unseemly demonstration. He wanted to take his name to report the Principal. But the boy fled. Some constables ran after him in pursuit while other students rushed to give him protection. Then Principal reached and smoothed the whole affair. It is alleged some stones were thrown at S.P.. Fortunately he was not hurt.'¹³

The Commission was not stopped, however and passed through but the S.P. thought it necessary to stop and have the students removed to prevent a repetition of this, possibly with more serious consequences. When the students were asked to move from their position so close to the road, the students started behaving in the most disloyal and objectionable manner, and refused to move.¹⁴

Throwing of stones and the objectionable behaviour of some of the students, at the Agriculture College led to the full fledged enquiry into the matter by G.Clarke, the Director of Agriculture, U.P., with a view to suitable action against the offenders. The authorities held " _ _ _ the most serious of the incidents was the throwing of stones at the Commission's cars by students from the compound of Agriculture College." ¹⁵

A number of interviews, evidences, statements and reports were made during the enquiry, the Government Officials held that it was mainly done by the students of the Agriculture College while the College authorities held that it was not its students but the students of other nearby colleges, the city people and the local boycott leaders, who according to them were present in the larger number at the college grounds threw stones and provoked the Agriculture College's students to misbehave with the government officers and personnels, who were at the time present there.

Mayadas, the Principal, Agriculture College, Kanpur stated in his report that he was himself surprised while seeing a large gathering (of about 200 people composed of a mixed crowd from the city bearing black flags and shouting at passing cars). He stated that he was not at all aware and previously informed about the gathering and when enquired from the S.P's office, came to know that the Police were aware of this gathering and were taking necessary steps.



Principal also stated that he anticipated no trouble from his students, who remained loyal and quiet as evidenced by the fact that while Technological Institute and the neighbouring, Sanatan Dharm College and indeed most colleges and schools in Kanpur had observed a hartal and didn't attend College at all, the students of the Agriculture College attended without exception the usual classes on December 3rd. The Principal was also to attend the Garden Party given to the Simon Commission, at the Retreat. Nothing untoward happened till he left for the Retreat (which was near the College).¹⁶

Similar to the Principal's views Damle, Warden also believed that the students of the Agriculture College did not show the least sign of hartal or strike but attended all the classes as usual. On the contrary they had arranged for a friendly Hockey match and a Tennis match with the outsiders and the matches were played out also.¹⁷

The S.P. said that some of the public had gone into the garden but Jawaharlal Rohatgi (a local leader) had taken them away with him long before the arrival of the Commission and the persons forming the crowd (which was present at the sight) were students of Agriculture College, he gave the reasons also, that the reason on which they were refusing to move off, was that they were the students of the college, therefore the land belonged to them and they could not be legally removed by the police secondly when the police was ordered by him to seize the boy (who was misbehaving), he ran way towards the College.

Subsequently all the persons forming the crowd ran towards the college and the majority of them actually went into the college building. "To any mind there cannot be the slightest doubt but these were the students of the college."¹⁸

Principal held that it was difficult to understand that why so large a crowd other than students was ever allowed to collect at the junction of the roads so near the two government institutions i.e. the Agriculture College and the Technological Institute, further said that the authorities were powerless to prevent such a gathering as they occupied an area which was open to public. The non co-operators B.Narain, Nigam Vakil and Kishorilal Vakil of Kanpur were also present there.¹⁹ S.P. left the Principal (who was called back) to deal with the students and withdrew the police immediately. Leaving the place the he joined the Commission in the Garden Party.²⁰

In less than a minute Principal had the whole crowd including students from various colleges and schools, people from town and some of his own students, all of whom appeared very excited, under complete control and stayed there till Simon Commission had passed(while returning). So after his arrival there was no trouble of any kind.²¹



Director of Agriculture U.P., G. Clarke however accepted in his report that the sight inside the college grounds was well suited for a hostile demonstration. There was a choice of routes up to the entrance to the college grounds but the cars were bound to pass the site of the disturbance in the college grounds on their way to the garden party at the Retreat.²²

