



# The Forced Crises of the Public University in India

# FACTS & STATS

- ▶ By 2030, India will be one of the youngest nations in the world, with an estimated 140 million individuals in their 20s. In fact, one in every four graduates of the world will be a product of Indian higher education system.
- ▶ Indian higher education currently the third largest in the world, is likely to surpass the US in the next five years and China in the next 15 years to be the largest system of higher education in the world. India has the highest number of higher education institutes in the world.
- ▶ There are 26.7 million students enrolled in higher education institutes across the country. The government has a Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) target of 30 per cent by 2020.
- ▶ Our student enrolment number is likely to go to 40 million by 2020. This requires our higher education capacity to expand 1.5 times in five year. As of 2014, there are 677 universities, 37,204 colleges and 11443 stand-alone institutions in India

# PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE

- ▶ This summary on an on-line forum working on issues of privatization and public domain says it well –
- ▶ “There are many things that we assume to be ‘ours’ - from parks and pensions, hospitals and highways, and the land we may have long inhabited - until one day we find that they are no longer ‘ours’ but the ‘property’ of someone else: they have been privatized. Privatization takes many forms, from claiming ‘property rights’ over genetic material isolated from a human and the patenting of seeds.
- ▶ Privatization also describes the ‘ascendancy of corporate control over and benefit from university research and intellectual endeavours. A healthy society, however, requires a healthy public domain with a diversity of structures, spaces and management to nurture common interests and provide for the public good. These may take the form of public libraries, open source software, farm-saved seed, community gardens, public schools, roads, parks, and socialized health care”
- ▶ <http://www.forumonpublicdomain.ca/about>

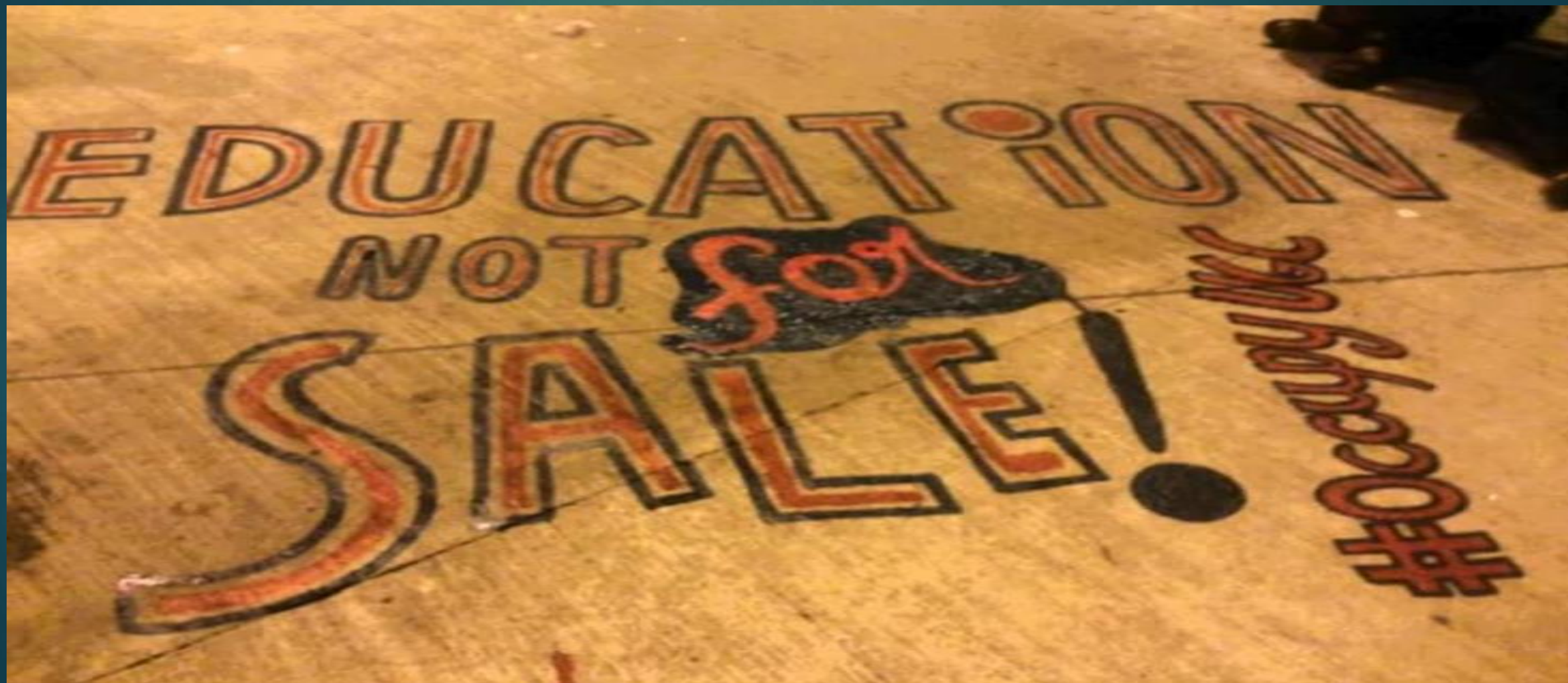
# PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE

- ▶ What we are witnessing is an attack on universities not because they are failing, but because they are public. This is not just an attack on political liberty but also an attack on dissent, critical education, and any public institution that might exercise a democratizing influence on the nation.
- ▶ In this case the autonomy of institutions such as higher education, particularly public institutions are threatened as much by state politics as by corporate interests.
- ▶ ~ Henry Giroux “Neoliberal Savagery and the Assault on Higher Education as a Democratic Public Sphere”
- ▶ Café Dissensus ,Guest Ed Debaditya Bhattacharya

# THE FORCED CRISES OF THE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN INDIA

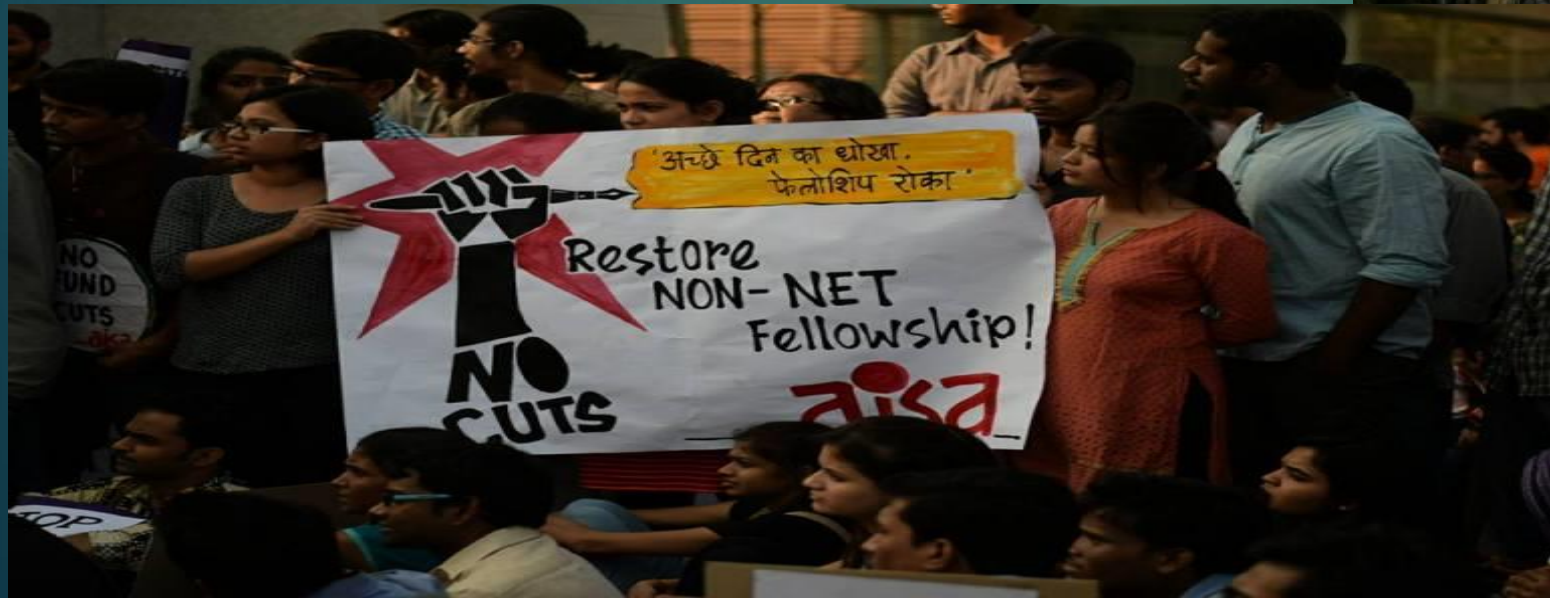


# OCCUPY UGC



# WTO – GATS

- ▶ WTO-GATS will impact upon the very character of knowledge and values in the higher education system to suit the corporate vested interest at the cost of the needs of our people.
- ▶ Even the Constitutional commitment to equal opportunity in education and the social justice agenda will be dismantled under the WTO-GATS regime as it will be viewed being against ‘level playing field’ for the corporate profits! Thus, committing higher education to WTO-GATS will erode our capacity to formulate educational policies. It is an assault on the sovereignty of the nation.
