
ROLE OF YOUTH IN MODERN INDIAN POLITICS

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ABSTRACT

Voting in elections and becoming a member of political organisations are examples of traditional forms of political participation in the Indian political system. In general, the term "political participation" refers to this interaction. The study of mass politics and democracy places a significant emphasis on the concept of political involvement. Academics, organisations representing civil society, and governmental institutions all over the world have devoted a significant amount of time and energy to discussing and debating the significance of political engagement on the part of ordinary citizens in the development of robust democracies. Despite the fact that perceived shifts in political participation patterns among young people in recent years have attracted a significant amount of academic research in democratic countries, particularly in Europe, North America, and South America, this topic has received relatively little attention in academic circles in India. In light of the fact that energetic political involvement is one of the most important factors in determining the level of democracy that may be achieved, this void needs to be addressed both empirically and philosophically. People are able to make their demands, concerns, and issues known to democratic institutions through their participation in the political process.

Keywords: *Political participation, democratic institutions*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to investigate the characteristics that set India's youth politics apart from other types of politics practised inside the country. These characteristics include the types of politics young people participate in and the types of young people who participate in it. First, there is an in-depth discussion of the various identities that political parties have used for mobilising youth, as well as those that youth themselves have used as a basis for political mobilisation on their own terms and in their own ways. This is followed by a discussion of the various identities that youth themselves have used as a basis for political mobilisation on their own terms and in their own ways.

The dynamics of young politics are also discussed in this paper, and the point is made that these dynamics are significantly more behavioural than ideological. Not only is the practise of youth politics, which frequently takes place outside the realm of formal politics, heavily influenced by the characteristics that are uniquely associated with youth, such as restlessness, spontaneity, and insecurity, but it is also primarily concerned with participating for the purpose of participation itself. Given that the literature portrays India's youth politics as a male-dominated domain, participation in youth politics is driven by the desire to experience a sense of action identity and masculinity rather than an ideological policy-focused type of participation for the fulfilment of a certain goal. This is because participation in youth politics is not driven

by the desire to fulfil a certain goal. However, there is indication that this is beginning to change as the number of demonstrators in the weeks following the rape of a 23-year-old medical student in South Delhi on December 16, 2011 had been around half women and half males. This provides proof that this is beginning to change.

Identity in Youth Politics

A significant amount of the research conducted thus far has uncovered patterns of young people being lured into politics on the basis of their identities, specifically by mobilising along caste, ethnic, and/or religious lines. As a direct result of politics, caste, ethnicity, and religion have not only become more significant as identifiers of importance among young people, but they have also been reconstructed. Young people engage in discussions and reevaluations of the meanings of their caste, religious, and ethnic identities as part of the process of becoming politically mobilised.

Caste Identity

Because most Yadav males begin their political careers or interest in politics at a very young age, the study that Michelutti (2004) conducted on Yadav men in Uttar Pradesh is particularly relevant to youth politics. This is because the study conveys how political responses are not only encouraged by but also based upon caste stereotypes.

The perception of Yadavs as a caste composed primarily of politicians, which in turn serves to validate the caste identity of Yadav men, has a significant impact on the attitude that Yadav men have toward politics. Michelutti explains how common Yadavs consistently attribute their caste predispositions and skills, such as their proficiency in political manoeuvring, to their descent from a particular caste. Similarly, while their political rhetoric is inextricably linked to notions of caste and depicts democracy as a fundamental phenomenon inherited by contemporary Yadavs from the ancestor-king-god Krishna, their political behaviour in action is also influenced by their sense of masculinity and the idea of Yadavs as thugs who base their strength on muscle power. This is the case even though their political rhetoric is intrinsically tied to notions of caste.

According to Jeffrey Jeffery and Jeffery (2005), the elimination of caste stereotypes has a beneficial effect on young people because it creates opportunity for young people to become more self-reliant and advance their social standing. Low-caste political action has been helpful in mobilising Dalits because it has provided a strong model of Dalit masculinity that is based on education and white-collar jobs. In contrast to the majority of the research that has been done, Jeffrey and Young (2012) witness the political mobilisation of young men across class, caste, and religious lines at Meerut College in Uttar Pradesh.

Ethnic Identity

The goals that the members of the Meghalayas Khasi Students Union (KSU) strive to achieve are the driving force behind each and every one of the activities in which they take part. This sets them apart from members of other political youth groups in India and may be what makes them the most interesting. The operation of the KSU requires taking over contentious positions that national parties may shy away from because they are not electorally rewarding. These positions include opposition to institutionally correcting the influx of outsiders, opposition to mining and power projects, and the re-institutionalization of an inner line permit regime in Meghalaya.