Principal, Warden and other College staff whose statements were taken during the enquiry, all presented the same narration of the scene. All of them did not hold any student of their college responsible for the stone throwing or even misbehaving (they did not see any of their students misbehaving). They said that the resentment among the students started only then when the police gave chase to a student (Zianuddin Ahmed) inside the college compound.²³

The statements of 25 students identified by the police were taken by G. Clarke. He stated that with the two exceptions (Zianuddin Ahmed and A.N. Shivpuri), he didn't think that any behaved in the manner requiring severe disciplinary action. "They were wrong in joining the outside persons who had come in to demonstrate against the commission. They lost their heads and got out of hand, when the police intervention appeared likely. It has to be remembered that the prominent boycotters like Dr. Jawaharlal whose peaceful intentions I disbelieve were moving about among them as well as outsiders who had come in for the sole purpose of making themselves objectionable."²⁴

He further stated that "It is the credit of the Agriculture College students who were present, that; 1) they didn't observe a hartal although I am convinced that efforts were made in the morning to get them out and 2) They were brought to reason as soon as Principal arrived on the scene. They witnessed me, when they appeared before me as the sensible fellows."²⁵

Jagdish Prasad, Chief Secretary, U.P. also fully agreed with Clarke on this point that 'a certain amount of allowance must be made in case of college students, especially when prominent agitators were trying to get hold of them. It's also to the credit of the college that the students attended their classes instead of absenting themselves, as did the students of the other educational institutions in Cawnpore. After making these allowances, however there can be no doubt that the students behaved badly, but still its sufficient if action is taken against the ring leaders.'²⁶

The two exceptions which Clarke referred were identified by different officials including S.P. and C.O. at the identification parade for misbehaving but no one could definitely say that they saw them throw stones or mud at the cars. First was A.N. Sheopuri (4th year diploma, 23 years), admitted shouting and arguing with the police. The Director recommended that he should be allowed to sit for his final examination in April, 1929 and found that disciplinary action was necessary in his case but to expel him at that time was a very severe punishment, it would have ruined his career and probably turned him into a permanent agitator. He however further stated that



Sheopuri should not be allowed to return to the college after the end of the running term whether he passed or failed and the order should be issued that he was not to be offered employment in the Agriculture Department.²⁷

The second exception was Zianuddin Ahmed Kirmani (First yr. diploma, 18yrs), S.P. in his report said that he in particular was violently abusive (as per him incidentally Kirmani was one of the lads to throw stones) and he wished to obtain his name in order to report him to the Principal accordingly. He therefore called him to come to him and moved towards him .On seeing this he ran away.²⁸ However Zianuddin Ahmed himself denied charges against him and said in his statement that he was present at the sight but he could not misbehave because his family was a staunch supporter of the Simon Commission (He was the son of Khan Bahadur Mahmoodul Hasan, Advocate Barabanki and his mother was the sister of Raja of Jahangirabad.)²⁹ The Director's conclusion was that, Zianuddin was not telling the truth when he denied the charges against himself.³⁰ He recommended that 'Zianuddin should be allowed to sit for first year's examination in April-May 1929, but he should be rusticated for the summer term and not allowed to return to the college until the autumn term (June-October). He will be expelled from the college if there are further complaints on his return.'³¹

The Director further stated that he was convinced that an attempt was made to get students out on strike but the leaders whom he had not been able to discover had little or no influence and the attempt failed. The Agriculture college students as a body behaved better in this respect than the students of other colleges and schools .He did not consider it advisable to take severe measures against the general body of students in view of what happened in other colleges and schools in Kanpur. The best course he was convinced was to let the matter subside after suitable disciplinary action had been taken against the two students whose behaviour was exceptionally objectionable.

