

THE BITS HERALD

DEMOCRACY... OR SOMETHING LIKE IT: AUDITORIUM DEBATE 2

It is not surprising that the second **Audi Debate** is popularly referred to as 'the audi rag'. In this grueling phase towards a post in the executive committee of the Council for Student Affairs (CSA) at BITS-Pilani, Goa Campus, candidates can cross question each other, and furthermore, the audience is free to grill the candidates

The *audi rag* for this year's election process was a mixed bag, with its highs and lows. It started out with the Election Commission briefing the audience and candidates on the expected discipline and rules of debate- which would have Director, K.E. Raman and Vice Chancellor, Dr. L.K. Maheshwari in attendance.

The debate witnessed the candidates for the posts of General Secretary, Treasurer, Vice President and President (in that order) summarize their achievements and agendas, deliver promises (their fulfillment is another issue altogether, which is something only time will tell!), and ask questions to other candidates, which, at times were used to launch personal attacks and malign their competitors. On one hand, accusations flew, while on the other, there was a fair share of humour and entertainment provided by a few candidates.

Issues which were discussed and worthy of mention are - local websites, comprehensive databases for projects, improving accessibility to information on higher studies, power and jurisdiction of CSA's executive committee in matters like placements, amendments to the constitution, role of a pro-active CSA in a developing campus, defined roles of CSA's executive committee in the constitution, feasibility of a credit/debit card system, taxi service at lower rates, the 'none of these' option, restrictions and freedom on campus, feedback systems, perspective of regional associations, collaboration with the International Relations Unit, Pilani and Intel, transparency in transactions, printing and Xerox facilities.

Things which are not worthy of mention, but still worthy of (sic) mention – training in CPR, Vaastu, dreams pertaining to getting a Maggi at Nescafe

within 2 minutes and trivialization of other candidates' achievements, God being on a certain candidate's side, certificates, seriousness behind the candidature of a few VP candidates, cheapshots/personal attacks (also referred to as 'catfights between VP candidates' by a VP candidate), a section of the audience cheering for a certain 'Modi' and 'Jangra', 'you' and 'I' making a 'V', poignant rhetoric and more poignant rhetoric.

The first round was followed by an address by Dr. L.K. Maheshwari, the Vice Chancellor of BITS-Pilani University. He kept his promise of visiting the Goa Campus once a semester. In his address, he mentioned his happiness on seeing democracy in action and asked students to look at the bigger picture – that of raising the level of BITS to the best of their capabilities. He asked to transcend petty boundaries and capitalize on the BITSian status in helping India achieve greater heights. His advice was to integrate an international component into festivals.

Next, the audience question round had people rubbing their hands in anticipation of something interesting. The round did live up to its reputation. Sensitive issues like regionalism and bartering of votes between candidates were touched upon. No stone was left unturned in character assassination and maligning the reputation of candidates. CGPA, cheating in exams, personal life and habits, grilling on any aspect of speech/agenda/duties – Each candidates' life was made into an open book. Some responses were candid; They mocked the dilemma that candidates face while answering some questions in a genuine manner.

What made the debate unique was the participation of the non serious (arguably?) candidates. While some dismiss it as an attention seeking stunt, some treat it as an eye-opener. The malaise with the election process and the CSA, i.e., the tall false promises, the far fetched agendas, the dirty politics, etc was aptly addressed, albeit sarcastically. Is this going to change anything? That, unfortunately, only time will tell.

The Team

Introducing,
Dhashrath Raghuraman
Anmol Sharma
Kartik Guduru
Dushyant Kinwar
Ankit Hatakar
Apurv Gujar
Emaad Ahmed Manzoor
Saumya Dikshit
Rohan Menon
Madhupurna Biswas
Tanay Dashpande
Abhishek Ravi
Aastha Srivastava
Abhishek Jain
B V S Mourya
and
Pratik Mandrekar
Rithvic Rajah
Abhishek Agrawal
Sanjay
Shilpa Garg
Rithika Ardeshir

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Or could it be possible that this be an elaborate scheme of strategic placement of mock candidates to provide a disadvantage to another?

"We have a democratic setup and students have the right to freedom but, responsible behaviour is expected from them. We do not support their frivolous actions but it is within the law for them to speak about topics they care about."
ELECTION COMMISSION

I feel it necessary to point out is the amount of leverage that the CSA, whoever may chair it, can have in major issues like the mess food, electricity, internet timings...

