



HIGHER LEARNING, HIGHER PARTICIPATION: THE LINK BETWEEN LEVELS OF EDUCATION AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

In politics, an important area of discussion is political participation concerning Levels of Education and Gender. The term political participation does not only mean giving the right to vote but also giving one's own opinions, and participating in decision-making and policy-making at all levels of governance of the State. To study these two factors (Levels of Education and Gender) investigators collected different primary sources (published govt data) and secondary sources (articles, journals). To investigate these two factors the investigators critically analyzed different sources. The findings of this investigation are levels of education are closely associated with political participation. A higher level of education greatly affects individuals' political participation. Gender is important in political participation. It is clear from this study that adult women trail behind men in terms of engagement in political activities. To mobilize the political participation, process the investigators recommended some suggestions.

Keywords: Politics, Levels of Education, Political Participation, Gender

1. INTRODUCTION

From the dawn of civilization to the present day, education and politics have greatly influenced every aspect of society. Education is the backbone of any country as well as a society. It influences the overall development of any country, such as politics, economy, technological advancement, understanding, etc. On the other hand, politics is necessary for the relevant social reformation of society through good quality education. It significantly affects various elements of politics, like- decision-making, policy formulation, conflict resolution, etc. The term political involvement does not only mean giving the right to vote but also giving one's own opinions, and participating in decision-making and policy-making at all levels of governance of the State (Singh, 2000).

Twenty centuries one of the most discussed and interesting themes in politics and education was the role of education in people's engagement in the field of politics and political participation. Political engagement is the keystone of the democratic process and it influences individuals' choices (Mayer, 2011) and also healthy democracy needs educated and politically participated manpower. Educational attainment motivates the participation process (Willeck & Mendelberg, 2022). Berisnkey & Lenz (2011) mentioned in their study that is, educational attainment and political participation are closely related to each other. Voting is an instrument of democracy. Mainly political participation is measured by voters' turnout in the election process (Berisnkey & Lenz, 2011). Education constructs a healthy and conscious society and makes a man perfect. Various evidence shows that education and political participation are closely related to each other. Ars & Christensen (2018), Berisnkey & Lenz (2011) and Persson (2013) conclude in their studies that, levels of education, individual education, and educational attainment are all these factors directly related to individual political participation. Also, formal education is greatly associated with political engagement for men and women (Goetz, 2003). Berisnkey & Lenz (2011) mentioned that the reason behind the interrelation between education and political involvement is education gives peoples the skills and resources have needed to participate in politics. Education prepares a man skilled, conscious, politically aware, and active. Many studies point out that, an individual with high levels of education is more active than individuals with low education (Berisnkey & Lenz, 2011; & Persson, 2013). Verba et al., (1995) explain that: 'Education enhances participation more or less directly by developing skills that are relevant to politics the ability



to speak and write, the knowledge of how to cope in an organizational setting'. Formal education is the main mechanism for the preparation of a good citizen of a democratic country. Also, formal education is a fundamental factor that influences political participation (Willeck & Mendelberg, 2021). Caprini & Keeter (1996) cited in their work, that education also makes better individuals' ability to converge and process politically fitting information. Van De Werfhorst (2014) states that a noteworthy responsibility of education is to enable individuals to participate in political activity. To investigate levels of participation and their relation to political participation, the investigators are interested in studying the following questions-

Is the level of education the main indicator of a political participation process?

Are there any disparities between male and female citizens in political participation?

2. METHODOLOGY

To answer the above-mentioned two research questions, the investigator mainly used different secondary sources, such as national and international research articles, periodicals, book chapters, and some primary sources, such as government data.

3. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

To study the above-mentioned research questions, the investigator critically analyzes different national and international pieces of literature. For a clear understanding of the various literature, the investigator identified some important dimensions, like- Levels of education, and Gender.

3.1. Levels of Education and Political Participation

Ars & Christensen (2018) conducted a survey in Norway on "Education and political participation: the impact of educational environments" and they collected 11000 above data from participants. The primary goal of this work is, that the level of education is the indicator of the political participation process in municipality areas. The outcome of this study is education is a noteworthy predictor of political engagement. They also said that more education doesn't confirm the high level of participation, but it is a significant predictor. Larreguy and Marshall (2017) cited that basic education plays one of a crucial role in moulding basic forms of civic and political involvement. They also said that education itself voters' political preferences. Persson (2013) started his work based on one question, which is What affects who participates in politics? After reviewing many articles, the investigator found an eye-catching result, that is education is one of the main factors for political participation, and also found that more educated people participate more in political activities and less educated people participate less. He also said that the cause behind political participation is education to improve civic skills and a great level of political knowledge. Acharya et al., (2010) initiated a survey in Maharashtra, India, and established their results that levels of education and participation in the voting system are positively correlated with each other. Hillygus (2005) explored a strong and positive association between education and political involvement in his longitudinal study in America. However, he is unable to explain why education is so crucial for the political participation process. He mentioned, "Education has consistently been found to increase political participation, electoral turnout, civic engagement, political knowledge, and democratic attitudes and opinions". He also said that the prescribed curriculum of higher education notably influenced political engagement in the future. Academic disciplines like- social science highly influenced students' future of political engagement.

