

INDIA'S STUDENT MOVEMENT: CATALYST AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

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Image Source: *Jurist News*.

Introduction

In only few weeks of its creation, the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) emerged as the biggest resistance force for India's BJP government in years. The party was initially formed online as a satirical response to the remarks made by the Chief Justice of India comparing unemployed youth with cockroaches. Prompted by these remarks, the CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke posted a message on social media asking "*What if all cockroaches came together?*", leading to the formation of this satirical political movement.¹ It soon attracted active backing from the country's 'Gen-Z' population. The party's name carries perhaps a deliberate resemblance with India's ruling party, **Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP)**.

The party slogan simply claims to amplify the "voice of the lazy and unemployed". The party invites anyone who is "unemployed, lazy, chronically online and can rant professionally" to join the movement.² From outside, what seemed a satire-driven casual platform, soon turned into a ground youth-led movement, challenging the traditional political setup.

¹ Hannah Ellis-Petersen, "Who Are India's Cockroach Janta Party and Why Are They Staging Protests?," *The Guardian*, July 20, 2026, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/jul/20/who-are-indias-cockroach-janta-party-and-why-are-they-staging-protests->.

² Abhijeet Dipke, "Cockroach Janta Party Official Website — Voice of the Lazy & Unemployed," Cockroach Janta Party Official Website, Cockroach Janta Party, 2026, <https://www.cockroachjantaparty.org/>.

Its founder Abhijeet Dipke is a 30-year-old political activist, who studied journalism in India and earned a Master degree of Science in Public Relations from Boston University. He also bags the past experience of voluntary services for Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)'s social media. Dipke launched the CJP website and social media profiles on May 16, 2026, which quickly gained millions of followers bypassing the ruling party social media handles.³

Key Catalysts of this movement

The CJP's introductory tagline reflects its narrative: "*A political party for the people the system forgot to count*".⁴ The BJP government attempted to halt the movement's online march. However, the rapid dissemination of content by creators across digital fora made it impossible to contain, causing these efforts to fail eventually.

The first major catalyst that gave CJP the chance to flex its muscles was the controversy around leaked papers of National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), an exam arranged for medical aspirants at national level. The CJP's sit-in at Delhi's Jantar Mantar demanding the resignation of Dharmendra Pradhan, India's Education Minister, got intensified with the hunger strike of educational reformist Sonam Wangchuk. Weeks into the hunger strike, Wangchuk was moved to a hospital.⁵

Mishandling of the protests by the Delhi authorities became the second catalyst. The security forces fired tear gas and pallet guns on protesters, which further ignited the fire and protestors got united with further conviction. The protest at Jantar Mantar eventually ended with the youth's first victory when the education minister tweeted his resignation on X (former Twitter).⁶ The resignation was a significant development, as it represented the first ministerial resignation on public demand over the 12 years of Modi's rule, following such a strong pressure from the youth. Subsequent to the resignation, the CJP ended its protest claiming the government had met their two key demands pertaining no legal action against protestors and financial compensation for the students who died by

³ "Abhijeet Dipke Education Background: The Boston University Graduate behind the Youth-Led Cockroach Janta Party Protests," *The Times Of India*, July 22, 2026, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/education/news/abhijeet-dipke-education-background-the-boston-university-graduate-behind-the-youth-led-cockroach-janta-party-protests/articleshow/132553278.cms>.

⁴ Abhijeet Dipke, "Cockroach Janta Party Official Website — Voice of the Lazy & Unemployed," Cockroach Janta Party Official Website, Cockroach Janta Party, 2026, <https://www.cockroachjantaparty.org/>.

⁵ YP Rajesh and Saurabh Sharma, "Police Shift Fasting Indian Activist to Hospital against His Will," *Reuters*, July 18, 2026, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/india-moves-fasting-activist-hospital-police-say-2026-07-18/>.

⁶ <https://x.com/dpradhanbjp>, "Dharmendra Pradhan (@Dpradhanbjp) on X," X (Formerly Twitter), July 25, 2026, <https://x.com/dpradhanbjp/status/2080938216505667663?s=46>.

suicide after NEET leak. However, the prospect of further mobilization by the CJP remains, if the government fails to practically implement the agreed-upon demands.

