

---

# **CRITICALLY EXAMINING THE POLITICAL STRATEGY OF STUDENT MOVEMENTS IN INDIA: STUDY OF DIGITAL MEDIA PLATFORM TWITTER USED BY WOMEN STUDENT LEADERS**

**Albeena Athar**

Associate Dean, Asian School of Media Studies  
Marwah Studios Complex, Film City, Noida, India

---

**Abstract:** Student movements have largely been playing a pivotal role in bringing the political and social transformations across the world, as they hold a very unique status as these movements are being run by the students who themselves hold a transient position which they will leave eventually (Vaillant & Schwartz, 2012). Student movements also garner media attention owing to its role in nation building, political wings of established parties, raising larger student concerns, demanding policy changes and their active participation in the debate and discourse on socio- economic and political scenario in the country.

Over the last two decades, the momentum of students run movements in India have increased and so their demands, debates and discourse. But of late, it has been observed that a number of women student leaders have also emerged, people have started accepting and recognizing them. The movements like *Pinjra Tod* where girls are fighting for the equality in hostel rules between boys and girls or *Occupy UGC* where students have been protesting against the government decision of scrapping non-NET fellowships, *HokKolorob*, or a movement against molestation inside the Kolkata University Campus. In all the cases, student leaders especially women student leaders have played a pivotal role in bringing the change.

It is also interesting to notice, along with the traditional media; new media too has become instrumental in creating popularity, support base and discourse. This paper seeks to examine the women student leaders discourse on digital platform – Twitter. The official Twitter accounts of prominent women student leaders will be analyzed using Norman Fairclough critical discourse analysis. To understand the relationship between the messages (tweets) and the media platform (Twitter) used, theory will be drawn from McLuhan's 'medium is the message' where McLuhan states that the way information is disseminated is more vital than the information itself.

**Keywords:** Discourse, Twitter, Women Leaders, Movement, Strategy.

---

**Introduction:** Student politics has been very active in India. There have been many prominent leaders like current Prime Minister Modi, Arun Jaitley, Lalu Prasad Yadav, Ram Vilas Paswan and Sitaram Yechury, who were prominent faces in student politics and then made their way into mainstream politics. So, the university politics or student politics is being used as launchpad to the mainstream politics in India.

Be it the students protests of 1960's in the United States (US) where several students of various universities and colleges protested all across the US against the ongoing Vietnam war, and these protests were cited as the prime reason for the withdrawal of US troops from Vietnam or the famous French protests of 1968 against the government of the then President Charles de Gaulle, where protesting students were against the capitalist policies of the Gaulle government, which lead to the president fleeing to Germany or the 1989 Tiananmen Square agitation held during the student protests in Beijing, China, which was majorly against corruption and for public inclusion in decision making and for freedom of speech, even though several young students were massacred by the Chinese army but world remembers the Tiananmen slaughter for the courage and determination these young souls

demonstrated during the protests, or another resistance movement by students which is known as Velvet Revolution held in Czechoslovakia in 1989 primarily against the communism and eventually resulting in the fall of communism across all eastern Europe, all of these are the instances of unrests and movements run by students all across the globe.

Students' run movements have toppled governments in many states or have even compelled several supreme office bearers to step down. Various student movements have been instrumental in bringing about the changes in various government policies or decisions.

India also has been witnessing the student run movements since past many decades. Be it the pre independent era, where India seen several movements like *Swadeshi Movement* in 1905, *Non-Cooperation Movement* in the year 1921 and the likes which were initiated by the students and were mooted to gain independence from the British rule.

Even in the post independent era India has been witnessing a spate of student lead protests.

In the 1974 Reconstruction Movement or NavNirman Andolan which is also known as the only successful post independence student agitation in India, that resulted in the dissolution of the then Gujrat government. It witnessed the fury of Gujarat University students against the state government lead Chief Minister Chiman Bhai Patel. Students were agitating against the corruption and price rise, spread across the state and the chief minister had to step down.

Bihar witnessed the biggest ever student protests known as JP Movement in the year 1973. Inspired by the protests in Gujarat, Bihar also started to burn with fury. Bihar Chhatra Sangharsh Samiti lead by the then Patna University student union President Lalu Prasad Yadav under the guidance of eminent Gandhian and freedom fighter Jaiprakash Narayan, protested against corruption, bad food quality in the hostel mess also for providing more scholarships to the students. Around 70 students lost their lives during the protests.

While mentioning the prominent movements one cannot forget to mention the infamous anti- Mandal Commission protests. Mandal Commission was constituted in 1978 by Morarji Desai which submitted its report just after a year recommending 27% reservation for the other backward class. But after a decade in 1990 Prime Minister V P Singh accepted the recommendations and announced 27% reservations for the OBCs. This acceptance of reservations triggered country wide protests against the Mandal Commission report. The agitators were mainly the students belonging to the upper caste. This protest saw instances of self immolation committed by students.

Year 2015 onwards India has seen a rise in the student led movements and it is very evident to note that women student leaders have also emerged as torch bearers in many of the movements. Student activism obtained a new meaning with the advent of time; enormous student outrage was witnessed all through the year.

Indeed a year of momentous inception for the student activism in India. It started with 'Hokkolorob' one of the largest protests by students in the country by Jadavpur University students in West Bengal. The agitating students were demanding the Vice Chancellor (VC) to step down as there were girls molested inside the campus but he did nothing about it. Eventually the VC had to step down.

Another prominent student agitation observed in 2015 was the Film and Television Institute of India where students were against the appointment of their chairman. Students protested for several days and were joined by many award winners who even returned their national awards in protest.

Then came Pinjra Tod a protest where female students started protesting against a Jamia Milia Islamia University's circular which cancelled the late night outings for only the female students. Several

students took to the streets in protest to this sexist regulation and soon this gained momentum and spread to the other parts of the country uniting the female students against the 'curfew' timings. In the same year, another agitation which made to the top news charts was occupy UGC. This agitation started when UGC scrapped the Non NET fellowship. This fellowship was helping a lot of students who did not qualify NET but were into research for quite some time, the agitation goes on till date.