- ▶ Rampant privatisation and commercialisation has already excluded more than 90% of the deprived sections, especially the SCs, STs, OBCs and the minorities, with women and disabled in each of these sections suffering further exclusion.





# OCCUPY UGC

- ▶ The UGC ( a statutory body affiliated to Department of Higher Education of the Ministry of Human Resources and Development) had a novel scheme launched in 2008 to encourage research based education. The scheme gave stipend to Mphil and Phd graduated who come outside the ambit of National Eligibility Test(NET) cleared candidates. The Non-NET research fellowship was Rs 5000 per month for M.Phil and Rs. 8000 per month for PhD. This scheme was scrapped in the last UGC meeting much to the dismay of many research students who were relying on this stipend to sustain their passion for research.
- ▶ The UGC decision of scrapping the fellowship sparked off a massive spirited student movement which started in Delhi from 21st October 2015 and went on till January 2016. Students from different universities in the city gathered for a protest in front of UGC which turned into what is now well known as the [Occupy UGC](#) movement.

# OCCUPY UGC

While an MPhil student gets Rs. 5000 per month (ABOUT 70 EUROS), a PhD student gets Rs. 8000 p.m (ABOUT 115 EUROS)

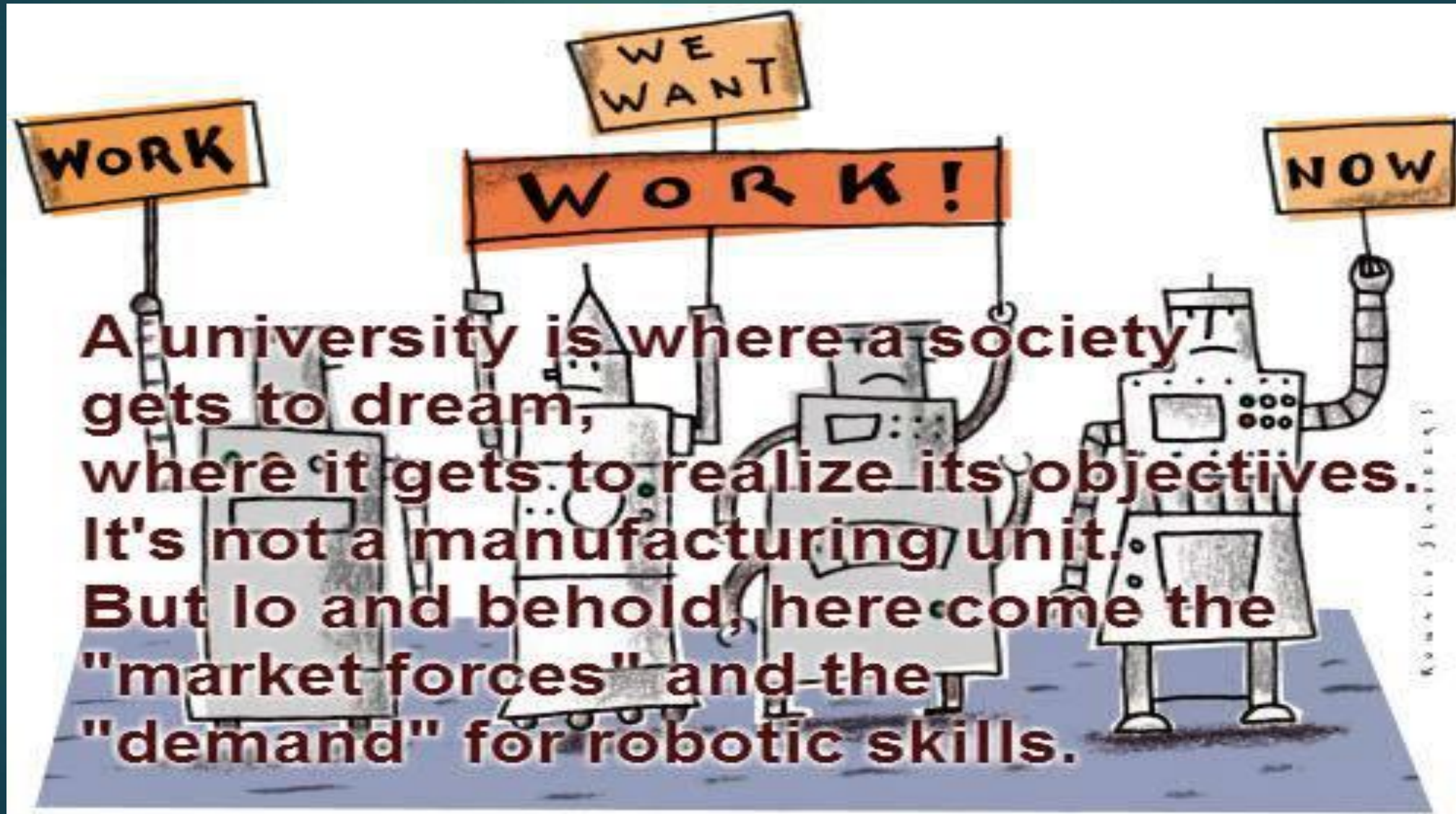
Scrapping the fellowship means thousands of students pursuing higher education and research on a variety of subjects will cease to get institutional support. Many would be forced to abandon their studies.

