

BHARATIYA CHHATRA SANSAD (INDIAN STUDENTS PARLIAMENT) AN INNOVATIVE EXPERIMENT FOR PURIFICATION OF DEMOCRACY

(A case study of MAEER's MIT, Pune – India)

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Introduction :

India has seen the great visionary leaders such as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Smt. Indira Gandhi, Maulana Azad & Lal Bahadur Shastri, who are recognized as the founder architects of this great nation. In the last 50 years, there have been very few such names, which can be counted on fingers. Whether the tradition of leadership development is discontinued in this country? If so it should begin again! MIT- School Of Government, Pune through Bharatiya Chhatra Sansad has taken up this task.

Prof. Rahul Karad, MBA from Concliff & OPM, Harvard Business School and Executive Director of MAEER's MIT Group of Institutions, Pune, took the innovative and bold step of establishing a unique institution, MAEER's MIT School of Government (MITSOG), the only institution of its type in India and South-East Asia under the mentorship of former Chief Election Commissioner of India Mr. T. N. Seshan. MITSOG provides education and training to young graduates to make a career in politics. Prof. Dr. V. D. Karad,

UNESCO Chair Holder & President of World Peace Centre (Alandi), Pune, India is the sole inspiration for this activity

Mission :

The Mission of Bharatiya Chhatra Sansad (Indian Student Parliament) is to mobilize the student union leaders of India to come together on a single platform with a view to entering public life and bringing about a positive change in the leadership of the country. This will be done by regularly convening parliament of student leaders at The State and National levels in collaboration with the state legislative assemblies and by exposing the leaders to eminent personalities of repute, who will guide them in this endeavour.

Vision :

The Bharatiya Chhatra Sansad envisages that motivated, committed and dynamic political

youth leaders will emerge to provide a positive and effective leadership to our country and practice morality and ethics in politics for the betterment of the country and the world.

Committed Leadership :

India is the largest democracy in the world and certainly amongst the more mature ones. If India has to change, we need politics of development. To bring in this change, we need youth who are committed to politics. The criminalization factor in politics has to end. Criminals and corrupt people should not be allowed in politics. We need to develop an interest among youth for embracing public life and politics as a profession, with a view to strengthen the democratic fabric of our nation.

Social activism is there among youth, but they have developed a hatred for politicians, political offices and politics. But all political

parties are not bad. It is imperative to change the image of politics among youth. To have healthy democracy, it is important to have good politics in the country. Good politics can facilitate healthy democracy in our country.

In our country, we have various NGOs and social activists like Anna Hazare who can play a major role to create awareness about healthy democracy. But they can't be at its core, the institution has to be democracy.

Good Governance :

It is needless to stress separately that democracy is one of the best forms of government, where the rule is of the people, by the people and for the people. In 2005, under the mentorship of Mr. T. N. Seshan, former Chief Election Commissioner of India, MIT School of Government (MIT-SOG), started an institute to train the youth for a career in politics and

government. Many people did not appreciate the concept. In 2005, we have completed nearly 64 years of our country's independence and it is high time that we thought of good governance. However, it is sure that it could only come through educated and trained young men and women.

It is a matter of pride that nearly 250 alumni of MIT-SOG, who are trained in the functioning of various democratic institutions of the country and who are aware of different political ideologies, are working in various political parties and will have a very crucial role to play in the politics of the country in the near future.

Bhartiya Chhatra Sansad :

To further this noble mission, the Bharatiya Chhatra Sansad was launched in 2011. It is an extension of MITSOG, wherein we can reach a larger fraternity in India to sensitize them, provide

knowledge & training and also a proper platform to enter politics. Student politics is not new to India. In the early years of India's independence, most leaders who came forward were from the freedom struggle. But in later years, many leaders who came into limelight were the product of student movements. Indian student movement under the leadership of Lt. Jaiprakash Narayan have already proved that strength of student leadership is much higher and can change the ruling government also.

The Bharatiya Chhatra Sansad is a unique platform created for the youth of India, which makes them aware of the realities facing the nation. Bharatiya Chhatra Sansad also gives the youth a platform to voice their opinions and question eminent personalities who have made a mark in their respective fields. Thus, it provides them the first lessons on the functioning of a parliamentary democracy.

During their formative years, the youth can decide on any political ideology that they think would best serve the country and follow it. BCS is not a slave to any political ideology or party. Instead, BCS promotes the ideology of developmental politics.

Student Leaders :

Today, many Chief Ministers of the various Indian states like Smt. Mamata Bannerjee of West Bengal, Shri. Nitish Kumar of Bihar, Shri. Shivraj Chauhan of Madhya Pradesh, Shri. Narendra Modi of Gujarat are the result of student political movements. Bharatiya Chhatra Sansad aims to ignite this very spirit of student politics in the youth of today. The time is ripe for the youth to come forward to shoulder the responsibility of public life and leadership.