According to the literature, the KSU is supposed to symbolise a rejection of political ideology. A highly anti-establishment, anti-development, and pro-tradition ideology that is very much in line with the group's mission to preserve Khasi culture can be extrapolated from the various positions the group has taken on issues such as mining and migration. This ideology is very much in line with the mission of the group to preserve Khasi culture.

THE NATURE OF YOUTH POLITICS

Youth Politics as a Form of Behaviour

The literature places a lot of emphasis on the apparent character of youth politics as opposed to the actual sort of politics and political beliefs that young people engage in. This is because the seeming nature of youth politics is easier to observe. This is probably due to the fact that, according to the literature, politics is less of an outlet for the political expression of ideas and more of an opportunity to overcome the feeling of limbo experienced by many young people both during schooling and afterwards when the problem of unemployment is a common occurrence. The reason for this is likely because of the fact that politics is less of an outlet for the political expression of ideas than it is an opportunity to overcome this feeling.

Because of this, young people have a greater influence than any other demographic on the nature of politics, which they actively inform and shape. Their own fears and personal aspirations are frequently the elements that lead individuals towards politics, and as a consequence, these motivations often determine the method in which they express themselves politically more so than the subjects that they choose to argue. Instead of advocating for a certain policy, one can find a quicker and more direct answer to the problems of boredom, restlessness, shame, social immobility, and unemployment by participating in politics and presenting a certain sort of behaviour and identity.

The Behaviour of Youth Gangs

The research that has been done on juvenile gangs is helpful in that it offers a plausible explanation for why young behaviour, rather than political goals, is the primary motivating factor behind youth politics. The apathy that young people have towards the activities that define the organisations that they join is one aspect that is shared by both youth politics and gangs. This particular dynamic is conveyed by both of these aspects. According to the findings of a study conducted by Pitts (2008) on youth gangs in East London, the possibility of engaging in criminal activity or being a member of a gang is seen to carry much less weight in the decision to join a gang in comparison to the possibility of engaging in social integration and interaction. When it comes to politics, it is quite doubtful that a significant number of the young males engaging are actively considering a career in politics or even have a genuine interest in the ideas that underlie political discourse. An incentive that young men involved in gangs and political groups have in common is the desire to participate in youth groups not because of what the group means or stands for in terms of its objective but rather for the opportunity to have fun. This is a common incentive that links young men together.

The similarities in the composition and organisation of youth gangs across the world and youth politics in India point to the distinctiveness of youth groups that operate in public spaces as visible and to some extent controlling entities. This can be seen by looking at the similarities between the two. According to Osella and Osella (2000), young college-going men in Kerala are frequently isolated from girls and socialise

among all-male gangs. This is consistent with the fact that the majority of gangs around the world are comprised primarily of groups of boys.

The Behaviour of Young Men in the Arab Spring

The uniqueness of young people and the impact they have on politics is brought into sharper relief when one compares and contrasts the literature in question with that which focuses on the Arab Spring. A majority of disenfranchised young people on the streets led the uprisings that led to the overthrow of the presidents of Egypt and Tunisia. This is comparable to the young males in India who are active in politics (the word street indicating the space in which they practise their politics much like India's youth rather than destitution).

After looking at the relevant literature, we can say that both of these examples of political involvement indicate a form of behaviour that is typical of younger people. While the practises of friendship, improvisation, and masculinity among young men in India help to shape youth politics there, in the Arab Spring, young people are bringing their character to the forefront of their fight for change. Pollock (2011) says that youthful protests can feel untidy and chaotic, and he makes this statement in connection to the Arab Spring. They can be entertaining at times. They frequently exhibit inventiveness. Participating in or organising demonstrations can easily fit into a busy schedule that also includes dating, studying, and working.

However, the striking disparities in objectives and methods of operation between the politics of young people in Egypt and Tunisia underscore the characteristics that make India's youth politics distinctive and particular to its cultural setting. To begin, although demonstrations and riots in the Gafsa region of Tunisia have traditionally centred on issues such as unemployment, much like in India, the Tunisian insurrection in February 2011 was geared toward the removal of Ben Ali as the country's leader.

Youth Politics as a Form of Performance

The literature's representations of young politics as performances are notably instructive in a number of different ways. They help to highlight both the reasons why young people resort to politics in quest of identity and the ways in which these identities are acted out, in addition to revealing the extremely active and emotionally charged nature of youth politics, which they do.