Editorial

With Elections for the posts of the Council of Student Affairs (CSA) and for those of the hostel representatives in the air, it was hard for me not to see someone or the other campaigning or shouting out slogans where ever i went or asking for "*just five minutes*" of my time to win me over.

The Debates held in the auditorium on the 1st and the 3rd of September saw four mock candidates for the post of Vice President who tried to rally wide propaganda against regionalism and favouritism. The two debates were used as a pedestal to air their views.

The two Presidential candidates on the other hand, received overwhelming support from the audience. It was as though the audience sincerely respected both their backgrounds and past work for betterment of the campus.

The issue that deserves some thought right now though, is that of the mock candidates. They claim their motive is to 'try' to expose the frailties of the system but i didn't see anyone offer any concrete solution to the problem. Is chaos really the answer to a fragile albeit functioning democracy?

Has their primary motive of pointing out what's wrong with the system been lost in the flashing V signs, "petty placement issues", "stray sniffer dogs" and the mockery of the post that has ensued?

Or could it be possible that this be an elaborate scheme of strategic placement of mock candidates to provide a disadvantage to another?

What will be the repercussions of this move on the future elections in the college? Are we setting a trend of underhandedness, deception, mud-slinging or even worse, plain apathy towards elections?

It's time to say goodbye to our herd-mentality and our indifference and make our own well-thought-out decisions. And it's time candidates contesting the elections rise up (yes, RISE) to the quality and class their posts and the college demand from them.

The mock candidates have certainly got us talking more about elections and what plagues the system, in the process eliciting roars and cheers from the audience and yet I think, the channel of approach, although it catches attention and gets its 15 minutes of fame, questions and mocks the very threads of democracy.

On a different note, I feel it necessary to point out is *the amount of leverage* that the CSA, whoever may chair it, can have in major issues like the mess food, electricity, internet timings, the organized and efficient working of the clubs and departments and the placement scenario. Aren't these issues more important to us than 'a bus to Panjim' or 'the fencing around the tennis court'?

I ask *you*, the students, who will ultimately face the consequences of the election (minus the post adorning your CV), to think. It's my sincere plea that you do not vote just because you consider it a moral obligation of friendship or regional brotherhood but because ultimately it will be your vote and mine which makes or mars the future. Unless I rectify my way of judgment, I cannot rectify the system. There isn't really any point blaming a hostel or a group because I am equally at fault.

-Editor

Write to us at djbpgc@gmail.com

THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

Sourabh Agrawal [2006P8PS441]

Highlights to the Agenda:

Sourabh plans to have a 24-hr helpline service which will entertain problems that cannot be reported to the CSA or which the hostel representatives cannot solve. However, this service will not be available during exams. He also wants to bring to our campus various coaching institutes like Career Launcher, IMS and TIME, in the near future. With regard to placements, he wants to form a unified body comprising placement coordinators of all associations, so that each stream can have more core companies for placements. He plans to make a few clauses, in contracts of food outlets, open to discussion in the General Body Meeting.

The Reporter's Analysis:

If you sat and questioned Sourabh Agrawal on anything at all, then you'd know that he likes to ramble and say 'see' about a 100 times in each sentence. His fancy idea for a helpline seems like just that: a fancy idea. I can't imagine calling a student of the helpline late at night for help and getting a polite answer in return (if I'm lucky enough to get an answer even). The other points in his agenda though, have some sort of solid grounding and are convincing.



Sourabh Agrawal

A Department of
Journalism and Media
Affairs (DoJMA) Publication

Abhay Egoor [2006P3PS083]

Highlights to the Agenda:

Abhay plans to make the International Relations Unit (IRU) of BITS, Pilani Goa Campus more active. "IRU in Pilani signs MoUs with different universities for student exchange programmes or foreign summer internships. We can have something similar in Goa Campus", says Abhay. His primary intentions are to improve the present scenario of placements and electives. He plans to improve placements by arranging for workshops by more companies. He was encouraged by last year's success of a certain company which held a workshop. Also he plans to have lectures through the VSAT technology regularly, so as to reduce the problem of fewer faculty for popular electives.

