



## Role of Youngsters in the Political Landscape of Kerala

**Seethal George**

PhD Scholar

Under the Supervision of **Dr. Prachi Chaturvedi**

Mansarovar Global University, Bhopal

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### ABSTRACT

Kerala, known for its unique political culture and vibrant democracy, has always been at the forefront of social and political movements in India. The active involvement of youngsters in Kerala's politics has been a significant factor in shaping its political landscape. This paper explores the role of youth in political activism, decision making, and governance in Kerala, analyzing their contributions, challenges, and potential for fostering change. It also examines how social media and emerging platforms have empowered young voices to engage in political discourse.

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### Introduction

#### Significance of Political Participation of Youngsters in Kerala

Kerala's political landscape is marked by its high levels of literacy, active civic engagement, and progressive social movements. The involvement of youngsters in politics plays a pivotal role in ensuring the dynamism and sustainability of its democratic framework.

#### *Kerala's Political Culture*

Kerala's political culture is renowned for its vibrancy, inclusivity, and active civic participation, which has earned it a unique place in India's democratic framework.

#### High Political Awareness

Kerala has one of the highest literacy rates in India, contributing to an informed electorate. Political debates and discussions are deeply embedded in the social fabric, transcending class and community boundaries.

### **Strong Party System**

Kerala's politics is dominated by two major coalitions: the **Left Democratic Front (LDF)** led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the **United Democratic Front (UDF)** led by the Indian National Congress.

This two front system ensures a competitive political environment.

### **Scope and Objectives of the Study**

#### *Scope of the Study*

The study on the role of youngsters in the political landscape of Kerala explores their participation in various dimensions of politics, governance, and civic activism. It aims to assess the contributions, challenges, and potential of Kerala's youth in shaping its political culture.

### **Geographical and Contextual Focus**

Focuses on Kerala's unique sociopolitical environment, marked by its high literacy, strong party system, and active civic participation.

Analyzes youth involvement in urban and rural settings to understand their role across diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

### **Areas of Exploration**

*Electoral politics:* Voting patterns, campaigning, and candidacy of young individuals.

*Activism:* Role in protests, social movements, and issuebased campaigns.

*Governance:* Contributions to local selfgovernance and policymaking.

*Digital engagement:* Use of social media and technology in political mobilization.

### **Demographic Coverage**

Includes youth from diverse socioeconomic, cultural, and educational backgrounds to provide a comprehensive understanding of their political roles.

## **Timeframe**

Examines both historical and contemporary participation of youth to understand trends and shifts in their political engagement.

### *Objectives of the Study*

#### **To Analyze Youth Participation in Electoral Politics**

Examine voting trends and the involvement of youngsters in election campaigns and candidate representation.

#### **To Document Success Stories**

Showcase young leaders and movements that have brought significant change in Kerala's political landscape.

#### **To Evaluate the Influence of Educational Institutions**

Analyze the role of schools, colleges, and student organizations in fostering political awareness and leadership skills

#### **To Propose Recommendations for Enhancing Youth Participation**

Provide actionable insights and policy suggestions to encourage and empower youngsters to take on leadership roles in politics.

## **Contemporary Participation of Youth**

### **Role in Social Reforms and Protests**

- Youth movements in Kerala have been instrumental in leading protests against social injustices, environmental degradation, and economic policies. For example:
  - Movements against the controversial SilverLine project.
  - Protests advocating for gender justice, such as those related to the Sabarimala temple entry issue.
  - Campaigns for better educational infrastructure and against fee hikes.

### Youth and Political Innovation

### *Social Media and Digital Platforms*

#### **Mobilization through Social Media**

Youth in Kerala effectively use platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to mobilize support for political causes and raise awareness.

Social media serves as a space for debates, discussions, and the dissemination of information.

#### **Online Campaigns and Movements**

Online campaigns such as "Save Alappad" and other environment focused movements highlight the youth's ability to address critical issues.

These campaigns often transcend regional boundaries, garnering national and international attention.

### *Civic Technology Initiatives*

#### **Role in Transparency and Accountability**

Young innovators use civic technology tools to monitor government initiatives, report grievances, and promote transparency.

Apps and platforms are developed to track public spending, environmental violations, and electoral data, empowering citizens to hold authorities accountable.

### *Cultural and Artistic Contributions*

#### **Political Satire, Theater, and Youth Festivals**

Youth engage in political satire through memes, short films, and social media content, making complex political issues more accessible and relatable.

