



Political Awareness Among Girl Students Of Assam: A Case Study Of Sibsagar Girls' College

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ABSTRACT

Political awareness refers to the understanding and knowledge of political issues, processes and institutions. It is an important component of a healthy democracy. Political awareness enables citizens to make informed decisions, participate in democratic process, critically evaluate governmental activities, recognize and protect rights, democratic values, support and strengthening democratic institutions and many more. Thus, Democracy and Political Participation goes hand in hand. A democratic system cannot be successful without having proper participation of the people. One of the most important condition for active of people's participation in political system is their level of awareness about any political system. India has a large youth population with 65% of the population under the age of 35, and more than 50% under the age of 25. This makes the country with the largest youth population in the world. According to 2011 population census report Assam has 87,93,133 Lakh youths covering the age group of 15 to 29 years. It shows that youth can play an active part in the state politics of Assam. They are the future leaders and change makers of the society. Thus, their political awareness and engagement are crucial for shaping the state's destiny. However, despite the numbers of girls' students in Assam have historically been marginalized from the political process, their voices have been remained silenced and their

participation is not upto the satisfactory mark. So this paper seeks to examine the level of political awareness among the girl students of Assam with special reference to sibsagar girls' college.

INTRODUCTION

Political awareness refers to the understanding and knowledge of political issues, processes and institutions . It is an important component of a healthy democracy . Political awareness enables citizens to make informed decisions, participate in democratic process, critically evaluate governmental activities, recognize and protect rights, democratic values, support and strengthening democratic institutions and many more.Thus, Democracy and Political Participation goes hand in hand. A democratic system cannot be successful without having proper participation of the people. One of the most important condition for active of people's participation in political system is their level of awareness about any political system. India has a large youth population with 65% of the population under the age of 35, and more than 50% under the age of 25. This makes the country with the largest youth population in the world. According to 2011 population censusreport Assam has 87,93,133 Lakh youths covering the age group of 15 to 29 years. It shows that youth can play an active part in the state politics of Assam. They are the future leaders and change makers of the society.Thus, their political awareness and engagement are crucial for shaping the state's destiny. However, despite the numbers of girls' students in Assam have historically been marginalized from the political process, their voices have been remained silenced an dtheir participation is not upto the satisfactory mark. So this paper seeks to examine the level of political awareness among the girl students of Assam with special reference to sibsagar girls' college.

Objective

The primary objective of this study is to:-

- a) Assess the level of political awareness among girl students of sibsagar girls' college
- b) Examine the relationship between political awareness and political participation among girl students.
- c) Identify the factors that influence political awareness among girl students

- d) Provide recommendations to promoting political awareness and empowerment among girl students.

Methodology

The present study is mainly based on empirical method. To get a valid and verified data a questionnaire has been prepared and data was collected. Secondary data was collected from various books, journals, government reports, websites etc.

Review of Literature

Verma, R. (2017) in his research paper “*Political awareness among Indian Youths: a study of Delhi university students*” published in “*Journal of Political Science and International Relations*” revealed that Indian youth lack political awareness attributing it to inadequate civic education.

Kumar. S (2019) in his paper “*Social Media and political awareness among Indian Youths: A comparative study of urban and rural areas* “ published in “*Indian Journal of Political Science*” discovered that social media exposure enhances political awareness among Indian youths.

GHosh . S, (2020) in his paper “ *Gender sensitive civic education and political engagement among Indian girls*” in “*Journal of education and human development*” expressed that gender sensitive civic education can increaae political engagement among Indian girls.

Mahanta, U (2018) in her paper “ *Political Awareness among Assamese youth: A study of Guwahati city*” published in “ *journal of Assam research Society* explored the political awareness of assamese youths , highlighting the impact of regional issues like NRC and citizenship amendment act etc.

Goswami, k (2020) in his paper " *Education and political awareness among Assamese students: A comparative study of rural and urban areas*” in “*Journal of education and research*” examined the role of education in promoting political awareness among assamese students.

The above stated literature provides insights into political awareness and gender so there ia need of research for focusing on political awareness of the girl students in assam. This research would be beneficial to address the gap by exploring political awareness of girl students in Assam along with identifying the factors influencing their political engagement.

Area of the study

Sibsagar is a historical place and district in the state of Assam. It is situated in the eastern part of Assam and almost 360km away from capital city Guwahati. Sibsagar district has nine colleges. Out of which it has only two girls colleges namely Sibsagar girls' college and Moran Mohila Mahavidyalaya. The Sibsagar girls college is a premiere institution of women education and 1259 students are currently studying in the college. For the study, 100 students have been randomly selected irrespective of all artificial barriers and departments.

Findings

In this section, the data will be analysed along with its solution.

Political Knowledge

The girls students of Sibsagar girls college have limited knowledge about the political institution, processes and current events of regional, national and international importance. It was found that only 30% of students were aware of the three tier Government in India. Only 20% of students knew the three tier panchayati raj system of the state. But it is a matter of satisfaction that almost all students knew the name of our present prime minister of the country. Thus, to enhance the political knowledge of the students a compulsory course can be given to the students in their UG level programme. Apart from it political education and awareness programme is mostly required.

Political Participation

Regarding political participation it was found that 89% of girls had casted their votes in the last parliamentary election which was held in 2024. Out of them only 15% had participated in the rally party campaign. It implies that the girls students are interested to take part in the political process of the country. But it is a matter of regret that they had casted their votes as per dictates of their family members. Thus there is a need of imparting training to cast their vote as per their consense and reason.

Media consumption

It was found that media consumption among girl students was very high. During the time of election they consumed the news from social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp,

youtube vlogs, podcast channels etc. 90% of students viewed news in this way. Only 10% viewed tv news and print media news. It reveals that social media is the primary source of getting political information among girls students at present. Thus, Digital literacy training should be given to the students to critically evaluate online information.

Women Empowerment

In the study it was found that only 46% students felt empowered to express their political opinions. Where 54% faced barriers in expressing their political views. The reasons behind less empowered in keeping political views was patriarchy, gender stereotype mentality, mindset of the older generation, family background, lack of leadership quality etc. So it indicates that there is a need for support mechanism to promote political expressions and empowerment.

Conclusion

It is clear from the above study that political awareness among girl students is gradually increasing after universalisation of education. But the barriers like patriarchy, gender based discrimination, mind set of people creates hamper in their active political participation. So these should be eliminated from the society. Though the civic engagement drives have been taken by the colleges but it should be increased and frequently organized. Moreover, peer – to – peer mentorship programme can be organized to foster a supportive environment for political discussion and empowerment.

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