In recent times the country has seen a new vigour in the Indian youth, a mutiny against the establishment over cast bias and free speech. Year 2016 is also considered the year of student movements.

It all started with the suicide of a Dalit youth RohithVemulla who was a Hyderabad University student. In a note written by him just before committing the suicide he talked about caste discrimination he faced along with the other students. This triggered an outrage amongst students and it became a movement within no time. Next in the line started when some JNU students commemorating Afzal Guru the Parliament attack convict's death anniversary were booked under sedition charges. Not only students from JNU but from various universities across the country came together in support of the arrested students and it became one of the biggest movements in the recent past.

It has been observed that in the recent times women have started emerging as true leaders and the year 2015 onwards as India has seen a substantial rise in the student led movements and it has been very evident to note that women student leaders have emerged as torch bearers in many of the movements. Right from Hakkolorob to Pinjra Tod to Occupy UGC to RohithVemula Suicide to JNU protests the woman student leaders have lead from the front and shown their remarkable leadership skills.

**Methodology:** The research applies Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis to study the language as a form of social practice, and to investigate how language sets up and strengthens the power relations in society (Fairclough, 1995). This will also help establish language, individual's views, ideology and power relationships.

Textual analysis was conducted on Twitter accounts of three prominent woman student leaders' having different political affiliations. Tweets from these three woman student leaders' twitter accounts were analysed over a period of time i.e. 2015 onwards reason being there was a change in central government so it was imperative to study how they have changed. Also universities witnessed fresh elections and lots of changes were observed.

- The criteria while choosing the woman student leaders has been specifically that the leader must have a decent amount of followers and have been active on twitter.
- The aim is to study their strategies as their political affiliations are different.

Name of the Student Leader	Political Affiliation	University	Number of Followers on Twitter	Number of Tweets
Shehla Rashid @Shehla_Rashid	Communist Party of India (CPI)	Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)	241 K	11.5 K
Hasiba Amin @HasibaAmin	Indian National Congress (NSUI)	Goa University (GU)	44.4 K	28.4 K
Mahamedhaa Mishra @mahamedhaa	Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS)	Delhi University (DU)	2.5 K	954

**Research Questions:** Twitter as a digital platform for political campaigning has its own discursive patterns. Politicians use this space for promotional activities by creating rhetorical situations. Here, ideological component through the language used may lead to the production of a text wherein power may be an underlining factor. Though various studies have been conducted to analyse the discourse of political speeches, there is little or no extant academic research about the discourse in student politics in digital space, particularly Twitter. Therefore, the following research questions guided the study:

**RQ 1:** What are the most common messages delineated by women student leader on Twitter?

**RQ 2:** What is the scope of strategy by women student leaders through the analysis of their tweets?

**RQ 3:** What is the relationship between the messages (Tweets) and the media platform (Twitter) used?

**Significance:** India is a democratic country where student politics is largely connected to main stream politics also India had numerous people's movements and student run movements which have over the period of time have seen success and failure as well, but there is a dynamism and activism in this space which truly needs to be studied. This is what has been noticed that very limited amount of research has gone into it.

Vast bodies of literature on discourse theory of the student politics are available and student movements have been studied to a great extent. Though the studies have been more western centric the works done are mostly based on western theories and cases. So the potential of women leaders and politics could be studied in an Indian context itself. As India constitutes 31.3% of youth and there were about 100 million first time voters in the last general elections it becomes imperative to study student politics.

Youth all around the world is heading to social media, same is the case with Indian youth. They are using various social media platforms extensively. But as far as the politics as a subject is concerned, Twitter has gained popularity on a large scale. So Twitter has emerged as a political catalyst as it has a mass connectivity with the youth. Also, as political leaders of all stature are present on Twitter youth of the country got more attracted towards it. Though the academic research on Twitter is taking baby steps and it is on a very early stage, but it becomes vital to study the political discourse and debate by young woman student leaders on Twitter.

#### **Literature Review:**

**Twitter As a Revolutionary Medium:** Marshall McLuhan, in his book *Understanding Media* (1994), clearly indicated that "Medium is the message", i.e. content of the message is secondary to the medium it disseminates through. Similarly, John Allen Hedricks and Robert E. Denton Jr. wrote that in 2008 US. Reverberating McLuhan, Twitter has emerged to redefine the means by which politicians shape, distribute and refine their messages (Tumulty, 2012). Twitter has indeed become a new- age rhetorical medium to engage with voters, call for volunteers, gather donations and become the mouthpiece for further campaign.

A major limitation of the researchers is the lack of extensive research studies on social media in political discourse in India. Moreover, most literature is confined to western-centric studies. Retrieving tweets was a challenge and therefore, in all fairness, one cannot rule out the possibility of some missing data.

**The Power of Students:** Student movements have been an agent of social change since decades. These movements have even toppled governments, and have played instrumental in bringing the change in various policies or even in reviving various cultures be it any country in the world. (Altbach, *Students & Politics*, 1966). Philip G. Altbach has written extensively on student movements, in one of his articles 'Student Politics in the Third World' (1984) he talks about how the student movements in the third world countries emerge and sustain and how political activism of the students becomes an issue for the universities based in these countries. In all developing countries students' fraternity is being believed to be the primary technical savvy manpower taking active participation in the role of modernization. Even students have contributed to shape political development in many nations. They have actively dedicated for social and political attributes to imbibe in elites in many of the developing nations (Altbach, *The*

Transformation of Indian Student Movement, 1966). It has been observed India also being the third world country faces the student uproar quite often.

One of the earliest student organizations in India, the Student Federation of India (SFI) which was formed in the year 1970 played a crucial role in student politics in India. Prakash Karat one of the SFI student leaders argues in his article Student Movement at Jawaharlal Nehru University that Predominantly, SFI's role was being navigated to discourage ruling party's initiatives to build JNU a facilitation centre for articulating the Congress brand of virtual radicalism. (Karat, 1975).

