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The 'Metamorphosing
Public' and The
Travails of Public
University in India

A Working Paper by
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ABSTRACT

The public university in India functioned smoothly during the early years of independence because of the formation of a 'general public' in the aftermath of independence. The fragmentation of the general public into 'multiple publics' in the 1970s and the 1980s got reflected into the travails of the public university. By the 1990s, the eclipse of the general public by multiple publics, and the making of a 'Hindutva public' transformed the Indian social and political landscape as never before. The public university as a microcosm of society mirrored this development. By the beginning of the present century, 'multiple publics' and 'Hindutva public' jostled for public sphere, making the university space confrontational and rendering the public university dysfunctional.

It is in the prevailing conditions of despondency that a private university was conceived in the first decade of the present century on the lines of the US system of undergraduate liberal education. Today the landscape of Indian higher education is dotted with public and private universities. In the last decade, with systematic attempts at saturating the public sphere with Hindutva public (attempts by Hindu nationalists at creating an all-India Hindu

community through homogenization), and the government declaring its intent in their National Education Policy 2020 to do away with difference between a public and a private university, the Indian university today is more vulnerable than ever before to meddling by government. This paper tries to understand the travails of a public university in the light of the changing nature of society as reflected in the composition of the university community of a public university.

KEYWORDS: public university | general public | multiple public | Hindutva public

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At the time of independence, there were only around 20 universities in India. Private universities had a negligible presence, and, with student enrollment of barely 250000 and around 20000 faculty members, higher education was available only to a privileged few. Today there are more than 1100 universities and both public and private universities dot the landscape of Indian higher education. According to the All India Survey on Higher Education, the share of private institutions is 41 per cent of the sector.ⁱ With student enrollment of more than 40000000 (in Delhi University alone more than 250000 students enrolled in 2025) and around 1500000 faculty members,ⁱⁱ higher education is no longer the preserve of the elite. While private universities cater for privileged sections and aspire to meet global standards, public universities are thronged with aspirational youth short on resources and arguably subject to political meddling. Private universities, particularly the ones modeled on the US system of undergraduate liberal education, promise their students a quality of education available in the top universities of the world, and their faculty working conditions comparable to universities in the West. Parallel to this, public universities struggle to meet regulatory requirements, frequent policy shifts, and inadequate funding.

In India today students coming from privileged backgrounds often opt for a university abroad or choose one from the newly-established private universities, ostensibly philanthropic in nature, that claim to anchor their pedagogy in liberal education. Students with meager resources but with high aspirations, hailing mainly from rural areas or mofussil towns, have no recourse but to turn to a public university that is close to their hometown. With a narrow social base, the student and teaching community in a private university represents almost exclusively the upper and upper middle classes and upper castes. It lacks diversity – people from the same stratum, with similar background and taste, and very similar in their disposition.ⁱⁱⁱ In contrast, the student and teaching community of a public university is a representative cross section of society, wherein almost every section of Indian society finds representation. It is diverse in nature and has a broader social base. This fundamental transformation in the *social composition of the student and teaching community* of a public university has been coterminous with *transformation in the nature of the public* in Indian society. This essay will try to understand the travails of public

university in the light of the *changing nature of society* as reflected in the *social composition* of public universities.

Thomas Blom Hansen, a cultural and political anthropologist at Stanford University, analyzes the ideal of a ‘general public’ formed in the aftermath of independence and its fragmentation into multiple publics in the context of his study of the role of violence in Indian politics. Increasing violence in Indian public life is explained in terms of this transition and the birth of multiple publics by the 1990s organized around caste, community, and/or religion (Hansen 2021, 60-64). Discussing the role the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has come to play in Indian politics, Badri Narayan, a social historian and cultural anthropologist, has coined the term ‘Hindutva public’ (Narayan 2021, 16). Narayan is obviously referring to the efforts of the Sangh Parivar^{iv} to bring together different communities with very different socio-cultural practices, though loosely united in identifying themselves as Hindus, to create an all-India Hindu community. In effect, Narayan’s ‘Hindutva public’ seems to be subsuming the ‘multiple publics’ of Hansen. Though divergent in connotations, these concepts are very helpful in understanding group behavior in contemporary India – the way different groups organized around caste, community, and/or religion, perceive public reason, look at and relate to the public sphere and institutions, and the demands they make on the Indian state. Their formulations provide invaluable insights into the factors that have a bearing on the functioning of institutions and drive Indian democracy. Recently, political scientist Suhas Palshikar has very insightfully talked about the prevalence of two versions of the Indian state in India today – “the constitutional state and the Hindutva state” (Palshikar, 2025). According to Palshikar, the former is normative and idealist, enshrined in the Constitution, whereas the latter has sprung from the ideology and vision of the RSS and is gaining ground through the tactical practices we now witness in public institutions.