The portrayal of politics as a type of performance was particularly successful for the Shiv Sena, which aimed to remain anchored in political society as a location for permanent protest. This was particularly successful for the Shiv Sena in boosting the accessibility of politics to young people. The performance-based character of Shiv Sena politics provided a platform for young men to publicly enact the gender roles they envisioned for themselves. It is therefore clear how the Shiv Sena's emphasis on political identity through performance was able to empower and, as a result, politicise young people. The performance touched on many of the insecurities that young men in the region faced, such as emasculation and powerlessness, and this was one way in which the Shiv Sena was able to do this.

The research that was conducted by Lukoses (2005) among college students in Kerala traces the way in which the academic atmosphere has supplied young men with the space to organise rallies and protests. To be more explicit, she identifies a link between the nature of politics in the state and the age and gender identities of the actors who engage in it within the space of the college. This link exists between the nature

of politics in the state and the identities of those who participate in it. In order to emphasise the significance of this connection, she argues that the role of youth in Kerala as a venue for the exercise of masculine political agency has been essential to the development of public politics in that state.

Her research demonstrates the contemporary significance of young people by demonstrating how the politics of Kerala are driven by the political agency of young men who are either revolutionising or becoming revolutionary.

52 In addition to this, it delves deeper into the educational institution as a particular location in which a politically charged style of performance that is heavily influenced by age and gender is carried out. This is made abundantly clear by the fact that colleges, which should be exemplars of civic virtue, are frequently the target of political action in the form of strikes, fasts, and demonstrations.

These kinds of performances offer a glimpse into the impact that masculine sociality that is reckless and restless has on youth politics as well as the extent to which youth politics is as a result highly active and impulsive in its nature. Additionally, these performances provide a window into the impact that masculine sociality has on youth politics. On the other hand, problems pertaining to political ideology and the connection between particular youth activities and politics are not addressed in any way. A number of questions are raised by the reading material. The first examines the patterns of political attitudes held by young people, and the second investigates whether or not their experiences of pleasant friendship and romance in public play any role in determining the kind of politics they participate in.

The Lack of Political Ideology

The young community-leading males who are featured in the Gooptus study on decreasing jute industrial zones in Kolkata considered themselves as non-political and avoided getting involved in power plays, patronage nexuses, and factional conflicts. However, it is impossible to deny that they have political ambitions. In stark contrast to the politicians, who they saw as being motivated solely by their own self-interest, they claimed to have the best interests of the community at large in mind. This demonstrates that their conception of the concept of politics is one that is pessimistic and inextricably linked to the politics of formal institutions and political parties. As a result of their efforts to create a sense of distance between themselves and the individuals and organisations that have come to define what it is that they understand to be politics, it has become abundantly clear that their particular brand of politics is less ideological and institutional than formal politics. Instead, their politics are marked by a considerably greater emphasis on individualism and are an expression of their desires.

A group of young people in Meghalaya who are members of the Khasi Students Union have distanced themselves from the political structure and beliefs of their state, in a manner that is analogous to that of the young men in Kolkata. This is clear from the fact that the KSU is, and always has been, a non-ideological organisation that only occasionally participates in activity and serves as a launching pad for politically aspirational young men.

In the case of Egypt's youth, whose political behaviour is comparable to that of India's youth, the importance of protest and performance has risen to the forefront, pushing philosophy to the background. This is made clear by the emergence of new youth movements that have developed independently of traditional political parties, such as the Youth for Change movement and the Sixth of April movement.

According to Sika, these movements do not reflect a single or united political goal but rather represent a broad spectrum of opposition since they do not have a single or coherent political purpose. She goes on to say that they have been active only in voicing their unhappiness with official policy on the streets or on social networking sites, but that they have not presented any distinct sort of political platform to the public.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study on role of youth in modern Indian politics
2. To study on political violence

THE IMPLICATIONS OF YOUTH POLITICS

The Political Violence of Educated Unemployed Youth

There is a recurring idea in the research that has been done on educated people who are unable to find work (McNally Unni and Cassen 2004, page 162) about the connection between being unemployed and being politically active. Many academics have discussed how educated young men around the world who are unemployed have responded to the uncertain economic climate by becoming involved in youth politics or student politics.

According to the research that has been conducted, the politics of educated young people who are unable to find work in India pose a significant risk not only to the physical security of religious and caste communities, but also to the effort to eradicate caste distinctions. According to Chowdhry's (2009) study of unemployed Jat men in Haryana, their political activity through the route of the caste panchayat is depicted to be aggressive in nature and to be profoundly informed by stringent concepts of social division on the basis of caste. Rogers contends that in the face of joblessness, educated unemployed Dalits on a south Indian university have a tendency to revert to caste-specific aggressive behaviour.