The movement has crossed university as well as organisational boundaries and has generated response from different parts of the country. Spontaneous protest were held in different universities. Teachers in large numbers also came in support of the movement.

# STUDENTS PROTESTING THE SCRAPPING OF UGC NON-NET FELLOWSHIP



# MARKET SKILLS & THE UNIVERSITY



# VOCATIONALIZING THE UNIVERSITY AS SKILL FACTORY

- ▶ In the new conception being put forward by the government, the university is considered as a skill factory which through mass production will address the needs of the country's economy. Critical thought is regarded as an outmoded ambition, an irritant that impedes the smooth accomplishment of this aim. In the protected space of the university, the implicit valorisation of critical thinking has served to link the classroom to its outside: political debates and intellectual conversations on campus connect in creative ways with the classroom, and serve as much as sources of education as formal academic instruction.
- ▶ Universities can foster critical thinking only if they permit students to engage and experiment with diverse points of view in an atmosphere free of fear and the threat of violence. New policies seem to envisage a different kind of public university, where disciplined acquisition of skills is the only role assigned to students. They are not imagined as possessing any non-curricular intellectual subjectivity. Thought and expression outside the classroom are being considered as part of the domain of discipline. The suggestion seems to be that governments will decide what sorts of non-curricular activities are permissible.



VC Must  
respects  
students  
'NO' to  
FYUP

REJECT  
FYUP  
RECLAIM DU

Expose DU VC's  
Brazen Illegality  
and Manipulations  
to Retain FYUP  
by Hook or Crook!

दार्जों के  
भ्रविष्टा से  
खेलना  
बंद करो!  
आइए-

SA  
ASSOCIATION

missa

Let me read,  
write and think  
without fear of  
clan, culture and  
gods

Sillybus  
to Nowhere  
at Delhi  
University

**Say No  
to  
No Say!**

protest unsound & imposed  
reforms  
\* Delhi University

see therapist  
for 'hurt  
sentiments',  
leave the  
university  
alone

**Reading  
Ramanujan is  
good for your  
mental health**



# THE NEW EDUCATION POLICY 2016

- ▶ The draft of the New Education Policy (NEP) 2016, now in the public domain, makes no attempt to challenge the onslaught of neoliberal values or counter the new model of the university as a service provider for skillified labour.
- ▶ The proposed changes in the NEP are, in fact, drawn out to shape and ready learning in congruence with the vicissitudes of the new 'knowledge based economy' and its soft power.
- ▶ A goal of cohesion and status quoism, as against critical thinking, praxis, and intervention is aimed at, in a bid to create a docilized citizenry of student-consumers.