Thus, in scholarly discussions, it is not hard to see a correspondence between the ‘general public’ and *constitutional state* of the past, and the ‘Hindutva public’ and *Hindutva state* of the present. The constitutional state was born out of the pangs of partition and freedom and grew as a corollary to the formation of a ‘general public’ even as the emergent Hindutva state is getting entrenched as a result of the formation of a ‘Hindutva public’. This transition from general public

to Hindutva public passing through multiple publics charts the journey of the nature of the Indian state. What is lost in this journey is the normativity of constitutional morality – cultivation of a healthy respect for democratic institutions created by the Constitution and functioning of public institutions to actualize the vision of societal restructuring envisaged in the Constitution. Arguably, constitutional morality has been ebbing away with the formation of Hindutva public and the ascendance of New India.^v

André Béteille has ruminated on the formation, nature and transformation of a modern Indian university. Referring to the first three universities at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras,^{vi} and a few others, such as the University of Allahabad, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) and the University of Delhi, set up under the colonial rule, Béteille has pointed out that while being “open and secular institutions” from the beginning, “they did not seek actively to be socially inclusive in the sense of striving deliberately to incorporate all classes and communities when they were first established”. Consequently, “although admissions and appointments were in principle open to members of all classes and communities, both teachers and students came very largely from the upper castes and the middle classes” (Béteille 2010, 5). Mary E. John highlights the social background of students in higher education at the time of independence: “We can fairly safely assume that this was an overwhelmingly urban, middle class and upper caste set of educated youth” (John 2018, 108). After independence, efforts were made to expand higher education and make universities more inclusive. But good intent and the shift in policy orientation were not to yield immediate results, and the social composition of university community remained almost unchanged during the early years of independence. The diversity and complexity of Indian society proved to be a stumbling block. André Béteille captures the situation: “The preponderance of some sections of society over others in the social composition of the university appeared increasingly worrisome to planners and policymakers under the new dispensation” (Béteille 2010, 14). The homogeneity of the background of the student and teaching community in university, coupled with a lack of representation from the middle and lower castes who constituted the majority and occupied the lower rungs of society accounted for relative calm at universities during the 1950s. Homogeneity and a lack of diversity in the *composition* of the

university community, alongside the presence of a unifying sense of a general public in the larger society, contributed to the smooth and non-contentious functioning of universities. Adhering to high standards of constitutional morality, university leaders set a benchmark in public conduct and academic culture, and universities at Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Delhi, Allahabad, and Varanasi became centers of academic excellence.

Globally, the 1960s saw the university becoming a site for interrogating existing structures of power, expressing dissent, and practicing resistance. The atmosphere was upbeat with intellectual discussions on the issues of freedom, ethics and the responsibilities of citizenship. In India, student protests reflected disaffection with a failing system that was unable to cope with a surge in demand for higher education and to provide job to the educated and signaled an impending crisis in the public university. Edward Shils thought that Indian student agitation declared no fundamental criticism of its society and it had no schemes for the reconstruction of Indian universities (As quoted in Shah, 2004, 108). Pankaj Chandra has argued that during this period India became inward-looking and refused to learn lessons from what was happening globally. Consequently, environment in the university became “parochial, narrow-minded, and rule-bound”, and the best and the brightest “started to stay away from a career in academia” (Chandra, 2017, 44). Several developments in Indian society and politics during the 1970s had reverberations on the Indian public university. The rise of the Naxalbari movement in rural West Bengal in the late 1960s – militant guerilla-like mobilization inspired by Maoism – and Jayaprakash Narayan’s call for Total Revolution through an alliance of internally divided left organizations drew students in large numbers from cities like Calcutta, Patna and Delhi; many of them identified with the cause of the masses and left their studies to join these movements. In western India, the dispute over the renaming of Marathwada University in Aurangabad, and violent anti-reservation protests by upper caste students disrupted academic life and had a crippling effect on campuses in Gujarat and Maharashtra. Pankaj Chandra has pointed to a slide in the quality of academic leadership that became “very uninspiring”; as good scholars seceded from the university system, the vacuum came to be filled by “those with poor academic preparation and poorer commitment to the profession” (Chandra, 44). Through the decade of

