



THE PARTY IS ON

Typically, management students like to spend their summers interning with high-profile global financial consultants. But not Abhishek Padhye, a 25-year-old business management student at XLRI Jamshedpur. Padhye has opted for a summer internship with the Congress party in Delhi ahead of the general election this year. He already has a degree from the Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee, and three years of corporate experience with Tata Steel in the bag. But he says he wanted something new: "You don't get to experience a general election often. Moreover, I want to be part of the policy-making process."

Political internships are common in the West, but the concept has caught on only recently in India, especially in the run-up to the 2014 general election. In the past year, an increasing number of students from business schools to engineering and medical colleges have signed up to intern with the country's biggest political parties as they work on their strategies and draft their manifestos. Some digitally-savvy young interns are helping with social media planning as on-line campaigning gathers pace in

Political internships are the flavour of the month ahead of the election.

By ARUNIMA MISHRA

the country. "These days we can see a new trend where lots of B-school students are showing interest in interning with political parties and government agencies. In the ongoing summer placement process at various B-schools, many students are choosing this option," says Sidharth Agarwal, Director, Spectrum Talent Management, a

headhunting firm.

Most of the country's big political parties are hiring interns as they head for the polls this year. The Trinamool Congress will recruit two interns from the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta to help with communication strategies in the election. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has also hired 40 to 50 interns over the past two to three months, in addition to over a million volunteers, says Arvind Gupta, National Head, Information & Technology, BJP. "Our interns work in areas of research, content and social media. They are from all universities across India – a mixture of graduates and undergraduates – and a few from overseas colleges."

Apart from interns, the BJP also has help from many members of a non-profit organisation called Citizens for Accountable Governance (CAG). Ashwini Anand Pillutla, a 29-year-old banker, has taken a break from his career to help set up CAG with 59 other founders.

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