3.2. Gender and Political Participation

Shairgojri & Bhat (2023) analyzed various Indian government data and different secondary sources like national and international articles, and journals and they concluded that the total percentage of male and female voters is nearly equal. However, all the available data and testimonials clearly showed the difference between male and female participation. Males are far ahead of females in political participation. Acharya et al., (2010) carried out a whole state-based survey in Maharashtra,



India and they collected total data from 23077 participants and investigators successfully interviewed 7750 adult men and women. After analyzing the data, they established a conclusion that adult men and women are the main participants in the voting system. They found a difference between adult men and women in political involvement. Their findings show that adult people's participation in the voting system is a universal process. In Maharashtra, 68 percent of adult men and 57 percent of adult women aged 20 and above voted in the recently concluded voting process. Here the difference between men and women in political participation is clearly shown. **Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs of India's (2023)** data shows the real situation of parliamentary seat sharing between male and female candidates in India. Out of 542 Lok Sabha seats, only 78 women represent their constituency and out of 224 Rajya Sabha seats women represented only 24 seats. **Goetz (2003-04)** mentioned a few important points in her study regarding political participation and gender differences. The USA is world one of the most developed and educated countries, but there is a wide range of variation between women's levels of education and their formal participation in politics and political activity.

4. DISCUSSION

This study is mainly based on the two above-mentioned world-wide discussed relevant questions. To find out the answers to two questions, we analyzed different primary and secondary sources and found few significant answers. There is no question about the relationship between education and politics. It has already been proved by many scholars in their investigation such as **Alimba; 2020; Ijadoula, Odunaike & Ajayi 2012**. Recently worldwide one important question has been asked many times. That is, political participation is influenced by levels of education? The answer to this question is, yes. **Acharya et al., 2010; Ars & Christensen, 2018; Hillygus, 2005; Persson, 2013;** cited in their investigation that political engagement is greatly influenced by a higher level of education rather than a lower level of education except for **Ars & Christensen (2018)**. Education prepares a man to think critically, to work efficiently, to become a skilled person, and most importantly to be prepared as an individual for a democratic society. Formal education indeed has a consistent and overwhelming association with political participation. Many studies show that the curriculum of formal education directly or indirectly discusses different political ideologies. Mainly various subjects of social science like- political science, international relationship study, and history directly discussed politics-related issues. Another above-mentioned question is in political involvement any disparities between male and female individuals. The government of India's official data reflected disparities between male and female participation in parliamentary participation. The condition of women in parliamentary participation is very low and also participation in the voting process is low than men. In the voting system, women are influenced by their family members. This is not a good sign for a well-decorated democratic system. In a country like the USA, there is a difference between men's and women's political engagement. Women are far away from men in political engagement and political activities **Goetz (2003-04)**. All the above-mentioned studies clearly show the reality of gender-based political involvement. Women still lag far behind men in political participation in all other spheres of society.

5. SUGGESTIONS

After critically analyzing different studies, the investigators mention some further suggestions regarding political participation and women's roles in politics. the suggestions are as follows:

- (1) to ensure good quality higher education for all, because education promotes political consciousness to all,
- (2) to prepare curriculum and pedagogy for creating consciousness in individuals regarding various political activities,
- (3) for the preparation of policy only experienced and expert individuals are recommended,
- (4) to ensure women's involvement in formulating policy and decision-making,
- (5) to ensure equality in political involvement between adult men and women,
- (6) to elevate women's engagement in the parliamentary body.



6. CONCLUSIONS

The inquiry between education and political involvement is an area of research in different disciplines. This paper shows the role of education in political involvement and gender discrimination in political participation, policy-making, parliamentary bodies, etc. This study proved the association between a higher level of education and greater participation in politics, and a lower level of education is an indicator of less involvement in political activity. Formal education and its curriculum and pedagogy positively influenced individuals voting responsibility and created a sense of critical appraisal. In India and different first-world countries like the USA, there is a notable inconsistency between men's and women's participation in politics. If we can't eliminate this disparity then it will not be possible for any country to develop rapidly.

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