the 1970s, India's new social and political movements reflected a diminishing sense of a general public, and the period was marked by a fading adherence to constitutional morality among high public functionaries. Public university in India had already hit the path of decline.

In the 1980s, the general public's fragmentation into multiple publics facilitated the birth of several new political formations like the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), and Janata Dal (JD), that changed the political landscape of the country. With *the Ram Janmabhoomi movement* (agitation for building a temple in Ayodhya at the alleged birthplace of Lord Ram) gaining a new impetus, this period also saw the making of a Hindutva public. On the educational front, higher education ceased to be the preserve of the elite as Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) found representation in the university community through the route of reservation, and the aspirational youth from 'Other Backward Classes' (OBCs)^{vii} [a Government designation] who wanted to break away from hereditary occupation mostly based on caste thronged the university in the prospect of a better future. The broadening of the social base of the university community had implications for teaching and learning in the universities. Several young and bright faculty members in the Departments of Humanities and Social Sciences questioned the prevalent intellectual currents influenced by social theories originating in the West, critiqued the content of the curriculum and the mode of its presentation, brought lived experience into their academic pursuits, and produced fresh perspectives on the social and political issues facing Indian society. Gopal Guru, a prominent social scientist from a Dalit background, opened up new vistas for Dalit discourse in India through his writings.^{viii} Sharmila Rege of the Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule Women's Studies Centre, University of Pune questioned prevalent canons of historiography, employed new ways of recording history, and tried to re-imagine pedagogies from a Dalit feminist standpoint. Rege has been described as a "Phule-Ambedkarite Feminist Welder" who successfully brought "the structural violence of caste and its linkages with sexuality and labour into the feminist discourse" (Devika, 22). K. Satyanarayana, a Dalit scholar and professor of cultural studies at the English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Hyderabad, created a culture of critiquing power and oppression from a Phule-Ambedkar perspective. Kancha Ilaiah, a professor of political science at Osmania University, Hyderabad,

with an OBC background, advocated the “Dalitization” of Indian society – a call for restructuring Indian society around Dalit-Bahujan values. His 1996 seminal work *Why I Am Not a Hindu: A Sudra Critique of Hindutva Philosophy, Culture and Political Economy* critiqued Brahminical Hinduism and tried to construct a Dalit-Bahujan identity.^{ix} Unlike the disruptive period of the 1970s, politically aware students also seemed to be interested in learning. These developments, while making the university community more representative, university space more inclusive, and teaching and learning more diversified, unfortunately, could not create an urge for the cultivation of academic morality, a hallmark of higher learning and a prerequisite for creativity in advanced research.^x André Béteille has noted the tensions involved in the process: “The democratization of the Indian university has not always been a smooth and orderly process, and it has had unanticipated consequences, not all of them conducive to the pursuit of study and research” (Béteille, 2010, 17). The opportunity provided by the churn in the social composition of the university community was lost as the quality of academic leadership slid further, and the downward trend seemed irreversible. Pankaj Chandra sums up the situation: “This was the first decade during which universities started operating without the academics of the pre-independence era at their helm. With a strong sense of entitlement and low accountability, the people now running educational institutions manipulated the freedoms of the academy and started to destroy them from within” (Chandra, 45).

