UP ELECTION 2022
Perspectives from First Time Voters (Students)
Leaders rule through apparatuses with their own agendas, and in a world of unintended consequences, even if their instructions are followed to the letter, the result can be surprising. They can't impose their agenda on society through force; instead, they join or form coalitions that will allow them to dominate. Many political leaders, in reality, appear to be badly lacking in some of the most important leadership qualities, such as ethics and accountability. Above and beyond any short-term personal rewards, this kind of leadership requires a focus on a country's long-term improvement. With a population of nearly 200 million people, the country's most populous state, Uttar Pradesh is a political cauldron.
Several political parties and leaders have emerged from the state, each playing an important role in the country’s political history. At the same time, the politically complex state has hampered many people's political ambitions. People's lived realities and problems appear to have taken center stage. Young voters in UP are more interested in job possibilities and improved law and order.

"Employment is the biggest issue that the youth in Uttar Pradesh is facing. Thousand of students are preparing in cities like Allahabad for years, but they don’t have jobs. They are well versed in their courses, but there are no vacancies." By a student in a Public School, in Ayodhya.

When asked about the current government's performance and if they've lived up to the promises made by them, more first-time voters in Uttar Pradesh expressed a lack of trust and dissatisfaction. One of the main reasons for this is the government's failure to deliver on its promises of giving laptops and tablets. The offer of laptops at the start of the elections and during the campaigns, according to popular view, was just to ensure a vote bank. This notion of being a mere vote bank, combined with the belief that the data supplied about COVID-19 cases and deaths was skewed and that VIPs were given preferential treatment in terms of medical facilities, explains the public's mistrust and dissatisfaction with the government.
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The rural young, who faced a lack of connectedness owing to the status of the roads in their areas, drew parallels with misleading promises. The growing need for more work possibilities is a major source of frustration in this quickly growing economy. Several first-time voters are students who believe that the ultimate purpose of their study is to find work. With the current work situation, or rather, unemployment situation, there is a rising loss of incentive to study because job opportunities are limited.

“Kamayenge nahi toh khaayenge kya”

“If we don’t earn, how will we sustain ourselves and our families”
There is an uncontrollable need for more job possibilities in the state, particularly after the outbreak of COVID-19. The pandemic has brought with it a whole new set of problems. Students’ grasp of subjects has suffered as a result of online education, as have delays in crucial exams like NEET PG counseling. The infrastructure in schools, especially senior and senior-secondary schools, also has its own set of problems and is in desperate need of repair.

“Employment is one thing, but the process of recruitment has loopholes, and that is more disheartening. Sometimes exams are not held after the application process, a lot of times results are not released, if results are released, positions are not offered, and many more. The drawback of these loopholes is that it takes around 3 to 4 years to get a job.” By a student in a Public School, in Ayodhya.
Amid all the chaos and mistrust, there is still hope for the government to improve, since many of their practices were respected. The development and rollout of the vaccines in such a short time were greatly appreciated. There were instances of both premeditated and desultory political decisions under the Yogi-Modi reign. The start of an “encounter phase” by the police has been criticized due to the immense power given to the force to handle criminals. These direct encounters punish the criminal’s right way, without giving them a chance at rehabilitation.

"TIT FOR TAT IS NOT JUSTICE” By a student in a Public School, in Ayodhya.
However, during the CAA-NRC protests in UP, rather than attacking the protesters with lathis, the government sprayed water on the ground to suppress the protests. This action was perceived as admirable since the government refrained from violence and chose a peaceful way to tackle the situation.

Steps like these have made voters trust that the government can still improve, and as a result, they have offered their support and suggestions. The government of Uttar Pradesh took steps to ensure that teachers who were being placed in schools were qualified to a higher degree, which appears to be a thoughtful and progressive approach. This had a direct impact on the quality of instruction provided, and many students were pleased with the job completed. The most recent NEP policy was also regarded as a significant step forward in the correct direction, as it provides students with opportunities to learn new skills through vocational courses while simultaneously emphasizing personal development.
The UP government tackled the issue of paper leaks to a great degree, which ensured that candidates who were deserving performed well and gave a realistic image of meritorious students. While this is a step forward, coupled with a prevention of practices like cheating during papers, the government still has work to do regarding employment opportunities. Furthermore, the urban-rural divide in terms of paper leaks must be tackled since the practice is still prevalent in the latter areas.

In a country like India, where many women are hesitant to go out alone, the construction of "pink booths" on practically every road has aided women's safety significantly. Female voters have felt safer in recent years as a result of the police being available 24x7 through their helplines, and they strongly value the government's participation in this.

While voters have had their fair share of issues with the government's functioning, implementing promises made to voters, particularly to the youth, would go a long way toward improving the government's policies and functioning.
"kaha tha ki gaddha mukt road karaenge lekin yeh road gaddha yukt hogayi hai"
"They had promised to free the roads of pits, but the road pits are only increasing"
By a student in a Public School, in Ayodhya.

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