Sir Surendranath Banerjee, one of the India's first student leaders had a mindset that students should be stimulated out of their indifference to politics on one side and on the other be protected against fanatical approach. The success of the students' organization as well as the failures depends on the proper syncing of students' problems with the social classes to seek adequate solutions. If the student issues are not integrated with the society as a whole, the failure of the movement is inevitable (Chopra, 1978).

As per Emmerson's school of thought, a student uproar is bound to occur when meagerly paid, amateur educationists direct these aimless mobs, where the only agenda for the students is to pass exams and learning is merely crowd up in large numbers (Emmerson, 2004). Student radicalism is found at institutions where none of the above criteria are met. In India too, student unrest is one of India's most serious political and educational problems. This unrest factor among students and their logical revolt has been the prime cause of many state governments to fall and compelled various central governments to revamp the language related policies. An immortal journey of the same has given India time to modify this system to meet its own needs made on a rational platform (Shrivastava, 1992).

Almost in all universities, the indulgence of party political intervention has enormously increased. The anti-intellectual ideologies and temperaments of many political parties have made the working cumbersome for many universities (Baxi & Mohan, 1990).

Across the entire globe, students comprises a group of youth who are considered the most knowledgeable and dynamic cadre in all societies. This is because of their intellectual thought processes, their ability to think different from the league, out of the box, youthful idealism and paramount energy and freedom from job and family liabilities and last but definitely not the least, their inquisitiveness to mingle with political awareness, made them the prominent driving force to create innovative landscape to foster better thinking strategies. As a positive outcome, it welcomes drastic changes, channelized to uplift development and unmask holistic policies that initiates towards better living and shoulder developments in all communities in all fronts. Thus, in developing societies like India, students constitute the literate and politically conscious factors for revolution. Therefore, students' politics is increasingly becoming a key component for incubating national politics as well (Hazary, 1988).

**Women, Leaders & Politics:** The concept of feminism as a "political ideology" is to promote rational sensible attitude towards women (Ghosal, 2005). Women's role in the social, political and economic arena needs to be recognized because they are the contributors to the national development. The significant indicators of the status of women in any strata of community can be reflected by their political participation and allowing them to have their valuable inputs in decision-making (Khanna, 2009).

But internationally, women around the world find themselves "under-represented" in national parliaments. Even, in many countries, it is assumed to be untraditional and unhealthy for women to participate. Thus, women who want to make their career in politics find that the political environment is often not amiable for them (Sugirtha, 2007).

Women "disempowerment" is done in various ways, like for example the sex determination diagnostic tests in India topping the list, which are done by the patriarchal society to marginalize women. The supporters of gender equality after reviewing the disabilities and constraints on women in India from



the differential sex ratio that exists in the country get terrified. Thus the movement of creating equality amongst genders remains foiled. (Misra, 2006).

There are ample proofs of gender differences in leadership styles. Internationally, women are still “under-represented” in respect to assigning positions, powers, responsibilities and leaderships despite their high qualification and increase in employment over the last few decades. The traits that contribute to the leadership include: effective communication, task completion, responsibility, problem solving, originality, decision making and actions taking abilities. Women are dominated by men to lead from behind and not to come in the limelight (Rey, 2005).

Questioning, understanding and clarifying notions, language and thoughts are the most important but sometimes overlooked aspects of feminist/women’s movements. Women’s ethics and special qualities need to be the pivot for feminists for creating global movements. The understanding of development agencies and its people is key, and they need to elevate the economic reasoning for inclusion of women (Jain, 2012-2013).

When women students led “Progressive Organization of Women (POW) in India was established in the year 1974, they were motivated and influenced by the radical student movement. The theme was to abolish exploitation and social oppression against women. Its most popular campaigns were against the dowry and the humiliation done to women (Patel & Singh, 1979).

**Text with a Context - Ideology, Language and Discourse:** Linguistic and sociology scholars have broadly used ‘discourse’ as a term. According to VanDijk, it is text with a context. Norman Fairclough states it is a whole process of social interaction of which a text is just a part (Fairclough, 1989).

Here, T.Trew brings, in the significance to study the language, states that language structures are material existence of ideology and can be studied to reveal ideological process in the production of discourse (Trew, 1979).

The objective of the critical discourse analysis (CDA) is to perceive language use as a social practice (Horvath). Analysis of text and discourse are considered the essence of the CDA. Fairclough has given three stages of discourse. In his works, he states that each social condition of production and interpretation of text, process of production and interpretation of text and the text, as a product of first two levels (Fairclough, 1989).


**Data Analysis:** While studying the tweets, the issues which have been taken up were started within the universities or have been university related, like for example Rohith Vemula, a dalit students’ suicide was not national news till these student leaders made it national news. Rohit was a student who was later discussed in both the houses of parliament and became national level news.

**Social Injustice:** A society is considered just in every sense if the issues like gender bias, caste discrimination, radicalization etc do not exist. But no society is completely just and so is the case in India. Social injustice exists. Student movements run against these social injustices have been phenomenal and historical. The three women student leaders tweeted about issues concerning social injustice which turned into a prominent student movement. The various tweets posted by the women student leaders created different discourse perspectives.


**Rohith Vemula:** Rohith Vemula case turned into a student movement as soon as the news of a dalit student’s suicide due to discrimination went viral.


The AISA woman student leader Shehla Rashid’s tweets about the issue clearly indicate her stand on the case; she clearly voices her resentment and blatantly calls it a murder and blames the establishment, the institution for this act of brutality. Shehla carries the communist ideology along while tweeting.


 **Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 10 Dec 2016  
Like **Rohith Vemula** was institutionally murdered, a US student, Aaron Swartz, was institutionally murdered by the copyright regime. #NewText

 **Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 28 Jun 2016  
The horrible case of caste based humiliation of Nitish Paswan brings to light the importance of a **Rohith** Act in educational institutions.

