

**Lyngdoh Committee Recommendations** are perhaps the most cited phrases in DUSU politics today. To understand its importance and relevance, it's necessary to know that they were approved by the Supreme Court in 2006, to curb the use of muscle power and money in student politics. The aim was to reform the election system to make it more inclusive for students and involve fewer malpractices. Unfortunately, the guidelines have received brickbats from students and politicians alike, as many clauses are unrealistic and utopian.

Lyngdoh had aimed to keep political interference out from student elections but unfortunately failed to realise that this endeavour doesn't exist without acknowledging the 'political' aspect of student political parties. To escape these restrictive guidelines, parties have identified loopholes, a few such examples being:

**Clause 6.6.1: The maximum permitted expenditure per candidate shall be INR 5000.** Probably the most flouted clause in the recommendations, parties spend as much as lakhs to print countless pamphlets and hoardings that can be seen across the campus. The loophole that every party takes advantage of is that the guidelines restrict the candidate's expenditure to INR 5000, but nothing has been mentioned for the candidate's respective party. All major parties reiterate this reasoning to escape legal action.

**Clause 6.7.5: No candidate shall be permitted to make use of printed posters, printed pamphlets, or any other printed material for the purpose of canvassing. Candidates may only utilize hand-made posters for the purpose of canvassing, provided that such hand-made posters are procured within the expenditure limit set out herein above.**

To cleverly counter this, parties have been releasing posters that misspell the name of its candidate but allow it to be distinguished back to the party as well. The use of an extra 'A' after the name would save it from any legal consequences.

**Clause 6.7.9: During the election period the candidates may hold processions and/or public meetings, provided that they do not, in any manner, disturb classes and other academic and co curricular activities of the college/university. Further, such procession / public meeting may not be held without the prior written permission of the college/university authority.**

It's common knowledge that campaigners do disturb classes and disrupt routine workings in a college. It's also never the candidate alone who partakes in this, more often the supporters do the loud sloganeering or get involved in brawls. Since the LCR specifies nothing for parties, political outfits do it as per their will, and candidates are absolved from all responsibility for its party's action.

What could also be a major advantage for political parties is that the LCR are only applicable from the day the nominations are declared. Up until that day, parties can freely distribute pamphlets urging students to join their organisation.

Apart from one clause in the Lyngdoh Committee guidelines that calls for dissociation of student elections and political parties, there is no clause that directly links the entire party with the administration or puts it under the purview of the election officer's power. This requires an urgent overview of the recommendations to make them more realistic to plug the loopholes and acknowledge the 'politics' in student elections.