

MEETING WITH YOUNG STUDENTS AT ROPAR, PUNJAB
BY Dr APJ ABDUL KALAM, FORMER PRESIDENT OF INDIA

VOTE FOR NATION

I was at Ropar, Punjab on the 20th March 2014, to address and interact with the students. I met a large gathering of young boys and girls. While I was entering the venue of my address, a group of students, about two girls and four boys, hailing from different States, approached me and said that they have an important question and I should answer it before I start my address and interaction. The message that was put forth to me was :

"Sir, wherever we go, to any part of the country, be it on study tour or excursion or on leisure trip, we have interacted with the youth of that place. Many of them are of our age, ie. 16-18 years and above. When we discussed with them about our voting rights, most of them conveyed that they will not vote for the reasons that none of them deserves to lead us as a Member of the Parliament or a Member of the Legislative Assembly. We also feel the same way and we have decided not to vote in the forthcoming elections. Sir, please tell us whether we have taken the right decision?"

I told them, "dear friends, I do not completely agree with you. In my 80 plus years of age, I have seen many Parliamentary elections and Assembly elections, and at each election, I have voted the right type of person. At every election, many candidates contest, some

may be new candidates and many times sitting MPs and MLAs too contest. You have to choose the best candidate among the contestants based on their work and contribution to the society. Many a times the contribution is visible in each constituency from where they are contesting and also their overall performance in the Parliament/Assembly. Information on their performance is also available through media and internet. Based on the candidate's performance, you can discuss among yourselves and select the best performing candidate, clean candidate, and vote for them. Remember, your 'right to vote' is precious and exercise of this franchise is very very essential as you have a great opportunity to select the right person to represent you in the Parliament or in the Assembly. That means, you as a youth, you as a young citizen is helping the nation to evolve a good government at the Centre or State. The nation will be grateful to you if you cast your vote to the right candidate."