 **Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 8 Apr 2016  
Attack on activists continues. Just like **Rohith Vemula** was wrongfully denied fellowship, Shweta Raj, one of the &... [fb.me/XLwy4UXI](https://fb.me/XLwy4UXI)

 **Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 5 Mar 2016  
The concerted attack on education continues. IIMC faculty victimised for speaking out on **Rohith Vemula** issue. In... [fb.me/27ct5miT4](https://fb.me/27ct5miT4)

 Shehla Rashid Retweeted  
**Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 9 Nov 2017  
Hyderabad Central University administration is not content with murdering **Rohith Vemula**. They've now suspended 10 student activists (NON-ABVP, of course) bcoz a girl was "found" in a hostel room!! Sheer sensationalism - in HCU women can enter boys hostels

 Gurmehar Kaur Retweeted  
**Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · Jan 16  
We rally behind the deceased, but fail to organise around the living. Rest in power, Rohith! In death, you taught us a few lessons.

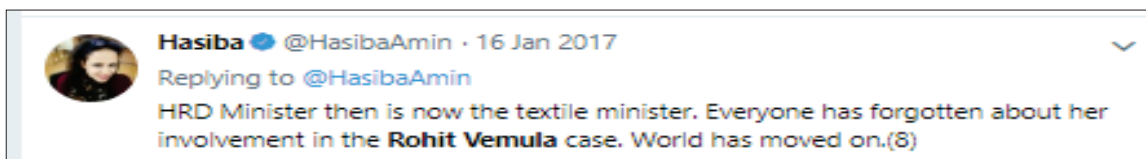
Shehla Rashid extensively tweeted about Rohith Vemula and tried to build the image that the establishment is not student friendly and students are not safe in India especially if they belong to a certain community.

Hasiba Amin being the NSUI woman student leader tweeted but not that extensively about the Rohith Vemula case, unlike Shehla, Hasiba takes a lesser aggressive role which differentiates the political ideologies of the two.

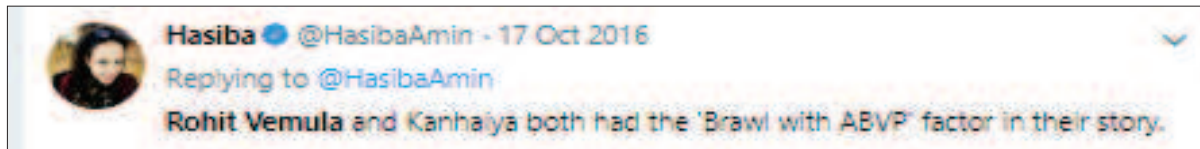
 **Hasiba** @HasibaAmin · 14 Feb 2017  
Suddenly the focus has shifted from Rohit **Vemula's** plight & involvement of the establishment to his caste. Sad state of affairs..

 **Hasiba** @HasibaAmin · 21 Jan 2016  
Hurts my heart seeing the propaganda started by Sanghi's to defame **Rohith**. Utterly disgusting! #JusticeForRohith

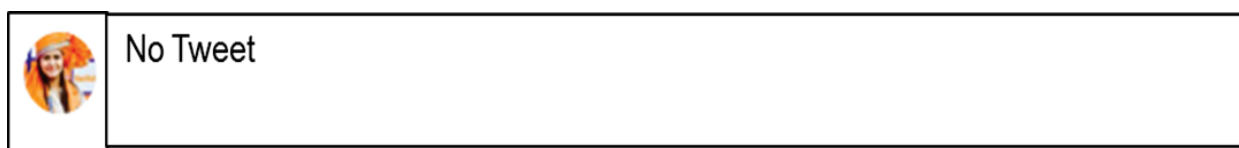
Hasiba directly puts blame on the HRD minister to show their anti establishment approach and resentment from the ruling party who defeated them in the past Lok Sabha elections.



She also indicates at the direct involvement of ABVP in the Rohith case.



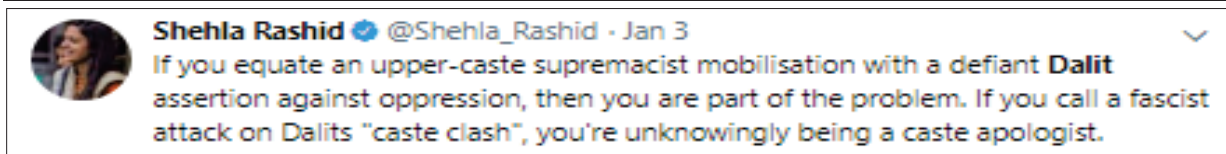
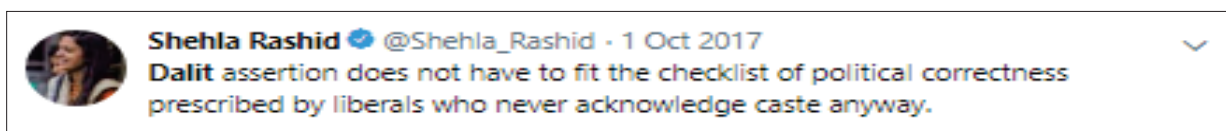
The ABVP prominent female student leader Mahamedha Mishra did not tweet about the Rohith Vemula case at all.



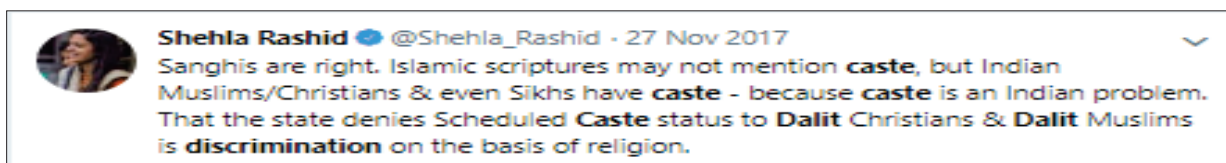
**Caste Discrimination:** India has been a land of multiple identities and one of the inevitable prominent identities is caste. And discrimination based on caste has been a highly sensitive issue in India. Despite several laws and constitutional safeguards caste discrimination still exists in abundance. Like Dalits have been oppressed since generations and untouchability still persists.

Political leaders and various other people have been speaking about it in length. The student women leaders also have a take on it.