With ‘general public’ relegated to the background, by the 1990s, ‘multiple publics’ and ‘Hindutva public’ jostled for occupying public space, making Indian public life more confrontational and violent. Regional political parties like the BSP, the Samajwadi Party (SP), and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), formed around the identities of caste and/or community gained currency; and pushing the Hindutva project, the BJP had emerged as a force to be reckoned with in Indian politics. For the educated youth looking for employment, the most consequential happening of this decade was the government’s decision to implement the recommendations of the Mandal report on reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in government jobs.^{xi} This produced an angry “backlash” from ‘upper caste’ students who resorted to violence in several cities of North India. They were ostensibly protesting assault on ‘merit’ and nation. Mary E. John has rightly observed

that this agitation exposed “the pretensions of caste-lessness of the Indian university system” and redirected “attention to the reproduction of caste inequalities in modern spaces at a national level” (John 2018, 111). These developments, along with the demolition of the Babri Masjid by Hindu zealots on December 6, 1992, transformed Indian society and politics as never before. Analyzing the developments of the last two decades of the 20th century and the 2000s, Christophe Jaffrelot has talked about first of a “silent revolution” – the rise of the lower castes resulting in the democratization of Indian democracy, and the retreat of upper-caste elite – and then a counterrevolution, referring to the ascendance of Hindutva politics as “revenge of the elite” (Jaffrelot, 2021, 5).

The public university as a microcosm of society mirrored the prevailing situations. Enhanced representation from hitherto excluded sections, namely SCs, STs and OBCs, altered and diversified the *composition* of the Indian university community and loosened the hold of upper castes on the university set-up.^{xii} Writing in the context of protests against the recent University Grants Commission’s “Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Regulations, 2026”,^{xiii} sociologist Satish Deshpande brought out the interplay between eclipse and fragmentation of general public and the transformation in the social composition of the university community. Deshpande has argued that nationalist ideology lost credibility from the late 1960s onwards, and, by the 1970s, issues of caste, communal and gender discrimination and oppression began to become visible.^{xiv} He observes that “beginning in the 1990s and into the 2000s, higher education experienced a truly astonishing expansion of enrolment, which, together with the extension of reservation to the OBCs, completely transformed its social composition” (Deshpande 2026). This, while lending them a voice and imbuing them with confidence, was sadly not accompanied by public spiritedness and the resolution of contentious issues in the democratic spirit of moderation, temperance, and consensus building. Resistance and backlash from entrenched interests^{xv} and growing assertion by the newcomers vitiated the atmosphere on campuses and gave birth to mutual suspicion. For example, in his book, *Caste Discrimination and Exclusion in Indian Universities: A Critical Reflection* (2023),^{xvi} N. Sukumar narrates his personal experiences as a “postgraduate SC student in Hyderabad University” in the aftermath of the decision to implement

the Mandal Commission report. Sukumar witnessed “tumultuous times” on the campus. He, thus, observes that gradually “social solidarity in the campus was fashioned around identity issues, like reserved category, multiple caste identities, disciplinary binaries, as science, technology and professional courses favoured anti-Mandal and ‘meritorious’ students” (Sukumar 2023, 27).

After the government decided to implement quotas in education as part of the Mandal Commission Recommendations in 2006, campuses witnessed intense agitations. Referring to the formation of Youth for Equality as an antidote to the government’s decision and protests by students from IITs and IIMs and other professional courses in various universities, Sukumar says that the stage was set “for more acrimonious relations on campuses among students in terms of social location and political ideologies” (Sukumar, 2023, 152). Such cleavages were not limited to only students; even the faculty and the administration sided with one or other group. Ambedkar Students Association (ASA) was formed in 1993 by a group of Dalit students at Hyderabad Central University to fight caste prejudices.^{xvii} Eroding levels of trust among stakeholders made the university space malevolent and confrontational. This combined with resource crunch and inadequate infrastructure rendered the Indian public university dysfunctional and unworkable by the beginning of the present century. Throughout these decades, the most critical failure of the Indian public university has been not producing graduates with potential for employability and faculty with critical reasoning. Craig Jeffrey describes the years spent by the average student in a mofussil university “as neither critical pedagogy nor as job credentialing, but as ‘time pass’” (John 2018, p. 113).

It is in the prevailing situations of despondency, compartmentalization of streams of knowledge into rigid academic disciplines in the Indian university system, and inadequate attention being given to liberal arts in technical and professional courses that some industrialists, enterprising professionals, and committed educationists conceived of a private university in the first decade of the present century on the lines of US system of undergraduate liberal education. With the rise of Hindutva politics and the formation of the BJP government in 2014 declining public universities came under heightened government surveillance and control. The crackdowns on the campuses of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in 2016 and Jamia Milia Islamia in 2019, and

the standoff at Visva Bharati in 2021 readily come to mind.^{xviii} By the second decade, the search for quality had effectively shifted to the newly established private universities offering programs in liberal education. Alas, as we advance through the third decade, the idea of liberal education in India seems to be in repose. Amidst the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the growing use of technology in classroom, faculty are denied a say in academic decision-making, and behind the veneer of freedom granted to head a department or lead a program/school lurks the sword of surveillance and control. Each of the foundational ideas of liberal education has come under attack.

