



A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE ROLE OF YOUTH AS GAME CHANGERS IN POLITICS IN CHENNAI

Ezhisaivani.D

B.A. Sociology, M.O.P Vaishnav College for Women, Chennai, Tamilnadu, India.

Nickshaya.T.R

B.A. Sociology, M.O.P Vaishnav College for Women, Chennai, Tamilnadu, India.

ABSTRACT

Youth people are the ones who are between the ages of 18-28 in India. They not only represent the future of our country, but they are also the primary agents of change and progress in society. They help in progressing various aspects of life from the economy to culture. But the change can be explicitly seen by the action of youth in elections happening in India as India has the largest youth population in the whole world. By casting their vote youth create a significant impact in the political spheres which is responsible for the smooth functioning of the government. The aim of the study is to identify the level of political awareness and participation of youth in politics along with its impacts. It is essential to exercise the rights given to a citizen in the right way and benefit as a whole.

Keywords: Elections, Politics, Youth.

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INTRODUCTION

Politics is a term which derived from a Greek word polis which means decision-making, power dynamics, and government. According to Max Weber, it is the quest for control over the way power is distributed. The growth of India is driven by India's large, dynamic, and young population, with 65% of Indians being under 35 years old. The total youth population increased from 222.7 million in 1991 to 371.4 million in 2021. The youth population not only represents the future of our country, but they are also the primary agents of change and progress in society. Formal politics is defined as political participation under 'rules and institutions' while informal politics is a kind of 'conventions and codes behaviour in the political sphere. All facets of society must be represented for political systems to be considered representational. When young people are excluded from political participation or disenfranchised, a sizeable sector of the population has little to no voice or influence in choices that have an impact on the lives of people. The destruction of the representativeness of political systems is a major effect. Through the active participation of young people, democratic principles may come to life and authoritarian practices can be overthrown. If they are not involved in new official decision-making processes, young people in nations where they have led protests that have ousted authoritarian administrations are likely to experience tremendous discontent. Democratization may become unstable as a result, and conflict dynamics may quicken. It is crucial to involve young people early on and in formal political processes in developing new democracies.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWPRK

In 1919 Max Weber in his theory of power and legitimacy defined politics as the struggle for power and redistribution of it along with explaining the role of authority. The theory elaborated authority into traditional, charismatic and rational-legal. Traditional authority derives its power and legitimacy either from custom or heritage, while charismatic authority relies more directly on the personal charm of the leader; and legal-rational authority depends on rules and regulations, laws, and duly constituted institutions. Young people participate in elections, policymaking, and civil activism when political institutions are perceived as fair, just,

and responsive. Distrust of political legitimacy, however, can lead to the disengagement of youth from legitimate political processes or towards non-democratic forms of activism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

I serve therefore I am”: **Youth and Generative Politics in India** is a paper written by **Craig Jeffry and Jane Dyson (2014)**. It discussed about vitality of civil society and involvement of young people in everyday civic politics. It dealt with the generative modules concerned with building resources rather than allocation of zero power. The attention to potentials of this practice is discoursed along with the limitations in political reproduces related to caste and gender inequalities.

Political Socialization and Youth Engagement is an article written by **Dalton (2008)** talks about the changing nature of political participation among young people, where the traditional voting pattern is being replaced by protests and digital activism. He believes that the changing patterns of political socialization, influenced by technology and globalization, are changing the nature of youth involvement in governance.

Youth Political Participation and Democratic Engagement is an article written by **Norris (2022)**. It emphasized on youth participation is essential for the stability of democracy. She argues that engaging youth would contribute holisticness in policies, electoral participation, and governance. However, decline in traditional political engagement among young people suggests a need for innovative participatory mechanisms.