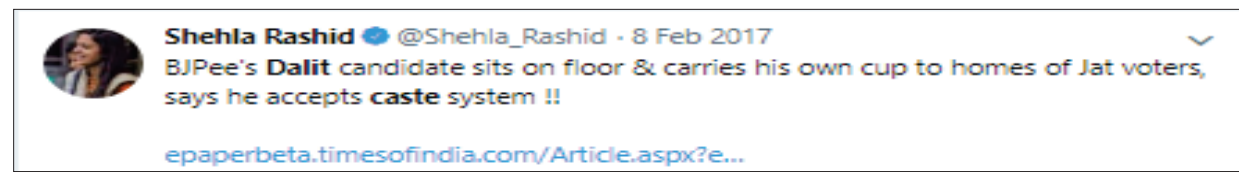
Shehla voices her resentment against caste discrimination through her tweets. She talks primarily about the lower caste and how they are still suffering. She attacks the mindsets which are still oppressing in the name of caste.



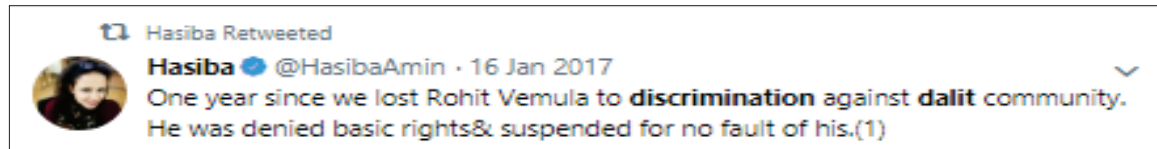
She attacks on party specific ideology over caste discrimination especially the ruling party, Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) or its ally Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS), as their political ideologies are starkly different with the communist which Shehla follows.







On the other hand Hasiba Amin who believes in the ideologies of Indian National Congress does not speak much about the Dalit controversies or discrimination based on caste.

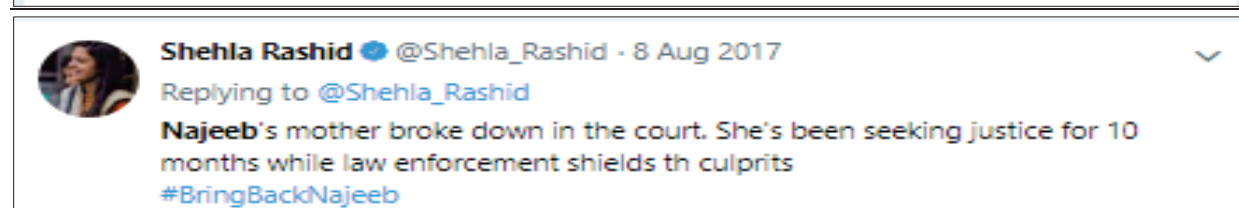
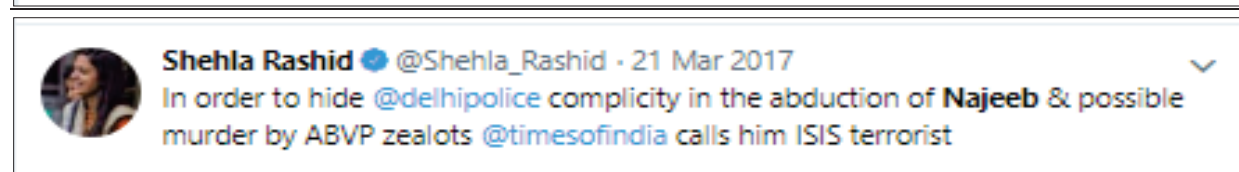
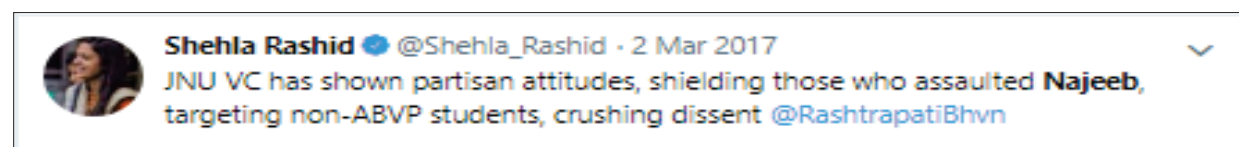


Mahamedha the prominent woman student leader of the ruling party BJP/RSS student wing does not have to say anything about it.



**Finding Najeeb:** Najeeb Ahmed a first year student of JNU reported missing after an alleged scuffle with ABVP activists in October 2016 in Delhi. It turned into a big movement which involved JNU students and other university students too from all over the country. Najeeb was later tagged as being an ISIS terrorist. Search for Najeeb is still on, he has not been found till date.

As this was a JNU case Shehla tweeted extensively on the issue, her tweets were in the same attacking mode on the authorities and how authorities and establishment is responsible for Najeeb's case. While Shehla tweeted abundantly and still tweets about it Hasiba tweeted about the same issue quite regularly for a month or so on how authorities and government is responsible and shielding the culprits but her tweets went rare after the issue. Mahamedha did not tweet at all about the Najeeb issue too.



---



**Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 15 Oct 2017  
One year of **Najeeb's** disappearance, caused by a mob attack on him by ruling party's student wing  
  
But, rejoice! We are better than Pakistan.



**Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 28 Jul 2017  
4) Hear this:  
**NO PUNISHMENT** for those who assaulted **Najeeb**.  
  
20K fine on @Mohit\_JNU for protesting against **Najeeb's** disappearance.



**Hasiba** @HasibaAmin · 1 Nov 2016  
Just a reminder: **Najeeb**, the student from JNU is still missing. He has been missing since 15th Oct following a fight with the ABVP.



**Hasiba** @HasibaAmin · 6 Nov 2016  
Why are Sanghis defaming **Najeeb** and spreading false information about him?



**Hasiba** @HasibaAmin · 8 Nov 2016  
Another day goes by and no sign of **Najeeb**. Enough is being done to distract us. Let's not get distracted.




No Tweet

**Minority Rights:** India is a vast country having varied cultures, caste, creeds and religions, where majority and minority primarily is based on religion, soothe Hindus constitutes the majority and rest other religions or communities constitute minorities in India, Prominently, Muslims, Christians etc. Minority rights have always been a topic of hot discussion in Indian politics.