Historic Mega Event :

The Bharatiya Chhatra Sansad, in a way, is a classroom that provides political coaching to nearly 8- 10

thousand students at a time. It provides lessons on the functioning of a democracy by allowing the participants to take part in discussions and vote on resolutions. In the age group of 18-25, when the students are morally and ethically sensitive, Bharatiya Chhatra Sansad provides them lessons not just on the issues facing the country, but on how to face these issues in a morally and ethically sensitive way.

We have conducted **Five** student parliaments in **2011 to 2015** respectively. The idea of Bharatiya Chhatra Sansad is now gathering momentum. It has only completed the fifth year and it will take 4 to 5 years to get matured. The various governing bodies will then take better cognizance of the various resolutions that are passed in the Sansad. As the first step towards convening state-wise students' parliaments, organized The

Haryana Chapter of Bharatiya Chhatra Sansad was organized on 17th & 18th of March 2012. The day is not far when this idea will travel beyond the borders of India. We have a vision to have Chapters of the Indian Student Parliament or the Bharatiya Chhatra Sansad in all States of India, facilitated by the respective Legislative Assemblies of India.

Innovative Experiment :

Even a country like USA, which has nearly 1500- 2000 universities, does not have a common single platform on which the students can come together to discuss the real issues facing their country. It is so in many other countries also. I envisage that Bharatiya Chhatra Sansad and the manner in which it is conducted can lead the way for other countries to emulate.

The report of 1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th Bhartiya Chhatra Sansad will be

covered during the presentation of this paper, whereas the detailed report of 5th Bharatiya Chhatra Sansad is highlighted in the present paper.

Fifth Bharatiya Chhatra Sansad :

5th Bharatiya Chhatra Sansad (BCS) took place on 10, 11 & 12th January 2015 in MAEER's M.I.T. Campus, Pune, in which 9000 students from 29 states of the country participated. 90 speakers guided the students in 8 highly informative academic sessions in 3 days spread over 36 hours. B.C.S. is supported by Ministry of Youth affairs & sports, Govt. of India, Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Govt. of Maharashtra & Govt. of India, Municipal Corporation of Pune city, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), National Service Scheme (N.S.S.) Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangthan (NYKS) and Association of Indian Universities (AIU). It is also supported by

heads of International organizations such as United Nations, UNESCO, Inter Parliamentary Union, Common Wealth etc. The 5th BCS will be specially remembered for the number of awards given to young leaders. 11 Young members of Legislative Assembly from all over the country conferred - Adarsh Yuva Vidhayak Puraskar for their excellent work in their constituency. Two outstanding women Members of Parliament were also awarded by Gargi & Maitreyee Awards. Adarsh Mukhyamantri Puraskar (Ideal Chief Minister Award) was given to Shri Shivaraj Singh Chauhan, the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh (M.P.) The programme was telecast live by Rajyasabha Channel & given prominence by Lokasabha Channel. Live webcast of the proceedings all across the internet was also made.

Problem of politics is absence of thoughts :

5th Bharatiya Chhatra Sansad (BCS) Conference was inaugurated by the hands of Hon'ble Nitinji Gadkari Union Minister for Shipping, Road Transport and Highways, Government of India. Shri. Nitinji Gadkari, expressed grief at the overall deterioration in the society, not just in politics, but also in media, films, literature and almost all other fields. Shri. Nitinji Gadkari emphasized that the "Problem of politics is not difference of thought, it is absence of thought itself, Mr. Rajendra Singh, Magsaysay Award Winner, Well known Water Conservationist, assertively said that we should practice disciplined and developmental politics that aim at stopping the earth from going.

Masala has become the bread n butter :

The first session topic was "Media: Truth or TRP ?" the session was opened by M. Abdul Salam, Vice-Chancellor University of Calicut, Kerala. The main speaker of the session was Mr. Rajdeep Sardesai, eminent journalist and Consulting Editor, ITE, TV Today Network Ltd. Mr. Rajdeep Sardesai put forth in his speech that there is nothing wrong to show a bit of masala, but problem is that the masala has become the bread-n-butter and the bread-n-butter have disappeared from the plate. He further said that, we are showing a crime programme where the anchor has to dress up like a criminal. We call everyone a thief, judges, politicians, everyone. Hon. Girish Bapat, Guardian Minister of Pune, urged the media to project news in such a way that people do not lose their faith.