OBJECTIVES

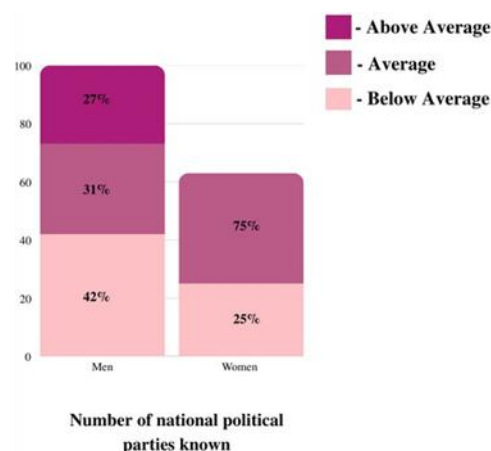
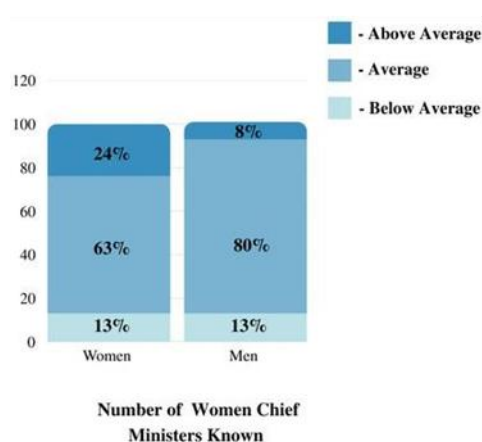
- To identify the level of political awareness among youth.
- To analyze the rate of participation of the youth in politics.
- To study the impact of youth participation in politics

RESEARH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology used in this study was the interview and case study method. The data collection was done between 18th February 2023 and 23rd February 2023. The sample size was 123. This data collection was mastered using the face-to-face interview as well as a telephonic interview by using the snowball sampling method. Each respondent was interviewed for 10-15 minutes to complete. Amidst this short duration of time, we couldn't extend our interview and field visits.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

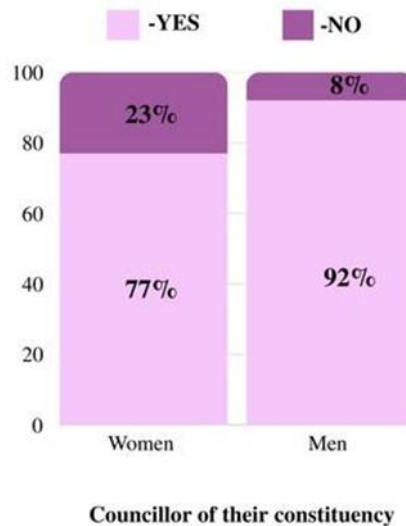
1. Level of Political awareness among youth



The above two graphs show the awareness among men and women on the National level and state level of political occurring. When surveyed on the number of national parties, most of the answers were Bharatiya Janata Party and Congress and people only remembered Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam in the state-level political parties. This shows that both men and women do not have an in-depth knowledge of the minute details of the country as well as their state. Respondents recognized various parties not by their names or symbols but by their leaders. This shows that people look into acts done by the politicians (individual recognition) not as a party in a (holistic perspective). This also shows that people are only aware of the parties which are actively participating or talked about frequently.

“Men have more awareness in politics when compared to women as they tend to speak a lot about in with their peers and are highly aware on current affairs”, says a respondents

In general, the awareness level among men is found to be more than 50% percent but among women, it is slightly lesser than 50%. It was found that the majority of women are still dominated by males in their families and they are eventually forced to focus on their household chores a lot more than on politics. But, surprisingly it was found that women with a double degree are more politically aware in politics than women with a single degree



While only less than 50% of men and women are well aware of national-level politics, more than 75% of people are aware of the political activities happening in their constituency. From this, it can be inferred that people are more aware of political activities when they are taking place in the lower strata of the hierarchy. In questioning the respondents on why they are able to know the details of their constituency, we came to know that these local body officials are more connected to them as they visit them frequently and they are also able to meet the needs of the people quickly. This makes people be more aware of their local-level political issues and politicians.

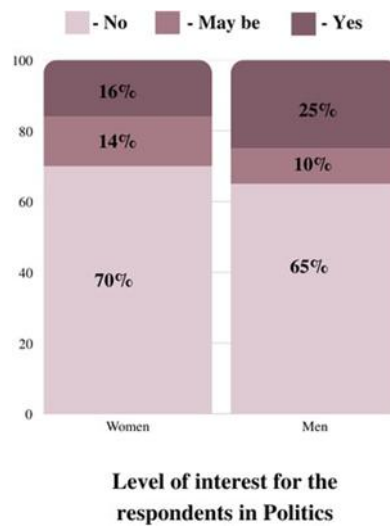
Level of Participation of Youth in Politics

53% of women have their voter IDs and 63% cast their vote based on their own will. On the other hand, 73% of men have their voter IDs and 85% of them cast their vote based on their own will. On considering the voting pattern, it's men who participate a lot in elections when compared to women

“Women's political decisions are slightly highly influenced by the men in their family mostly when it comes to voting choices ”, says a respondent.