Shehla continuing with her attacking strategy majorly tweets about how the ruling party oppresses the majority, she even tweets directly about the Prime Minister denoting his ignorance about minorities. Hasiba talks about minorities and their rights majorly till 2014, and did not tweet about minorities much. Even when it was congress rule in the country she tweeted and highlighted about how minorities are being oppressed and scared in Gujarat.

Mahamedha just tweeted once on the minority issue and the stance was clearly negative as there is a common view about the ruling party being not minority friendly and her tweet makes it more evident about the issue.

---



**Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 20 Apr 2014  
There's only one **minority** that Narendra Modi does not hate: the one per cent big business owners who are heavily... [fb.me/2rhapTwst](https://fb.me/2rhapTwst)

- 
- 

**Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 14 Apr 2017  
 Christmas = Good Governance Day  
 Good Friday = Digital India Day  
 Govt of India whitewashing Christian culture & holidays of a **minority**!!
- 

**Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 9 Jun 2015  
 Beef is banned as it hurts the "sentiments" of some Brahmins; but Surya Namaskar is imposed on a weak **minority**! How very sensitive! #India
- 

**Hasiba** @HasibaAmin · 22 Apr 2014  
 Replying to @aalav2010  
 @aalav2010 Muslims in Gujarat are terrified of Modi. Gujarat stopped every **minority** scheme. All other schemes are allowed, not 4 minorities
- 

**Hasiba** @HasibaAmin · 8 Nov 2014  
 Francis D'Souza should have known this would be in his fate in BJP. How can a **minority** be the CM?
- 

**Hasiba** @HasibaAmin · 16 Oct 2013  
 Replying to @arjun726  
 @naag726 I can't believe you made such an absurd argument- tht cuz muslims are in **minority** our festivals shouldn't even be a Public Holiday!
- 


**Hasiba** @HasibaAmin · 20 Jan 2014  
 Members of Jain community celebrate outside Congress office after Cabinet's decision to give **minority** status to Jains
- 

**Mahamedhaa Nagar** @mahamedhaa · 25 Mar 2016  
 The media works on a well-established narrative where Majority is always the assailant and **minority** is always the victim #JusticeForDrNarang
- 

### ***Patriotism and Jingoism:***


**JNU Crisis -2016:** A few students from Jawaharlal Nehru University organized a protest on the day when Afzal Guru the Parliament attack convict was hanged in the year 2013. The protest was to be showcased through music, art and poetry. But it took an ugly turn when Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) members alleged that anti India slogans were shouted during the protests and demanded expulsion of these students from the university. Later sedition charges were put on JNU students who organized the protests and were arrested.

Shehla as usual tweeted on this issue too in abundance but it was majorly to inform and make the people aware about the protests taking place against the arrest and mobilizing the students from other universities to come together on the issue. Hasiba on the other hand was not very vocal about the issue also none of her tweet showed the solidarity with the students involved in the protests. Mahamedha being the leader from ABVP showed her stance and calling the protests more of communal mindset outburst rather than anything else. She also advocated the JNUSU president's expulsion from the university.


- 

**Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 18 Feb 2016  
 15,000 people marched through the streets of Delhi today in defense of **JNU**. Arrest them all, they are all seditious. Media won't report this


---




**Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 19 Feb 2016  
Join Solidarity march with **JNU**.  
Against witch-hunt of **JNU** students, violence by right wing goons inside court...  
[fb.me/3TBwR0Gqc](https://www.facebook.com/3TBwR0Gqc)




**Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 23 Feb 2016  
**JNU** students, Umar and Anirban, had to go to the police yesterday after series of horrible media trials. **JNUSU**... [fb.me/7zi16yGIM](https://www.facebook.com/7zi16yGIM)




**Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 25 Feb 2016  
**#StandWithJNU** Intensifying the struggle against government crackdown on **JNU**, join protest gathering today at Ad... [fb.me/4EvNobBfB](https://www.facebook.com/4EvNobBfB)




**Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 1 Mar 2016  
We urge people across the world & across India to hold events/rallies, etc. in support of **JNU**, as we march to Parliament TOMO **#StandWithJNU**




**Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 18 Feb 2016  
On behalf of **JNU** Students' Union, I thank the tens of thousands of people who turned up to support **JNU** today.... [fb.me/5etrV8nyL](https://www.facebook.com/5etrV8nyL)




**Hasiba** @HasibaAmin · 15 Feb 2016  
Why is the entire **JNU** (8000 students) being labeled as Anti National for the doing of 10-15 students. It's not fair!



**Hasiba** @HasibaAmin · 16 Feb 2016  
I personally know so many **JNU** students. More Nationalist than most us of put together! **#ChatraVirodiNarendraModi**



**Mahamedhaa Nagar** @mahamedhaa · 19 Mar 2016  
What we see in **JNU** today is a continuation of the communist legacy, not a radical eruption @SunilAmbekarM @bahugunasaket @IndiaToday



**Mahamedhaa Nagar** @mahamedhaa · 14 Mar 2016  
**#JNU** panel formed to probe event organised in support of Afzal Guru recommends rustication of Kanhaiya Kumar, four others: PTI

---

**Gurmehar Kaur Issue:** It all started when a young Delhi University student named Gurmehar Kaur who also happened to be a Kargil War Martyr's daughter, posted a photo on facebook holding placard which read "I am not afraid of ABVP. I am not alone. Every student of India is with me". It went viral as soon as it was posted and very soon Gurmehar Kaur was labeled as anti-national by many and then it triggered a debate which created a movement where many supported Gurmehar and many were against her.

Shehla hailed what Gurmehar kaur did and tweeted her as being fearless and a star, also she condemned the ABVP for labeling Gurmehar as anti-national. Hasiba did not tweet aggressively about it and maintained the regular stance over this issue too. Mahamedha though being a female student leader preferred to keep mum on the issue.



Kawalpreet Kaur Retweeted

**Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 26 Feb 2017

Gurmehar Kaur @mehartweets D/O Kargil war martyr is being abused, called anti-national bcz she opposes ABVP violence!!

**Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 26 Feb 2017

Young fearless women like Gurmehar Kaur @mehartweets, Kawalpreet Kaur @kawalpreetdu & Pinjra Tod activists give us hope for DU

#FightBackDU

**Hasiba** @HasibaAmin · 28 Feb 2017

ABVP, when asked abt online rape threat to Gurmehar says, 'Even I can say I have been harassed by NSUI/AISA for publicity.' Rotten mentality!

No Tweet

### Equal Rights

**Pinjra Tod:** Pinjra Tod was a movement which started in 2015 by woman students in Delhi Universities against the curfew timings of the university hostels which was different for female and male students. The movement was to encourage the female students to 'break the cage' and take a stand against the rules which are sexist at large.

Shehla hails the Pinjra Tod activists but at the same time does not leave a chance to bring her anti establishment stance in it. Hasiba too welcomed the movement and extended her support for the same. Mahamedha though did not show solidarity with the movement through her tweet.

**Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 26 Feb 2017

Young fearless women like Gurmehar Kaur @mehartweets, Kawalpreet Kaur @kawalpreetdu & Pinjra Tod activists give us hope for DU

**Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 21 Nov 2016

ABVP leader Saket Bahuguna calls @PinjraTod #DesignerFeminism

Well, what is Modi's ever-new red-carpet dressing-- #DesignerFascism perhaps?

**Hasiba** @HasibaAmin · 19 Sep 2015

Awesome, you guys! Moral policing must end!! #PinjraTod

**Hasiba** @HasibaAmin · 19 Sep 2015

Stand against moral policing? Sign the petition! #PinjraTod [change.org/p/swati-maliwa...](http://change.org/p/swati-maliwa...)


**Mahamedhaa Nagar** @mahamedhaa · 29 Mar 2016

Jst mvd a pstr frm colg notice brd regrdng a march as I didn't like it. Hoping for a exaggerated controversy from Pinjra Tod in cpl of hrs




**Occupy UGC:** The movement called Occupy UGC is a protest which started in 2015 against a government ruling which scrapped the Non- NET Fellowship, a fellowship which was helping poor students to complete their research even if they did not qualify for National Eligibility Test, which has now been made compulsory for all researchers who seek any government fellowship. Students from all the universities came together on the issue; the protests are going on till date.


On this issue Shehla's and Mahamedha's stance seemed quite similar in terms of supporting the protests. Hasiba preferred not to tweet anything about the issue.




**Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 13 Jan 2016  
Word! "Scrap the Review Committee, not the Fellowship" #OccupyUGC AMU Chapter. [fb.me/V7aY67a4](https://fb.me/V7aY67a4)




**Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 15 Nov 2015  
#OccupyUGC AMU Chapter - As the ongoing movement against scrapping of non-NET fellowships completes 26 days, the... [fb.me/7uD2tRihm](https://fb.me/7uD2tRihm)




**Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 30 Oct 2015  
Teachers in support of #OccupyUGC.  
We really thank you for your solidarity and seek your continued support...  
[fb.me/7GkwAfwTX](https://fb.me/7GkwAfwTX)



**Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 24 Oct 2015  
Allahabad University students rise up against fellowship cut. #OccupyUGC  
#SaveNonNETFellowship [fb.me/2sEEwAmqj](https://fb.me/2sEEwAmqj)



No Tweet




**Mahamedhaa Nagar** @mahamedhaa · 23 Oct 2015  
ABVP condemns high handedness and authoritarianism of UGC Ch.Ved Prakash who announced ending of non-NET fellowship. @smritiirani @PMOIndia


**Women's Safety & Security:**

**BHU Crisis:** The crisis started when a large number of girl students who were protesting against a molestation case inside the Banaras Hindu University (BHU) campus without inviting them for any talks were brutally lath charged by the police. A large number of girls were injured in the incident.

On BHU crisis all three women student leaders Shehla, Hasib and Mahamedha seemed to be on the same platform. They all condemned the brutal attack on girls and blamed the authorities for it.




**Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 2 Oct 2017  
BHU witch-hunt begins. Innocent protesting students summoned while harassers, victim-blamers at large!




**Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 23 Sep 2017  
Strongly condemn the lathi charge on protesting girls in BHU! This is the condition of 'Beti Padhao' in Prime Minister's constituency!  
SHAME

---




**Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 2 Oct 2017  
This injustice is frustrating .. We need to stand in solidarity with students of **BHU** who are being targeted, as public pressure eases ..


Shehla Rashid and 1 other Retweeted




**Shehla Rashid** @Shehla\_Rashid · 23 Sep 2017  
All support to **BHU** girls in their fight for gender justice. It's a revolution, but it won't be televised!




**Hasiba** @HasibaAmin · 23 Sep 2017  
Sorry state of affairs in **BHU**. Case of molestation being protested, but University administration continues apathy & inaction: #UnSafeBHU



**Hasiba** @HasibaAmin · 23 Sep 2017  
Wow! So girls who were protesting against **BHU** administrations apathy & inaction on a molestation are now being lathi charged! #UnSafeBHU



**Mahamedhaa Nagar** @mahamedhaa · 25 Sep 2017  
ABVP protest against the brutal and insensitive administration of @bhu has been dismantled & we're detained by @DelhiPolice.



**Mahamedhaa Nagar** @mahamedhaa · 25 Sep 2017  
Delhi police has started following the footsteps of **BHU** administration now! Detained while protesting peacefully at MHRD. #IstandWithBHU

**Conclusion:** The research on twitter accounts of these students concludes with following key findings:

- The audience & messaging by the women student leaders is largely similar to that of men student leaders.
- Women student leaders are not limited to only women related issues; they debate & discuss socio-political issues which are concerned with the nation as a whole.
- The student leader of the party with a single digit seats in the centre shows maximum number of followers and involve in active debate on Twitter, contrary to the ruling party, the candidate of which has a bleak presence and limited followers & discussions to contribute on Twitter.
- It has been noticed that BJP student leaders largely does not indulge in student movement related debates.
- It has been observed AISA leader has more revolutionary communist approach and raises a lot of questions to the establishment but the leader fails to provide any probable solutions to the problems raised
- It has been noticed that the NSUI leader in many instances has provided an unasked for support to the JNU leader just for showing the solidarity.
- During the analysis it was found that on a particular movement 'Occupy UGC' there have been a couple of tweets where the women student leaders being analysed were having the same stand.
- Status of the women leaders in the political parties' hierarchy should be studied.
- As the leaders have been messaging about almost each & everything it is difficult to identify their set point of achievement
- The users who visit candidates' twitter page or follow his account are likely already a supporter; hence, the medium only reinforces their stand.
- During the analysis it was found that on a particular movement 'Occupy UGC' there have been a couple of tweets where the women student leaders being analysed were having the same stand.
- Status of the women leaders in the political parties' hierarchy should be studied.