The Reporter's Analysis:

His credentials may seem to back his idea of arranging for guest lectures (via VSAT or otherwise) on subjects which could become new electives. His idea on placements is based on inviting companies to conduct workshops to familiarize them with the campus and its students. The IRU in Pilani though, has just been established and is not functioning in full force yet. On the topic of bettering placements, he mentioned the Schlumberger Workshop (which is really very clichéd now, considering how much people quote this when talking of improving placements), without mentioning his role. He then mentioned Oracle SST coming for placements; which was based on students' PS2 performance.



Abhay Egoor

THE VICE-PRESIDENTIAL JOKE(S)

Angad Pal Singh Tiwana [2006P8PS190]

Wants no regionalist approach towards politics, no violent repercussions due to regionalism. He requested people to make a judicious assessment of the candidates.

Quotes:

"Companies won't come for placements to a campus with stray dogs."

"Clubs and depts. should oversee the education of stray dogs and not clash over petty matters."

"We are not only good but we're the best."

Shounak Sen Sharma [2006P1PS463]

One of the most radical idealists of the campus.

Quotes:

"I'd like to introduce sex education to our college. Awareness prevents unwanted outcomes."

"Everyone is only being used by the CSA. What do you get in return for your vote?"

"Practical classes? Train everyone in CPR."

"If election processes continue in this manner, I am not proud to be a BITSian"

Angad Pal Singh Tiwana, ironically enough

Divesh Kumar [2006P3PS173]

One of the philosophical candidates standing for VP who tended to depend a lot on the Almighty.

Quotes:

"Why aren't companies like Schlumberger coming? Who knows, it all depends on the Almighty."

"Our outlook is too negative, we search what we don't have instead of enjoying what we have."

"Transparency? Of course, God will be our witness. I have faith in God and Vaastu."



Abhimanyu Vatsya

[2006P8PS028]

One of the cool gurus of the elections constantly flashing the victory symbol at the audience and speaking about his dreams waiting to be realized. Coming from Pilani (after the 4th iteration), he wishes to increase the professionalism in the maintenance of the sound and light system. He even wishes to improve the night life here and also prevent the CSA from taking decisions without polls. With experience in various departments he wishes to carry out his visions.

Quotes:

"I don't even like the word agenda"

"I have a dream"

"When we dream alone, it's just a dream. We dream together- it's the beginning of reality"

"You and I make a V"

Buddharaju Vinay Varma [2006SIP4561]

Analysis: Points in favour

- He wants "BITS without any buts" where every student is proud of being part of this family. And yet, he refuses to take a stand against his mock-VP candidates (friends?) also contesting.
- He proposes to host an ftp server containing all the details of all the club activities in order to avoid clashing of club events.
- He claims his active involvement in the working of various clubs and also in the organizing of the college festivals for example, his stint in the quiz club and the wall street club and that as a registration volunteer for waves 07 proves his good understanding of working of various committees and clubs (Registration volunteer pfft!)
- Very enthusiastic about implementing the Earn While You Learn Programme, like *all* other candidates.
- He also plans to start the Hostel Nite Programme this year onwards.

Points against

- The whole interview seemed more of a prepared speech rather than coming from a person passionate towards this post.
- Some of his plans like assigning administrative duties to students in library during night hours certainly goes against the academic interests of students.
- With such well formulated plans he seems rather incapable of including any flexibilities, if situation demands so.
- He was quite dismissive on issues concerning points outside his agenda

"A car runs on all 4 wheels. It's not that I will only stick to my job and not initiate things which will help develop my college"

Vinay Varma in reply to our query on why he wants to initiate so many administrative issues even though these don't come directly under the Vice-President.

Abhineet Prasad [2006P8PS147]

Analysis: Points in favour

- The student feedback system was (apparently) his idea. Though it will be implemented regardless of whether he's elected or not.
- Being passionate about sports, he wants to bring in practice rackets, and a dedicated SAC in-charge, with whom he has already spoken, which will enable extension of the SAC timings. It's a pity he doesn't know that guy's name.
- He plans to improve the project scenario, by getting more funding and study material like academic journals for the various associations.
- He is on friendly terms with his other opponents, and seems sensitive to the feelings of the minorities. Not ethnic minorities; but general minorities, like the people who like the mess food.
- He feels he can do a good job to indirectly influence the placement scene, by efficiently collecting and presenting placement related issues to the concerned authorities.



Vying for VP

Points against

- He seems pretty lacking on the details of his agenda. A roadmap is present, but it doesn't show the roadblocks.
- He personally doesn't feel that the 11.30 rule should be abolished; he'd rather have it relaxed to 12.
- He seemed relatively dispassionate about the post of vice-president. Though his passion for sports, and the working of the clubs and associations might make up for that.