# THE NEW EDUCATION POLICY 2016

- ▶ Usher in industry-linked research, private and global investment in higher education, and the setting up of frameworks for rating and ranking institutions. The draft of the NEP reinforces the same, with an added thrust on processes of evaluation for institutions that now links performance to funding.
- ▶ “An institution will be ranked on a scale of I to VII. VII representing the highest and I the lowest in the category. Those in the top two of the scale should be given full operational autonomy in all academic and administrative matters; those in category VI would be provided incentives, guidance and advice to move to category VII. Those on the bottom of the scale in category I would be put on notice for immediate closure. Those in category II would be given a warning that they are under close watch, and could be considered for closure unless they move up the scale”

# THE POLITICS OF RANKING

- ▶ Indian newsmagazines, like **Outlook** and **India Today**, have in the past released rankings hierarchizing colleges and universities through their own indigenously worked out algorithms. Yet even as these rankings never impacted funding, their metrics went a long way in creating pools of elitism and neglect.
- ▶ Within a ranking play off, higher education devolves into a competitive, hierarchically stratified system that institutionalizes competition in ways so profound as to create an entire class of non-achievers who 'fail' by virtue of being ranked low. In highlighting and showcasing the high-ranked is also a covert formula that generates excess demand for the few, while negativizing into oblivion the subjacent others.

# THE POLITICS OF RANKING

- ▶ Even as academia has never been free of competition or stayed otherwise ethically pristine, what has come in the present moment is a decree that institutionalizes a new culture of competition in the pursuit of 'excellence'
- ▶ Far more crucially, from within the politics of this ranking, a system of differential funding and favouring would in the future ease itself into the welfare model, subverting its very foundational ethic.

# THE POLITICS OF RANKING

- ▶ "Universities now operate in a much more Darwinian world, where the fit survive and others flounder. Tenure is under threat, bothersome rankings and performance indicators are becoming common, and new university structures are arising to provide professional qualifications at very low cost. But nothing is going on here that has not already gone on in government and business. The shake-out should prove healthy, the argument goes, and bring us a sleeker delivery of higher-education services to match market needs. A dose of private-sector logic will surely help. And to the extent that everyone lives in this kind of world, why should the university be any different?" David Harvey