Theater groups and performances address social and political themes, sparking public dialogue.

Youth festivals in Kerala often include events that reflect sociopolitical narratives, promoting awareness through art and culture.

In summary, Kerala's youth combine technology, creativity, and activism to innovate within the political landscape, ensuring their voices are heard and their concerns addressed effectively.

### **Challenges Faced by Youngsters in Politics**

#### *Lack of Representation in Leadership Positions*

Despite their active participation, youngsters often struggle to secure leadership roles in political parties and governance.

Senior leaders dominate decisionmaking, limiting opportunities for young voices to influence policy and strategy.

#### *Intergenerational Conflicts in Political Parties*

Differences in ideology and approaches between older and younger generations create tensions within political organizations.

Resistance to change from traditional leadership hinders the implementation of innovative ideas proposed by the youth.

#### *Economic and Social Barriers*

Financial constraints make it difficult for youngsters to enter and sustain themselves in politics, especially without party backing.

Social stigmas and gender biases further hinder marginalized groups, including women and minority communities, from active participation.

In summary, these challenges create structural and cultural barriers that limit the full potential of youth in Kerala's political landscape, necessitating reforms to foster inclusivity and equal opportunities.

### **Case Studies**

### *Success Stories of Young Political Leaders in Kerala*

Several young leaders in Kerala have made significant impacts at local and state levels.

Examples include young MLAs and local body representatives who have introduced innovative policies and developmental projects.

Their success highlights the ability of youth to balance fresh perspectives with effective governance.

#### *5.2. Prominent Youth Movements and Protests*

Movements like **Save Alappad** (against sand mining) and **Kiss of Love** (protesting moral policing) showcase the activism of Kerala's youth.

These protests gained widespread attention and emphasized the role of youth in addressing societal and environmental concerns.

#### *5.3. Grassroots Initiatives Led by Youngsters*

Young individuals have led community initiatives such as waste management drives, digital literacy campaigns, and women empowerment programs.

Examples include student-led efforts in flood relief operations and local development projects, which demonstrate their commitment to social welfare.

These case studies illustrate how Kerala's youth have actively contributed to the state's political and social progress through leadership, activism, and grassroots involvement.

## **6 Discussion**

### *6.1. Comparative Analysis: Kerala vs. Other Indian States*

Kerala's high literacy rate and political awareness distinguish its youth participation from other states, where socioeconomic and educational disparities often limit political engagement.

Unlike many states, Kerala's decentralized governance provides ample opportunities for youngsters to influence grassroots decisionmaking directly.

### *6.2. Potential of Youngsters in Strengthening Democracy*

The energy and innovation of youth can address contemporary challenges such as climate change, unemployment, and digital transformation.

Their active involvement ensures representation of diverse perspectives, enhancing inclusivity and transparency in governance.

### *6.3. Role of Educational Institutions in Political Awareness*

Schools and colleges in Kerala play a crucial role in fostering political awareness through debates, student unions, and leadership programs.

The integration of political science and civic education in the curriculum encourages informed participation among the younger generation.

In summary, Kerala's youth have immense potential to strengthen democracy, and leveraging their engagement requires continued focus on education, inclusivity, and innovation.

## **7.Recommendations**

### **7.1. Policies to Encourage Youth Participation**

Implement policies that lower barriers to entry for young people in politics, such as quotas or reserved seats in political parties and governance bodies.

Support youthcentric programs that address issues like unemployment, education, and mental health, ensuring that their concerns are reflected in policy decisions.

### **7.2. Strengthening Youth Leadership Programs**

Establish leadership development programs within political parties and government bodies to train and mentor young leaders.

Encourage the formation of youth wings within all political parties to ensure active participation and provide platforms for youth to showcase their leadership skills.

### 7.3. Leveraging Digital Platforms for Political Education

Use digital platforms to create accessible, engaging political education resources that inform youth about governance, elections, and their civic rights.

Encourage online debates, discussions, and webinars to foster critical thinking and informed political engagement among young people.

In conclusion, these recommendations aim to create a more inclusive, innovative, and informed political environment where youth can play a central role in shaping Kerala's future

**8. Conclusion:** This paper highlights the undeniable importance of youth in Kerala's political landscape. Their active participation not only rejuvenates the democratic processes but also ensures the incorporation of fresh perspectives into governance. Acknowledging and addressing the challenges they face can pave the way for a more inclusive and dynamic political future in Kerala.

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