The last decade has also seen systematic attempts at saturating the public sphere with Hindutva public. The historian Ramachandra Guha was reportedly prevented from joining Ahmedabad University, a leading liberal arts university, in 2018 because of pressure tactics employed by the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the student wing of the RSS. Guha declined the position saying he was not joining the university “due to circumstances beyond [his] control.”^{xix} In 2021, P.B. Mehta reportedly resigned from Ashoka University, another leading private university, because his association with the institution was a “political liability.”^{xx} The departure of Sabyasachi Das, an assistant professor of Economics, from the same university in 2023 related to controversy over his working paper that investigated the possibility of electoral malpractices during the 2019 general elections in India.^{xxi} In 2024, Sasanka Perera, a professor of Sociology at the New Delhi-based South Asian University (SAU), an international university sponsored by the eight member states of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC), resigned after an inquiry was launched against him for his PhD student’s proposal that referenced an interview with American scholar Noam Chomsky, where he criticized the Modi government and called it a “threat to Indian democracy.”^{xxii} Reportedly, prompted by ABVP protests, five vice-chancellors (VCs) have been removed in Rajasthan, a state of India, where allegedly “the ABVP effectively functions as a front for political extortion” (*The Indian Express*, December 12, 2025). These incidents are ample proof of the growing influence of Hindutva on Indian campuses and impingement on the autonomy of the Indian university. With the government declaring its intent in National Education Policy 2020 to do away with difference between a public and a private

university, the Indian university today is more vulnerable than ever before to meddling by the government in its internal functioning.

Notes

ⁱ See “Can India’s elite privates meet the demand for high-quality education?,” *Times Higher Education*, 31 January 2025; <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/depth/can-indias-elite-privates-meet-demand-high-quality-education>.

ⁱⁱ See C. Raj Kumar, “Almost 75 years after Constitution was adopted, what does education mean for nation-building?,” *The Indian Express*, 24 October 2024; <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/constitution-india-education-9635710/>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Reservation, as originally envisaged in the Indian Constitution, is a quota for socially and educationally backward classes in public employment and public educational institutions. Reservation in student admissions and faculty recruitment is still a distant reality in private universities in India. Recently, a Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education has recommended the provision of reservations for Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and Economically Weaker Sections (EWSs) in private higher educational institutions (https://sansad.in/getFile/annex/269/AU1158_LydQRb.pdf?source=pqars).

^{iv} The Sangh Parivar (the Sangh family) refers to the RSS and its myriad affiliates; the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (Indian Student Association), the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (Indian Workers’ Association), the Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram (Ashram for Tribal Welfare), the Vishva Hindu Parishad (World Council of Hindus), and the Bajrang Dal are the most prominent ones.

^v B. R. Ambedkar famously talked about cultivating constitutional morality. He feared that the norms of behavior emanating from the social institutions of society would trump the norms of political institutions created by the Constitution. Generally, scholars agree that the leaders of post-Independent India who had fought for independence had respect for constitutional institutions and followed their norms in word and spirit.

^{vi} The three cities are now known as Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai respectively.

^{vii} In contrast to SCs, who are at the lowest rung of Hindu social structure and historically have faced abominable social discrimination and abject economic deprivation, OBCs generally come from intermediary and lower castes and are non-*Dvija* (non-twice-born). The composition of OBCs varies from region to region.

^{viii} Guru has discussed cultural hierarchy and prevalent inegalitarian practices in social sciences in India. He has underscored the need for the *dalits*, tribals and OBCs to move beyond empirical studies and produce theory to remove the prevailing cultural hierarchies.

^{ix} See “Kancha Ilaiah’s Advocacy for Dalitization of Indian Society,” *Dalit Philosophy*, 21 February 2026; <https://philosophy.institute/dalit-philosophy/kancha-ilaiah-dalitization-indian-society/>.