He further recommended that as the mark of government's disapproval of the conduct of the students of the college joining in demonstration, no convocation (which used to be held in February and was to be presided over by the Governor or the minister of Agriculture) should be held that year (i.e.1929).³²

The government held the Principal and his staff and equally the local boycott leaders, responsible for the unseemly incidents which occurred on the afternoon of December 3rd, 1928 as in spite of the Principal being asked by the Sub-Inspector to see that the students did not misbehave themselves, no adequate arrangements were made to prevent hostile demonstration on the part of Agriculture College students.³³



But Principal on the other hand said that he couldn't take any concrete step against whatever happened on the grounds of his college because he was not given information by the police before hand of the route by which the Commission were to go.³⁴

The government authorities were equally blaming the boycott leaders also for the Agriculture College incident, as according to Jagdish Prasad, Chief Secretary, U.P., "At Kanpur the authorities were misled by the assurances given by certain leaders regarding the scale and manner of the demonstrations. The most serious was the throwing of stones at the Commission's cars by students from the compound of the Agriculture College The fact that some cars were hit on the roof with sticks and the stones were thrown at them proves beyond doubt that the action taken at Lucknow was necessary, and is a sufficient answer to contentions that crowds can be trusted not to commit violence provided they are not subjected to police control."³⁵

The administration also realized that it was its mistake that after the incidents of 28th, 29th and 30th November in Lucknow it ought to have taken more stringent measures at Kanpur as the events of Lucknow were bound to influence Kanpur as well. It realized that three mistakes seemed to have been made. First of all, the underestimate of the extent of the possible number of demonstrators, secondly an undue reliance on the results of the negotiations with leaders of the agitation, who clearly could not carry out promises made by them and finally failure to recognize the necessity of keeping crowds far enough back from the commission ..., for it if they were allowed to approach at all near, disagreeable incidents such as those in Kanpur were bound to occur.

So like other places of the country, the industrial hub of U.P. i.e. city of Kanpur also saw the public outrage against the Simon Commission, the general resentment against the commission was doubled by the news of the police assaults on the beloved and popular leaders, G.B.Pant and J.L.Nehru in Lucknow. Students got carried away by this anger which drove them aggressive. "...college students in Kanpur had become so militant that Kanpur Congress leaders, Vidyarthi and Jawaharlal Rohatgi were evidently in no position to control them."³⁶ Fortunately authorities decided to take disciplinary action only against the two identified students that too after keeping its effect on their future in mind as it was not sure whether they only were the culprits for stone throwing.

Though whatever happened in Kanpur does not seem to be planned beforehand and was more like a spontaneous act, the protest demonstration by the students of Agriculture College of Kanpur was certainly an indication that the period of the emergence of a new force i.e. activism of Indian students had not only arrived but was also taking the entire country into its sway. This young and raw force was in synchronism with the other new age forces of the third decade of the twentieth century (like workers movement, peasant movement and spread of socialist and



communist ideas etc) which saw the basic crystallisation of the main political currents on the national scene. The Indian youth and student class was very well aware and could relate to all the national issues. They were just waiting for a chance to express their resentment and Simon Commission gave them the perfect cause they were looking for. The impulsive and impatient young blood when got blended with intense patriotism could prove most dangerous for the repressive foreign rule.

Each and every section of Indian society wanted to be counted and contribute in the protest movement against the Commission. It was because the massive efforts of all Indians that Irwin himself had to admit (writing 30 years later) that ‘in the light of the events that followed’ the total exclusion of Indians ‘appeared to have been a mistake’.³⁷

Students continued to play a vital role in the national front, be it Civil Disobedience Movement launched by Gandhiji in 1921 or Quit India Movement (1942). Infact, during latter the students not only successfully managed to shut down most of the colleges but also provided the link between the underground leaders and the movement. They participated and courted arrest in big numbers all over India. It was during this campaign that the participation of youth and the power of the Indian student class which was emerging and growing rapidly, reached its zenith. Government authorities had to use extreme force to control the eruption of the volcano called Indian youth.

Students also participated in various constructive programs also such as- removal of untouchability and casteism, adult education, popularizing ‘Swadeshi’ articles and the use of ‘khadi’, cleaning of the villages, promotion of communal harmony, and so on. In 1936 All India Students Federation (AISF), the first student organization in India was formed in Lucknow at the All India Students Convention. Muhammad Ali Jinnah presided over the convention, and it was inaugurated by Jawaharlal Nehru. The AISF framed a charter of demands pertaining to educational and democratic rights. For the first time the academic demands of the students were incorporated within the larger framework of anti-imperialist ideology, allowing a much more mass-based organisation to be built.