Concerning the nature and characteristics of youth politics, the majority of the research that has been done on the connection between youth bulges and politics has come to the conclusion that issues such as high unemployment rates, a lack of available employment opportunities, and overcrowding in urban areas can lead large populations of young people to become involved in politics that are violent in their nature.

Crime and Politics

Some young males who are unable to find work are more likely to engage in risky and illegal activities. It is possible to draw parallels between the circumstances that contribute to this propensity toward criminal activity and the politics of jobless young people, which can occasionally take a violent and aggressive turn. For instance, the dissatisfaction that young Chamar men in Uttar Pradesh felt in relation to their experience of competing for secure white-collar employment was identified by Chamar parents as an important factor in the perceived rise in alcoholism, suicide, and criminal activity in the local area including murder, assault, sexual harassment, rape, bullying, and vandalism. This was the perception of the Chamar parents.

It does not appear that the fundamental forces that are responsible for this vast array of illegal activities are all that unlike to those that exist in Kolkata and are responsible for driving certain young men into criminal politics. A relatively small number of young males have become involved in particular sorts of

criminal activity, such as petty extortion and intimidation, as a direct result of the casualization of the labour market. These types of criminal activity are inherently political due to the fact that they involve highly publicised performances that are carried out with the intention of being observed and experienced (in contrast to other types of criminal activity, such as homicide and theft, which are typically committed in private and are done so for the purpose of the end result rather than the experience of the process), and they give men the opportunity to define a new persona for themselves as one who is powerful rather than as a typical criminal.

THE POLITICS OF MIDDLE CLASS YOUTH

The Politics of Youth from Elite Sections of the Middle Class

Although a significant portion of the literature on youth politics in India concentrates on young men from lower middle classes, working classes, and those who are unemployed, only a small amount of attention is dedicated to those who hail from upper middle or high classes. The portion of the middle class that is brought into the clearest focus by the research is what Jeffrey calls the "real middle class," which consists of people living in rural areas of India who are not considered to be poor but who also do not have access to many of the advantages that come along with metropolitan modernity. To be more specific, the vast majority of these males from the middle class who are depicted in the literature are identified as being jobless. Because unemployment is so often a setting for political assertions that are more reactionary in nature, the research seems to show that their status as unemployed rather than their status as middle class is the most important factor in influencing their level of political activity.

This is evident in the way that reservations have provided space for the political assertion of unemployed upper middle class men. Educated young men from urban middle-class elites have been key players in protests against positive discrimination for lower castes. Reservations have provided space for this political assertion. Unemployed young men from prosperous backgrounds have articulated their goals in the language of the upper classes in urban India, which is English, and have been circulating political messages on internet blogs as a response to government policies that have introduced reservations for OBCs (Other Backward Castes) in higher education. The OBCs are a category of people who are considered to be socially and economically backward. According to research conducted on Hindu right-wing political organisations in India, there has even been participation in party politics among wealthier segments of the educated population that is unemployed.

The Recent Protests over Rape and Corruption

What needs to be understood about the youth of the upper middle class is that their political behaviour is characteristic of politics in the modern middle class; more specifically, it falls under the purview of civil society, which is the arena for middle-class action and assertion. Their activity was on full display in the recent demonstrations that took place in 2011 against corruption and in 2012 against gang rape in Delhi. It is indicative of the nature of politics practised by young people from the middle class that there were no political parties involved in the organisation of the demonstrations. Party politics are typically geared toward the members of political society. Middle class youth politics, on the other hand, operate outside the realm of party politics.

Women and men, the majority of whom were students at various educational institutions, participated in

the demonstrations that were held in response to the rape. This demonstrates the political agency of younger people from upper middle class families. However, the fact that there has been more engagement in protests by the middle class only over the past year and a half may explain why there is a lack of literature on this particular demographic. The public political expression of the young of the upper middle class has only just begun.

CONCLUSION

The political awakening of India's young has been defined as having taken place in the country during the course of the past two years. The growing concern that young people have about issues affecting the nation as a whole has powerfully translated into political action, as evidenced by the thousands of young people who took to the streets in 2011 and 2012 to demonstrate against rape and corruption, respectively. Despite the hopeful signals of female engagement and the desire for policy change in both of these movements, questions of identity continue to dominate young politics in India. This is the case despite the encouraging signs of female participation.

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