^x Paraphrasing Ambedkar, here I have coined ‘academic morality’ to mean willingness to overcome cultural baggage and rise above ideological predilections, and to make efforts to engage with ideas on their own merit.

^{xi} The Mandal Commission was set up in 1979 to “identify the socially or educationally backward classes” of India. It was led by Bindheshwari Prasad Mandal, a parliamentarian. The commission submitted its report in 1980. And, in 1990, the V. P. Singh government decided to implement its recommendations for 27% reservations for OBCs in government jobs and promotions.

^{xii} Reservation for OBCs in Central government-funded public universities got implemented from the academic year 2007-08. It is unfortunate and a matter of serious concern that a considerable chunk of reserved faculty posts

remain vacant at public universities. According to a University Grants Commission (UGC) report (2023), “nearly 30% of reserved teaching posts in central universities remain unfilled, particularly at senior levels such as associate professor and professor” (<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/reserved-faculty-posts-are-still-vacant-and-out-of-reach/article69760789.ece>).

^{xiii} In January this year, upper caste students resorted to protest against Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Regulations, 2026, aimed at addressing social discrimination on campuses. The Supreme Court of India has stayed the regulations. While the provisions of the regulations are debatable, protests by upper caste youths are reminiscent of anti-Mandal agitation of the 1990s.

^{xiv} Needless to say, formation and preservation of a sense of general public in the 1950s and 1960s was a legacy of the national movement and nationalist ideology. Its eclipse and fragmentation, and the birth of multiple publics around issues of caste, community, religion and gender are parallel processes.

^{xv} Like Mary E. John, who has talked about “a violent backlash” from ‘upper caste’ students against the implementation of the recommendations of the Mandal report (John 2018, 111), N. Sukumar has written about “the backlash against the Mandal Commission Report and the increasing exclusivity of academic spaces in the name of ‘merit’” (Sukumar 2023, 5). Christophe Jaffrelot has talked about “backlash” in the sense of reassertion by upper-caste elite through the politics of Hindutva (Jaffrelot 2021, 5).

^{xvi} In a piece written on protests by upper-caste students against Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Regulations, 2026, academic-activist Yogendra Yadav has discussed the findings of the book (Yadav, 2026).

^{xvii} Birsa Ambedkar Phule Students Association (BAPSA) was formed in November 2014 at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). Other noteworthy anti-caste student organizations are Youth for Social Justice in Delhi University and Ambedkar-Periyar Study Circles in IITs. These organizations have provided a platform to Dalit and lower caste students for assertion of their rights.

^{xviii} Crackdown on JNU campus took place in February 2016 on a group of students who had assembled to express their dissent from government position on capital punishment meted out to Afzal Guru for his role in the 2001 Indian Parliament attack. In December 2019, Delhi police forcibly entered into the campus of Jamia Milia Islamia university during a confrontation with students protesting against the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 and brutally assaulted them. Standoff between a section of students and the administration happened at Visva-Bharati, Kolkata in September 2021; the students were demanding revocation of rustication of three students on charges of “gross indiscipline and misconduct”.

^{xix} See “ABVP wanted Ramachandra Guha out of Ahmedabad University in ‘interest of the nation’, shows letter,” *Scroll.in*, 2 November 2018; <https://scroll.in/latest/900638/abvp-wanted-ramachandra-guha-out-of-ahmedabad-university-in-interest-of-the-nation-shows-letter>.

^{xx} See “Founders made clear I was political liability for Ashoka University: Pratap Bhanu Mehta,” *The Indian Express*, 19 March 2021; <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/pratap-bhanu-mehta-resignation-letter-ashoka-university-7234669/>.

^{xxi} See “Second Professor Quits as ‘Democratic Backsliding’ Row Continues to Roil Ashoka University,” *The Wire*, 15 August 2023; <https://thewire.in/education/second-professor-quits-as-democratic-backsliding-row-continues-to-roil-ashoka-university>.

^{xxii} See “Censorship leads to resignation of sociology professor at South Asian University,” *Endangered Scholars Worldwide*, 27 March 2025; <https://www.endangeredscholarsworldwide.net/post/censorship-leads-to-resignation-of-sociology-professor-at-south-asian-university>.

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