Analyzing the rise of CJP

The rise of CJP reflects an amalgamation of public grievances, state dealing of the public sentiment, and populist signaling. The Indian youth's anger related to unemployment and educational stress was already in discussion. The NEET paper leak scandal revealed a deep systematic corruption, where the merit-based educational progress was being undermined. The CJP took up this issue with firmness; mobilized the country's youth with confidence; staged sustained but peaceful protests; largely remained apolitical; refrained from getting divided on party, religious, caste, or other agendas; and succeeded in getting resignation of a Union Minister, a milestone no other political or social protests had been able to achieve in 12 years of the Modi government.

The CJP also outpowered the BJP on social media front. It depicted how social media tools, especially Instagram can be used to mobilize audiences combining humor and memes while keeping the core political message intact. Traditional political parties used to rely on long, traditional ideological speeches to amplify their narratives. But this was not the language the Gen-Z chose. They rather used interactive ways to connect with the audiences through content such as *Get Ready with Me*, memes, creative placards and strategies to prevent political crackdown.⁷ These protests changed the people outlook on political rallies and this is how it became the country's most talked-about protest in recent times.

Political Implications

First, the protests made clear that the BJP grip on power, social media, and the society is now in hot water. It has effectively challenged the perception of BJP's political invincibility built over 12 years. A Union Minister's resignation on public demand was a rare moment in the BJP era. Secondly, the emergence of the CJP could pose a challenge to the traditional political strategies of BJP and Congress. Things could go from bad to worse for both the parties, if the CJP decides to enter the political arena. Currently, the CJP holds no electoral ambitions given its conviction that political accountability could be enforced more effectively through citizen mobilization rather than going through a long formal

⁷ Ananya Sarma, "Protest That Looked like Instagram: How Gen Z Made System Listen up through CJP Movement," News9live, July 27, 2026, <https://www.news9live.com/lifestyle/cjp-protest-2026-how-gen-z-used-memes-humour-and-reels-to-build-indias-most-viral-protest-2993647>.

electoral process.⁸ A leaderless movement under the CJP banner indicates a generational shift where people, particularly youth, are ready to mobilize without depending on status-quo political structures or leaders. This fact directly pushes the traditional political powers to rethink their strategies and public engagement policies.

Third, after the protests ended, the BJP acknowledged its dire need to strengthen its communication strategy and its youth connect prior to the 2029 general elections, as Gen Z is expected to provide one of the largest vote banks by that time. The BJP's earlier content was perceived as highly curated and therefore, failed to appeal the younger audiences. In response, Prime Minister Modi encouraged cabinet ministers to increase their participation on youth popular platforms like Instagram and Snapchat, while keeping the content less edited and raw.⁹ Several changes in the BJP's social media and youth wing teams were also recently made. Prime Minister Modi himself is now frequently engaging with Instagram users through his short video messages.¹⁰

Conclusion

The rise of Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) demonstrates the burgeoning pressure youth can inflict on a status-quo political system, especially in the South Asian context. Already burdened by grievances like unemployment and high educational costs, with India's growing population being a major concern, the NEET paper leak further amplified those grievances. The growing influence of youth and social media in politics bears witness to the fact that the political dynamics are evolving in India, with leaderless movements like the CJP, no longer relying on traditional political structures to communicate with those in power. CJP shows that beyond solely a platform for communication and entertainment, social media has now become a powerful tool to highlight the public resentments through engaging content such as reels, memes and creative placards instead of long ideological speeches. The recent upheaval in the Indian politics carries lessons not only for the BJP, but for the Congress and others as well that they may need to rethink how they engage digitally mobilized youth, moving beyond force-based responses toward more responsive and engaging approaches.

⁸ "Will Abhijeet Dipke Enter Politics? CJP Founder Says 'No'—But His Next Move Could Reshape India's Youth Politics," Human Online, August 3, 2026, <https://humanonline.org/news/will-abhijeet-dipke-enter-politics-cockroach-janta-party-founder-says-no-but-his-next-move-could-reshape-indias-youth-politics>.

⁹ Tora Agarwala and Saurabh Sharma, "India's Modi Turns to Instagram to Woo Young Voters after Gen Z Protest," Reuters, August 6, 2026, <https://www.reuters.com/world/india/indias-modi-turns-instagram-woo-young-voters-after-gen-z-protest-2026-08-06/>.

¹⁰ Nikita Yadav, "Gen Z: India's BJP mastered WhatsApp and X. now it is trying to crack Instagram," August 21, 2026, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cnvn0n1nld6o>.