Life is an echo :

On 2nd day the first session was on "Heroes of India, Agents of

Change. Mr Shailajakant Mishra (IPS) Former Director General of Police for Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) was the main speaker. Shailajakant Mishra expressed that there are few words that are defining our lives today. They are victory & defeat, success & failure, profit & loss etc. We forget that the foundation of every big victory lies in defeat. Mr. Mishra further added that life is an echo, whatever you produce, comes back to you. If you think nice about others, others will think nice about you.

Women should get educated :

“33% is it a real tool for women empowerment? was the third session & Poonam Mahajan Rao, Member of Parliament was the key speaker. She emphasized that women should also introspect why they do not have equal representation & she agreed that 33% reservation for women is necessary in the current situation

to help women to take them forward. On the other hand Lila Poonawala, was of the opinion that “We want women to stand on their own feet and I think it is possible only if women get educated.”

India has become example of democracy :

Fourth Session was on very important topic i.e. Temples of Democracy under siege : A Global Perspective. K. Natwar Singh, Eminent writer, Former Union Minister for External Affairs Govt. of India, was the principal speaker. He put forth that it is matter of pride for us that our freedom struggle which was conducted in a democratic manner has been the source of influence to most African countries, so India has become the example of Democracy in most parts of the world.

On the 2nd day, last session was “Let us bring Politics before

Bollywood and Cricket.” Mr. Vikram Gokhale & Mr. Vikram Sathaye were the eminent speakers. Mr. Vikram Sathaye was of the opinion that “Education is not about trigonometry and grammar but education is about becoming better citizens.” Eminent Film & Television actor appealed to the participants that if any one of you bring improvement in our country, younger generation can only do it.

On 12th January i.e. 3rd day of Bharatiya Chhatra Sansad, the 6th session was “Religion in Storm or Storm in Religion”. Maulana Mehmood Madani, Swami Paripoornananda Saraswati & Lobsang Sangay, Prime Minister of Tibetan Government-in-Exile, Dharmashala were the prime speakers. 7th session was “Impairing or Repairing Indian Democracy? In which social activist & former member of Parliament Mr. Prakash

Ambedkar, & Social reformer, member of Muslim Personal Law Board, Sayed Kalbe Rushaid Rizvi were the key speakers. Renowned Islamic Scholar Mr. Sayed Kalbe Rushaid Rizvi said that, A true believer of religion never asks for Caste, but instead, looks for a person’s integrity & honesty. Last session was “Back to Basics, Roti, Kapada Aur Makan. Social Crusader & Leading activist in Lokpal Movement Anna Hazare was the main attraction. Anna said that one should work selflessly. He gave his own example. Anna received cash awards over 10 million, but he did not keep any for him & created a trust fund out of it.

How can I serve my people better?

Speaker of Loksabha, Sumitra Mahajan was Chief Guest but she addressed B.C.S. through video. Eminent scientist Raghunath Mashelkar, Chief Minister of

Maharashtra Devendra Fadnavis, Mr. Shivaraj Singh Chouhan, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh (M.P.), Dr. Vijay Bhatakar & Prof. Dr. V. D. Karad were the chief guests for valedictory function on 12th January 2015. Mr. Rahul Karad, founder Convenor of B.C.S. expressed that many members of alumni of School of Government are serving in different political parties in various capacities. Prof. V. D. Karad emphasized that Mission of M.I.T. is to bring harmony of Science and spirituality. Mr. Shivaraj Chauhan was felicitated as “Best Chief Minister” by the hands of Dr. Mashelkar, Dr. Vijay Bhatakar, Devendra Phadanavis & Prof. Dr. V. D. Karad.

Mr. Shivaraj Singh Chauhan stressed on the point that throughout the day, he keeps on thinking how can he serve better to people of Madhya Pradesh (M.P.). Mr. Devendra Phadanavis

said that the biggest challenge before the country is to show the correct pathway to this huge “Youth Power”. The B.C.S. was concluded by tying of Ekta Sutra.

The Sixth Bhartiya Chhatra Sansad is scheduled on 27th, 28th, 29th & 30th January this year 2016.

Conclusion :

In conclusion, let me say that we cannot progress further without Good Governance. There is no place for corrupt and criminal people in the politics of our country. We need to bring in rapid changes in the way our country is governed. We feel there are NGOs and other institutions, which have their own roles to play and they are doing it well by serving as a political wheel. But the only way things can change at the top is through politics. We urge you all to please rise above regional and sectarian considerations, look at our country as a single entity and

come forward to lead it. We have a definite ray of hope for better India tomorrow. We cannot predict the future but it is true that the present untiring efforts & restlessness of Prof. Rahul Karad will bring dawn very soon for

committed leaders for this country. Bhartiya Chhatra Sansad is certainly innovative mega event for the purification of Indian Democracy.