"If I feel another candidate is more suited to the job, I would vote for him"
Abhineet Prasad

It was however much more convincing than "dreams" of sex education and leaving it all to God's will (which is, by the way, anti-democratic. God is not an elected representative).

TREASURER

C. Varun Venkatesh [2006PIPS239]

Highlights:

His main goal is to have transparency and accountability and prevent money misappropriations. He plans to set up an FTP server to upload photocopies of all bills and other finance related documents. In order to allow people to have a larger say in the CSA he wishes to keep polls wherein the general body can play a active role.

He has also planned to have a complaint box from which complaints are directly forwarded to the Finance Officer. Also for better placements, he wants to get various departments and associations the right to approach core companies. Also a placement fund is proposed using which the HRO's of companies are given better treatment so that they are encouraged to come again. A tier system is proposed for clubs so that clubs which do well and need funds are given priority over clubs which are not doing as well

Analysis:

The feasibility of the Institute maintaining a new FTP server is doubtful. The tier system will make good clubs better but might result in depriving the lower clubs of resources. All in all he has done good groundwork but many of his suggestions are out of the scope of the treasurer.

His actions speak louder than words

Ranjith Reddy Vemula [2006P4PS098]

Highlights:

The main point of his agenda was the introduction of the credit system wherein he wants to include the payment of the mess bills and all BITS accessories like T shirts etc. ,including a debit card system in the shopping complex. He also wants to make the Department of finance active throughout the year instead of just Quark and Waves. Also he plans to bring the RTI act into the BITS system wherein the students will have the right to know about the allocation of funds. Also he wants to continue the Earn Value Learn Program wherein the students will be paid to do jobs such as maintenance of SAC, coaching other students etc and also allocate proper funds for the up gradation and maintenance of SAC facilities which include the gym, volleyball courts etc. Other plans included marketing of projects done by students to the companies to help improve placements, organizing workshops, lectures by eminent personalities, helping students to get passports and starting a registered cab service.

Analysis:

His agenda relates to a wide variety of topics some according to most of us not even related to the treasurer. The RTI act is already implemented in BITS Pilani University as per the BITS Pilani Home page. Also there will be problems in implementing the RTI act since it is not mentioned in the BITS Pilani Goa Campus constitution. He basically wants to take care of all the problems faced by students and sees himself as a responsible BITSIAN.



Audi Debate 2. Courtesy: DoPY

President William Henry Harrison delivered the longest inaugural address in American history at one hour and forty-five minutes. He also had the shortest Presidency in American history: one month. He was inaugurated on March 4, 1841 and died of pneumonia one month later, on April 4, 1841.

POST: GENERAL SECRETARY

SIDDHARTH PATWARI [2007P8PS297]

"I feel that I am easily the most qualified and dedicated candidate and I DEFINITELY want to see the campus come up under my leadership."

His take on seminars on GRE, GMAT, CAT, "To maintain quality of the faculty it can be included in their (coaching institute's) contract that if 60% or more students are not in favour of the faculty, we can *chuck them*."

Patwari's Promises:

- Will set up a club co-ordination committee within three months!
- Earn While You Learn Programme (EWYLP) – 15 days after getting elected!
- First guest lecture from Pilani – November!
- Seminars for GRE, CAT etc – October!
- Gives a guarantee that a new BITS CO-OP store will be set up by next year!

We're definitely keeping time...



K. PRITHVI [2007P8PS243]

He plans to solve all LAN problems and increase the internet bandwidth from 4 mbps to 6 mbps (though previous proposals have already been rejected!). The eye-catching proposal in the agenda: "A website where one could get information on tech and cultural fests, projects, placements, notices and every other possible information that the user may seek. It also includes a help module where a student can log in using his ID and register his problem (he plans to monitor the system personally with the help of his MNU's)

"Gen-Sec is the first person you can go to when you have problems, I am ever ready to devote some time and answer problems and queries even during events and exams. If you plan you can do it."

So we have the friend in need here.

K. GAGAN KUMAR [2007P8PS283]

Gagan intends to popularize Quark and Waves, make them more appealing, increase participation from other colleges and increase funding through external sources. He says we must also participate in tech fests of other colleges as BITSians BUT ***"It is entirely the problem of the student as to which he wishes to attend – the tech fests or the exams."***

Q: You promised the availability of fresh fruits how will you obtain such a contract?