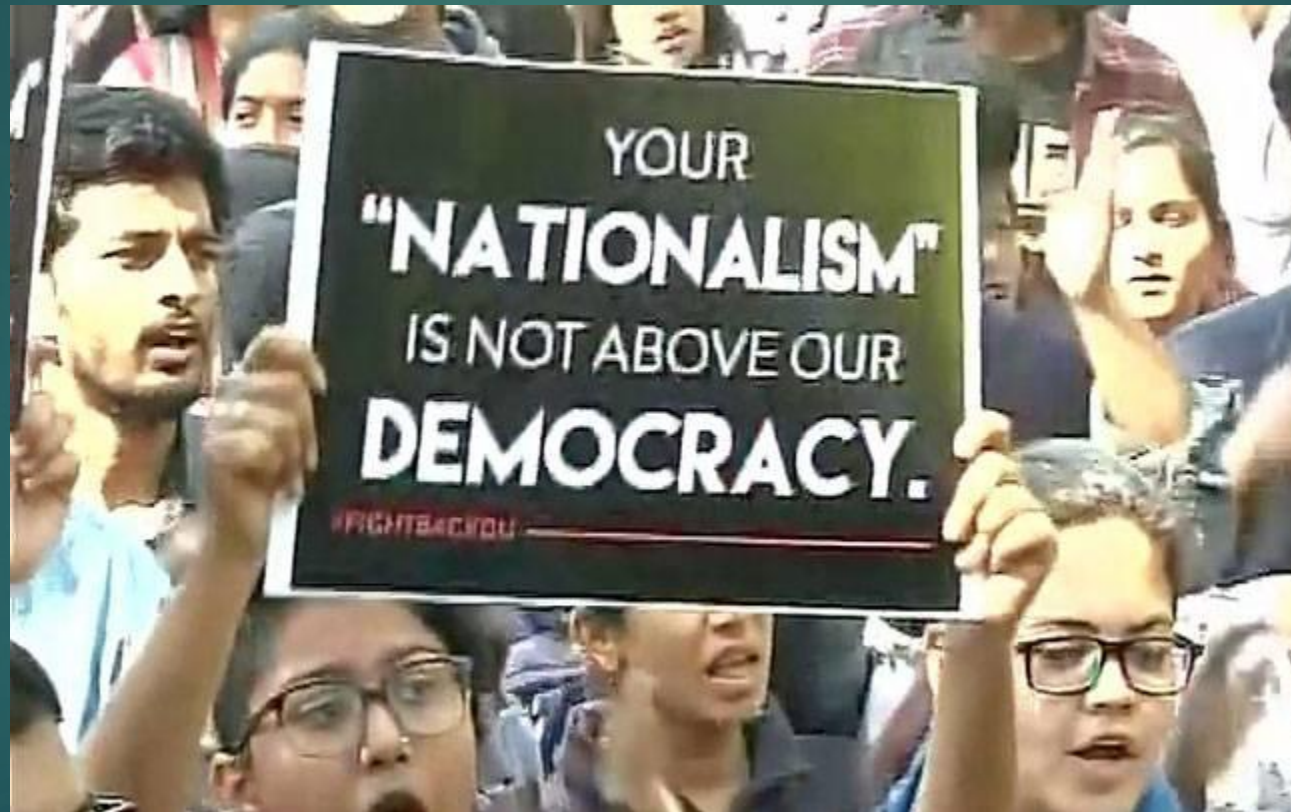
# THE POLITICS OF RANKING

- ▶ What rankings also bolster is a disciplinary practice that reviews performance through processes of benchmarking and standardization. As far as measuring output goes, the favouring of the STEM subjects – science, technology, engineering, and mathematics – foundational to the industrial-corporate world, thrive, riding established biases. On the other hand, language departments (barring English) would be thwarted by the limited number of peer reviewed journals that exist in the discipline, as also the number of readers for its publications within the language.

# THE POLITICS OF RANKING

- ▶ This regime of audit, ratings, and bureaucratic control selects and separates institutions as estimable through its pitch of 'best practices'. The vapid, tedious outlining of the idea of 'Excellence' in the NAAC's guidelines is as under:
- ▶ "It means the quality of something being extremely good. In an academic context it means the pursuit of the best strategies to reach higher knowledge and, in a pedagogic context, the best ways of imparting it to learners. This is a universal criterion because in any sphere of life anyone would want the best and none would settle for the second best, if they could so manage ... this criterion helps to apply rigour in academic activity, in order to ensure the bestness (sic)"