Political decisions such as voting could cause a bigger change in the society. At the time of elections 85% of men cast their vote according to their own will. A very little are influenced and they are found to be the young adults who are new to such experiences. In the case of Women, a considerable rate of 63% vote on their will. The rest 47% are influenced. When

looked into that deeply 30% are influenced by social media contents and the rest 27% are influenced by family.



Though men are interested in politics, the burden to take good care of the family stops them from being more active in politics. It is perceived that dominant parties would suppress the youngsters who want to join politics, making them think nothing could be changed. Though new parties emerge, within a short span of time they become inactive or merge with other parties.

Impact of youth participation in politics

Case Study - 1 This is based on a politician from a dominant political party in Tamilnadu. A 32 years old, ward councillor in Tambaram. He felt that the combo of literate young politicians and literate young officers will lead to a quick and drastic change in the future of land. He also quoted an example to support his statement. The stormwater drains constructed by old contractors with the support of the councilors in his locality were very defective and it did not withstand long floods firmly. The demolition of these drains and installation of these drains took a very long process of more than 6 years because of the political structure filled with the old population who followed each and every step properly without doing any smart work. But, when a large project of cut cover drain system was done in the same locality which is five times larger than the storm water drain work. It just took a few months to do and the work was done with all sorts of cooperation among the public, officials and politicians. This was because the politicians were young and literate to handle all sorts of work in a smart way.

Case Study 2 – A 34-year-old man, a ward councilor and a member of a leading political party in Tamil Nadu, and his wife, a ward counselor of Chitlapakkam, a constituency in Tambaram. While he was in power in 2011, his ideologies were game-changing. He introduced a Telephone service in each voting booth, in which he compiled details of all the voters in a single PDF and sent that to a dozen laptops. Each laptop was assigned a phone number in each booth. Thus when a person's name is not on the list, he/she can make a call and know their booth location. This helped many people and since then all of them who didn't cast their vote as their name was not on the list voted the next time. Undertaking this idea and implementing this paved way for their party to win in all the successive elections. Later he even decided to upgrade to the next level and introduced an app that will notify a person's voting booth name and location instantly. This evidently shows how young minds think and make appropriate decisions in a fascinating manner compared to old minds. Hence, the participation of youth not only acts as a game changer for a political party but also boosts the overall morale of society.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Politicians are supposed to be broad-minded and support youth and encourage them to participate rather than practicing Nepotism.
2. We need more educated people who have the capability to think rationally and be aware of the effects their actions could cause.
3. It is essential for politicians to keep up the words pledged to them during campaigns. People in power have to maintain close relations with the public and be easily approachable to common people and help in solving their problems quickly.
4. Mere knowledge of how the system works is not important, it required that the politicians upgrade themselves to accept changes and construct an inclusive society.
5. Politicians represent the people of the country. Thus, a higher degree of transparency is required to make the people informed about the decisions taken for a smooth and better functioning of the government.
6. One of the major roles of politicians is to address the problems of the people. It is advised that they get to know the actual problems/needs of the people rather than working towards something which they think to be a problem/need

RECOMMENDATIONS

- As a citizen of the country everyone should be aware of all the revolving political issues.

- Each citizen in the country must be taught about not the political system but how politics as a subject works.
- Media and politicians must have a good relationship and project most of the good deeds performed by them rather than spreading rumors or taunt them for their bad actions.
- Rational reasons are required to be provided to justify their actions instead of creating new minor problems and solving them to hide bigger ones.
- Politicians can connect themselves to the youth population through social media. The platform can be used to create awareness, provide them with the updates.

CONCLUSION

From the research conducted it is concluded that Chennai people have relatively a lesser level of awareness and interest to participate. The reasons behind this were they feel that politics is more complex, corrupted, and a process with a minimal level of transparency. This act as an obstacle for the youth population to participate in Politics. From our case studies, we have evidently proved that youth are performing well off when compared to old people in politics. The respondents have a clear idea of what kind of personality they want in power. As of now, the level of youth participation in politics is low. When the rate of participation and awareness of youth increases, they choose the right person to vote for and bring an enormous change in the existing political structure. Thus, they become game changers in politics. So as stated before the youth feel that if the political system is reframed with people who are literate, straightforward, and have a holistic perspective all the problems can be solved in a quick and furnished way, to increase their participation and awareness in politics.

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