- As the leaders have been messaging about almost each & everything it is difficult to identify their set point of achievement
- The users who visit candidates' twitter page or follow his account are likely already a supporter; hence, the medium only reinforces their stand.

### References:

1. Agnihotri, S. (2017, March 1). From DU violence to Gurmehar Kaur debate: All that happened and who said what. Retrieved November 2017, from India Today: <https://www.indiatoday.in/fyi/story/gurmehar-kaur-abvp-ramjas-college-twitter-who-said-what-sehwag-kejriwal-rijiju-963376-2017-03-01>
2. Altbach, P. G. (1984). Student Politics in the Third World. *Higher Education* , 13 (6), 635-655.
3. Altbach, P. G. (1966). Students & Politics. *Comparative Education Review* , 10 (2), 175-187.
4. Altbach, P. G. (1966). The Transformation of Indian Student Movement. *Asian Survey* , 6 (8), 448-460.
5. Baxi, U., & Mohan, D. (1990). Education and Politics. *India International Centre Quarterly* , 17 (2), 39-62.
6. Chopra, S. (1978). Political Consciousness of the Student Movement in India. *Social Scientist* , 6 (10), 53 - 58.
7. Emmerson, D. K. (2004). *Student & Politics in Developing Nations* (2 ed., Vol. 2). (D. Thakur, & D. Thakur, Eds.) Deep & Deep Publications Pvt Limited.
8. Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. London: Longman.
9. Ghosal, S. G. (2005). MAJOR TRENDS OF FEMINISM IN INDIA. *The Indian Journal of Political Science* , 66 (4), 793-812.
10. Gonzalez-Vaillant, G., & Schwartz, M. (2012, May 1). Student Movements and the Power of Disruption. Retrieved July 2017, from Mobilizing Ideas: <https://mobilizingideas.wordpress.com/2012/05/02/student-movements-and-the-power-of-disruption/>
11. Hazary, S. C. (1988). PROTEST POLITICS OF STUDENT YOUTH IN INDIA. *The Indian Journal of Political Science* , 49 (1), 105-120.
12. Horvath, J. (n.d.). Critical discourse analysis of Obama's political discourse. 45.
13. Jain, D. (2012-2013). UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP: Lessons from the Women's Movement. *India International Centre Quarterly* , 39 (3/4), 1-12.
14. Jaiswal, V. (2013, August 29). Rights of Minorities in Indian Constitution. Retrieved November 2017, from [www.importantindia.com](http://www.importantindia.com).
15. JNU row: What is the outrage all about? (2016, February 16). Retrieved November 2017, from The Hindu: <http://www.thehindu.com/specials/in-depth/JNU-row-What-is-the-outrage-all-about/article14479799.ece>
16. JNU student Najeeb Ahmed case: The story till now. (2017, June 19). Retrieved November 2017, from The Hindu: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/in-depth-look-at-the-jnu-student-najeeb-ahmed-case/article18474400.ece>
17. Karat, P. (1975). Student Movement at Jawahar Lal Nehru University. *Social Scientist* , 3 (10), 47 - 54.
18. Khanna, M. (2009). POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN INDIA. *The Indian Journal of Political Science* , 70 (1), 55-64.
19. Misra, J. K. (2006). EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN INDIA. *The Indian Journal of Political Science* , 67 (4), 867-878.
20. Patel, V., & Singh, G. (1979). India: Women Move. *Off Our Backs* , 9 (4), 4.
21. PISHAROTY, S. B. (2015, November 24). What Lies Behind the 'Occupy UGC' Protest. Retrieved November 2017, from The Wire: <https://thewire.in/16135/what-lies-behind-the-occupy-ugc-protest/>
22. Rashid, O., & Pathak, V. (2017, September 24). Banaras Hindu University on the boil. Retrieved November 2017, from The Hindu: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/banaras-hindu-university-on-the-boil/article19746481.ece>
23. Rey, C. D. (2005). *Gender, Women and Leadership* (Vol. 65). Taylor & Francis Ltd.
24. Shrivastava, R. (1992). AGGRESSIVE PARTICIPATION AND RADICALISM IN STUDENT COMMUNITY. *The Indian Journal of Political Science* , 53 (2), 204-217.

25. Student Federation of India. (n.d.). Retrieved from [http://www.sfiwb.org: http://www.sfiwb.org/pdf/History\\_of\\_SFI.pdf](http://www.sfiwb.org: http://www.sfiwb.org/pdf/History_of_SFI.pdf)
26. Sugirtha, A. T. (2007). Status of Women in Politics. *The Indian Journal of Political Science* , 68 (3), 589-606.
27. Tharoor, S. (2016). Why Caste Won't Disappear From India. Retrieved 2017, from Huffpost: [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/shashi-tharoor/caste-wont-disappear-india\\_b\\_6257354.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/shashi-tharoor/caste-wont-disappear-india_b_6257354.html)
28. Trew, T. (1979). *What the paper say: Linguistic variation and ideological difference*. London : Routledge & Kegan Paul.
29. Tumulty, K. (2012). Twitter becomes a key real-time tool for campaigning . *The Washington Post*.
30. Virk, A. (2016, February). History Shows How Stifling Student Movements is Counterproductive. Retrieved April 2017, from *The Quint*: <https://www.thequint.com/news/india/history-shows-how-stifling-student-movements-is-counterproductive>

\*\*\*