# NATIONALISM & THE UNIVERSITY





# VIOLENCE ON CAMPUS



# VIOLENCE ON CAMPUS



# ABVP – THE RIGHT WING STUDENT GROUP WITH LAATHIS



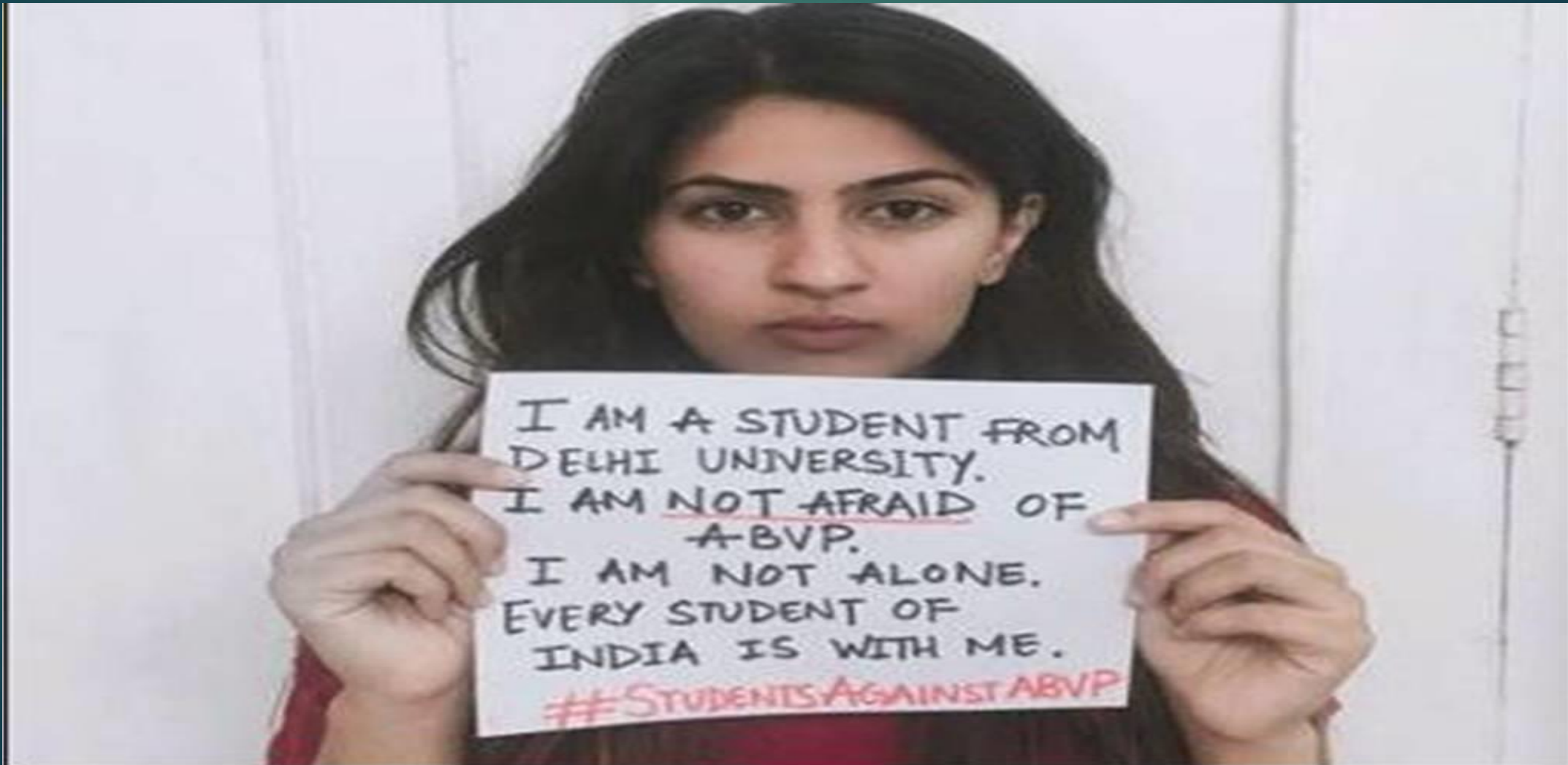
# NATIONALISM & THE UNIVERSITY

- ▶ “To curb these tendencies, over the last 3 years, the BJP government has put its heft behind a systematic effort to criminalise student activity and label regular university programmes as anti-national should they contain subjects the BJP and RSS does not like discussed, or views that do not match its own.
- ▶ The RSS student wing, the ABVP, has been at the forefront of this effort, with its members acting as informants and increasingly violent vigilantes for the RSS and the government’s war on ideas.” Anjali Mody *The Wire*
- ▶ The new project is the building of a “**WALL OF VALOUR**”. The Education Minister said: “We don’t want to give lessons in patriotism to anyone, after all that feeling is in all of us.” But in his very next sentence he declared that patriotism not constantly on display is no patriotism at all : “However, to re-awaken it [patriotism], so as to constantly remember it, that is very important”. The wall would be a site of just such patriotic inspiration.

# NATIONALISM & THE UNIVERSITY

- ▶ "The moment you say anything apart from 'Long live Mother India,' you'll be branded as an anti-national," Shehla Rashid, student activist.
- ▶ A female Delhi University student Gurmehar Kaur received rape and death threats after a video she made against the ABVP.
- ▶ "Universities are supposed to be safe spaces for debate and discussion. But the events at Ramjas College are a shameful reminder of how intimidation and threats continue to restrict free speech on university campuses," Aakar Patel, head of Amnesty International India

# NATIONALISM AND THE UNIVERSITY



# NATIONALISM & THE UNIVERSITY



# THE SUICIDES OF A DALIT STUDENTS ROHITH VEMULA & RAJINI KRISHH





# THE SUICIDES OF DALIT STUDENTS

## ROHITH VEMULA & RAJINI KRISH

- ▶ “The value of a man was reduced to his immediate identity and nearest possibility. To a vote. To a number. To a thing. Never was a man treated as a mind. As a glorious thing made up of star dust. In every field, in studies, in streets, in politics, and in dying and living” Rohith Vemula.
- ▶ In [his last post on Facebook](#), on March 10, Rajini spoke about the ongoing protests against the UGC criteria on MPhil and PhD admissions, “There is no equality in MPhil/PhD Admission, there is no equality in viva-voce, there is only denial of equality... denying the education of the Marginals.”
- ▶ He ended with poignant last words, “When Equality is denied everything is denied.”