A: Fresh juices are available in the messes. We can ask the mess contractors to provide more fruits for direct consumption on a daily basis.

Q: Have you spoken to Mr. Atish Raikar or E. Sarath Babu ?

A: NO.

We'll be sure to keep track of all the promises made here as candidates from the 2007 batch contest elections for the very first time.

A reader wrote us the following letter after Audi Debate 1. We thought this issue ideal for its publication.

I love Bits Pilani Goa Campus. Yes, at times I curse this campus, call it names ridicule the people in it, regret coming here. In spite of all that I still love my campus and will continue doing so. When someone of my own kind chooses to ridicule the sanctity of something as important and as serious as the Audi Debate, it becomes too much for me to digest. I firmly believe that the institution of elections is an excellent one. I believe that it does solve a lot of problems- that people choose to politicize it, berate it, is secondary to me. When a candidate chooses to stand for elections, there is a lot of thought involved and a lot of courage required to do so. People actually research the various problems that the campus is facing and try and come out with feasible solutions. Although it is the case that many of their solutions turn out to be clichés and turn out to be impractical, yes I do understand what a cliché means, they are still honest efforts. Earlier contestants used to campaign honestly, whole heartedly and with vigor. The contestants of the Vice President's post seem to be oblivious to the legacy of the post. They were nothing but a bunch of arrogant students who thought it was time to take things into their own hands.

What I saw today in the Auditorium was one of the worst of my BITSian days. I am a fourth year student and hence this is the fourth election that I am witnessing. I would like to believe that not only has this election been extremely insipid it has also been a complete mockery of the system at BITS and its students. What the election commission was doing when a few idiots chose to demean the entire system at BITS by including Sex Education and sterilizing dogs in their agendas, I do not know. I only hope that these guys will be prohibited from contesting in the next audi debate. I thoroughly understand that what happened was completely by the rules. The CGPA cut off for contesting for 6, but when the candidates came on to the stage and claimed that that they didn't have an agenda, the election commission should have taken a stand against them then and there. Abetting a crime is a crime too isn't it? There should have been someone there with the (ed: guts) to come out in the open and call them on their (ed: rubbish), someone who should have realized that this was just mockery, someone else who felt like me, but not as powerless. Perhaps this was the only time in my BIT-Sian life that I felt the situation needed an (ed: strong authority) to prevent this farce from happening.

Angad Pal who came in first, talked about regional feelings and how he wanted to prevent all that from destroying democracy. I was impressed. I actually applauded him. But when he went on to answer question put to him by the panel by saying that he wanted dogs to be sterilized in the campus, I realized that he lacked seriousness. He was just another guy who thought he could get away with ridiculing the audience and the system. And in any case the press is a strong enough medium for people to express their feelings if they choose to do so seriously that is, one does not need to mock the system to convey a message. The guy who said he believed in God should have been kicked out then and there. The guy who wanted sex education should have been dealt with similarly, more harshly I would please. These are all direct reflections of a spineless election conducting body. I am sorry that I had to witness all this at the audi today. It was such a no show. These guys would have witnessed the previous elections, the seriousness that went into those elections, the passion, the tempers that were running, the adrenaline pumping, the crowd shouting. That was real fun. This is bullshit. Where has all that gone? Why has the passion disappeared all of a sudden? Why do people think they can mock anyone and get away with it? Never has an election debate been thus disrespected. Never has it been such absolute nonsense. If these guys wanted to provide comic relief they should have booked an LT to impress upon us that they are very good clowns. What this will do is that it will make the whole institution seem very frivolous to our juniors. It will make contesting for CSA posts a laughable issue. All wrong qualities to have for an institute which is so very well reputed. God forbid, but what if the guys who were doing all this actually win. What will we have to say about this to our friends back home? That the guy had sex education and sterilizing dogs on his agenda and hence he won? How would it reflect upon the name of Bits Pilani, Goa Campus? – A name that I love. Now, what if someone posts a video of this on You Tube and someone else downloads this and watches it? I shudder when I think of what opinion of Bits; the viewer will form in his mind.

I only hope that there are more such people who share my opinion and concern about what happened in the Audi today. I whole heartedly and sincerely hope that further such nonsense will be nipped in the bud.

Aditya Vajjha

[2005S4P7359]

And then there were others who thought otherwise.