Students (hand in hand with the countrymen) vehemently demanded the freedom of political prisoners and the prisoners of the Azad Hind Fauj (1945-46). The Students Federation along with the different mass-organisations of the working class gave the Navy Uprising (1946) which was the next major struggle, its full support. Students also took part in the Tebhaga movement (1946-47) of the farmers of Bengal against police atrocities and the exploitation of Zamindars. The students’ movement had now begun to debate about the future of Independent India, the democracy that would be, the new society which had to be built on the basis of equality and secularity and the educational policies that would be pursued.



With Independence the backdrop of student politics changed along with a change in the character of national politics. The common enemy, the foreign ruler, had left the land, and newer struggles emerged such as the fight for democratic rights and against the state's repressive machinery. All the prominent political parties recognised the potential of youth and started taking them under their wings-Student Federation of India (SFI) founded in 1970, National Students Union of India (NSUI) in 1971, Akhila Bharathiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) in 1948-49, are the most prominent national level student organisations backed by main political parties of India, which are active today.

Even after independence the power and enthusiasm of Indian students remained the same, they did not shy away in expressing their views on diverse issues (either for or against). They were actively involved in the various socio-political affairs and movements (between 1970's and 1990's), for instance- Chipko movement, Anti Emergency Movement, Mandal Agitations, Anti-corruption movements, Cyber activist movement (mainly in Kerala) against the monopoly of the Micro Soft corporations in the soft ware industry. During 1990's the era of Liberalisation of the Indian economy and Globalisation arrived in the subcontinent along with the new concerns, this phase also saw active participation of students.

It is the students who make anything massive and proved time and again that no problem can be solved without addressing their problems and resolving their concerns. They have always been part of the solutions and shaped the course of the decision making process on almost all the important matters. It was the power of these movements which forced the decision makers to take notice and act accordingly.

Every single political and social issue turns into an uprising with students' participation. Huge student turn out in the protest marches organised in the capital of India demanding the justice for the slain victim in the unfortunate Nirbhaya case helped in setting the progress of the case on the right track. The spate of protests at the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in Delhi and the Hyderabad University and the media coverage and national attention given to it demonstrate the power of great force called students of India.

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26. Letter to Governor, U.P. from Jagdish Prasad, Chief Secretary, U.P., dated February 6, 1929. G.A.D., File no. 566, State Archives, Lucknow.
27. Report of G.Clarke, Director of Agriculture, U.P., dated, January 31, 1929. G.A.D., File no. 566, State Archives, Lucknow.
28. Report of S.P., Kanpur, dated December 3, 1928. G.A.D., File no. 566, State Archives, Lucknow.
29. Report of G.Clarke, Director of Agriculture, U.P., dated, January 31, 1929. G.A.D., File no. 566, State Archives, Lucknow.



30. Letter to Governor, U.P. from Jagdish Prasad, Chief Secretary, U.P., dated February 6, 1929. G.A.D., File no. 566, State Archives, Lucknow.
31. Report of G.Clarke, Director of Agriculture, U.P., dated, January 31, 1929. G.A.D., File no. 566, State Archives, Lucknow.
32. Ibid.
33. A letter to G.Clarke, Director of Agriculture, U.P. G.A.D., File no. 566, State Archives, Lucknow.
34. Proceedings of the enquiry held at Circuit House, January 18, 1929 and Report of Mr. Mayadas, the Principal, Agriculture College, Kanpur. G.A.D., File no. 566, State Archives, Lucknow.
35. Jagdish Prasad, Chief Secretary, U.P. to the Government of India, Home Department, New Delhi, dated December 20, 1928. G.A.D., File no. 566, State Archives, Lucknow.
36. Pandey, Gyanendra, The Ascendency of the Congress in Uttar Pradesh, p.75.
37. Halifax, *Fullness of days*, pp.114-116.

Note: The official correspondences and documents were obtained from General Administrative Department (G.A.D.), File no. 566, available at State Archives, Lucknow and newspapers' clippings were acquired from National Archives and Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.