Why so serious?

In the past days, the student council elections have been the cynosure of campus- the night air is rent by the sounds of promises and vows, suffused with fragments of a larger statistics and facts of doubtful verity. News of the election finds its way into the many channels of communication- polluted with baseless rumours and personal biases. The same complaints and the same solutions fall on weathered ears and fatigue and benumb the senses. As we fret under this enforced yoke of a farcical democratic system, we voice our dissent in private cynicism, content never to bring the dissatisfaction into the public view. It took four quirky and rather narcissistic candidates to shock us into realization- this is my tribute to them.

When first I heard the four candidates reel off their ludicrous agendas to a bemused audience, I looked for some premise from whence I could look down upon them in dissent and condemnation. Surely, I thought, this was a mockery of the election procedure and thus of the sacred institution of free thought and democracy- I was, as many still are, buckled down by the belief that the two lay linked- a truly elementary mistake. Revelation is in recognizing that the elections on campus are not a reflection of a fair democracy, notwithstanding their high aspirations.

Democracy is the most genial of all political systems. It is a system where each person in himself is allowed to form opinions, and once formed, given free rein to express them through whatever medium he desires. The voices of many form a discordant tone, that might sound jarring to the outsider, who shall quickly reject them, as is the prerogative of the undiscerning listener- but Hark! To those who listen, a melody carries forth through the noise, supported by the majority, who act a chorus. This great tune, the public opinion, is tempered by the few dissenting voices who regularly check the rise of this prodigious tune. Although there are rules over the entire system, the right to life, freedom and equal opportunity cannot be restrained, by virtue of being the fundamental building blocks of the system. There is no democratic system that advocates the suppression of expression.

This being my given, I was fairly surprised to see the rejection that the audience as well as the Election Commission offered to these candidates- even though I recognized the absurdity of their claims of equal opportunity, I thought they might have at least tried to be half sincere. Every year, the first years are cornered and forced into opinions that they do not understand- lured with unfeasible promises and hearsay. All this while, the seniors give into their narrow view of the world, choosing to stand behind the candidate who tells them what they want to hear. Not a soul objects at the regionalism, the blatant errors and large lapses in logic that are the hallmarks of the average candidate's speech. Yet four benign men wasting a grand total of around twenty minutes throws the electoral college into a frenzied furore!

I shall nod to their detractors by admitting that these people sought attention and the few laughs. There was no intended undertone of satire or rebellion in what they did- that was quite unintentional and unconscious. Furthermore, they could have been much more amusing with a little more practice.

It is however, an act of ignorance to condemn their actions. When asked why he stood, Abhimanyu Vatsya said, simply "Because I can."- that surmises, albeit in the crudest form, the crux of the issue. What we must see is simply four people who wished to stand for elections- perfectly permissible in a democratic system. These candidates had nothing worth saying, but democracy still guarantees them the right to free speech, notwithstanding the bulk of this speech. Not only do I ask for tolerance for their actions, I ask for gratitude- had it not been for them, the senses would have been benumbed by a torrent of mind numbingly serious fact recitation and propagandist rhetoric. By stepping in when they did, with their deviant brand of humour, they allowed us to pause and relax awhile in their light heartedness. In their mute way, they raised valid questions about the seriousness of the election procedure and about the debate- evinced most completely when almost the entire audience left after the vice-presidential debates.

Critics have been unequivocal about their behaviour, quoting tradition, decorum and etiquette as arguments against it. I would like to point out that decorum and etiquette are immensely subjective and self-defined terms, because the same people had no qualms about the crowd throwing paper rockets, booing, hissing and showing an absolute lack of sombreness befitting the occasion. If one can stand all this, there is no reason to object to a short, rather tastefully done, parody. Reprobating the candidates on grounds of tradition is the simplest and most brutish way of dismissing the most valid arguments of their political satire- it is the final refuge of a defeated debater, hiding behind the weakest of shields.

I wish to entreat the people of the college thus: Do not condemn the actions of the four candidates, rather, take it in the intended spirit - as an amateur mockery. Recognize that the issues that have been raised are valid and need to be addressed (by this, I do not mean their 'agendas'; I mean the defects in the system that they pointed out by merely participating). Finally, if you truly find it unbearable to sit through the rather dragging comedy, might I suggest the right to choose is still yours.

Sridhar P. Narayanan [2007S4P3483]