



## YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN INDIAN POLITICS: TRENDS, CHALLENGES AND IMPACT ON POLICY MAKING

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### ABSTRACT:

The socio-political fabric of India has undergone significant transformations, necessitating an exploration of the evolving role of youth in politics. This study integrates insights from global and regional literature, providing a comprehensive understanding of the contextual factors shaping youth political participation. A mixed-methods approach is employed, incorporating interviews, surveys, and content analysis of social media platforms. The research sample is selected to represent the diversity of India's youth across geographical, socio-economic, and educational spectrums. Today's young generation is more vigorous than the prior generation. Inconsideration with-respect-to future of the country in upcoming years it is indispensable to being an engaged citizen of modern India. Curiosity of what might happen in the future if youth enter Indian politics is very awaiting matter to Indian society as well as globally, the ability to imagine how things could be different and empathy for our future selves are all necessary if we want to create positive change in our own lives and the world around us.

The findings reveal a myriad of influences on youth participation in politics, ranging from socio-economic status to educational backgrounds, cultural influences, and the pivotal role of family and peer networks. Socio-economic disparities emerge as a critical factor, with marginalized communities often facing greater obstacles in accessing political opportunities. Educational institutions play a pivotal role, acting as both enablers and deterrents to political involvement. Furthermore, a perception of politics as a murky or unattractive domain acts as a psychological barrier, dissuading many from exploring political avenues. Technology, particularly social media platforms, offers a transformative medium for political expression and mobilization. Harnessing the potential of these platforms can bridge gaps in information dissemination and encourage civic participation.

The study incorporates case studies from diverse regions in India, illustrating successful youth engagement initiatives. These cases highlight the positive impact of education-centric programs, mentorship initiatives, and grassroots movements in nurturing politically aware and active youth communities.

In conclusion, this research underscores the critical importance of empowering the youth in Indian politics. The recommendations encompass a multi-faceted approach, advocating for reforms in educational curricula, leveraging technology for outreach, and fostering mentorship programs. By addressing these challenges and capitalizing on opportunities, India can cultivate a more inclusive and representative democratic process, ensuring the active participation of its youth in shaping the nation's future.

### KEYWORDS:

**INDIA, DEMOCRACY, POLITICS, TRENDS, CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, YOUTH PARTICIPATION, POLICY.**

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

Politics (from Ancient Greek πολιτικά (politiká) 'city affairs') is the set of activities that are concerned with group decision-making, or other forms of power relations between individuals, such as the distribution of status or wealth. The branch of social science that studies politics and government is called political science. The opening session of the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly stated that, "Politics can be used positively in the context of "political solutions" that are compromise and non-violent. Politics is descriptively "the art or science of government".

Politics uses a variety of methods, including promoting one's own political views among the people, negotiating with other political subjects, enacting laws, and using

internal and external power, including war against opponents. Politics is practiced at a wide range of social levels, from traditional social groups and tribes to modern local governments, companies and institutions, to sovereign states, to the international level. In modern states, people often form political parties to represent their ideas. Members of a party often agree to take the same positions on many issues and to support the same changes in law and the same leaders. An election is usually a competition between different parties. A political system is a structure that determines the acceptable political practices within a society. The history of political thought dates back to ancient times, with important works such as Plato's Republic, Aristotle's Politics, Confucius' Political Manuscripts, and Chanakya's Arthashastra. India is a

sovereign socialist secular democratic republic. Its system of government is parliamentary, with a federal structure as an important feature. It has a Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister, who advises the President, who is the constitutional head of the country.

Youth participation in Indian politics is crucial for shaping the country's future. With over 50% of the population under 25 and about 65% fewer than 35, India's youth can bring about significant change, progress, and innovation in governance. India had its first general election in 1951, which was won by the Indian National Congress, a political party that went on to dominate subsequent elections until 1977, when a non-congress government was formed for the first time in independent India. Young people want to bring modification in present politics, but they feel their voices are bound to get lost in the political oratory. The field of politics in India is habitually perceived as something that is not acceptable to the educated masses. The youth involvement has been majorly informal and even though the youth continue to participate in local elections there is a need for a more dynamic and formal participation in politics to emerge the changes which is obligatory for the country's progress. Politics has become as a last career invoke among the youngsters, due to uncontrolled corruption, nepotism, caste politics, and lack of accountability and lack of openness. As a result, most of our potential human resources choose to go abroad for settling their permanently as soon as they complete their education. Politics need to open and should promote the younger generation into mainstream politics. Young leaders personify energy and enthusiasm and can be immeasurably effectual in forming policies for themselves concerning contemporary issues and problems. Young generation should be the backbone of our future India, more ideas to be generated and they should be responsible for choosing which cultural beliefs are going to work for the benefit of humanity. Participation of young people will also make certain a larger sense of comprehensiveness in the democratic system. Political participation of the youth needs to be expanded beyond the casting of a vote through reservation for youth in political parties as well as in the parliament. The right balance of young talent and young politicians can lead to change in perception of politics and can build public faith in political system. The youth of modern India are aware of the problems facing by our country, give a chance they would be ready to change the political condition of the country and might become better guardians of our future India. We can just wish that next time we go to vote, we find more names of youngsters who can make our country a better place to live.

**1.1 Indian politics:** Indian politics is a complex and dynamic landscape shaped by various factors, including the country's Constitution, federal structure, and diverse population. Here's an overview of key aspects:

**GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE:**

- Federal Parliamentary Republic: India is a sovereign, socialist, secular democratic republic with a parliamentary system.

- President and Prime Minister: The President serves as the head of state, while the Prime Minister is the head of government.

- Council of Ministers: The Prime Minister heads the Council of Ministers, which advises the President.

**CHALLENGES AND CONTROVERSIES:**

- Dynastic Politics: Indian politics is often characterized by dynastic rule, with many parties being led by family members of prominent politicians.

- Criminalization of Politics: There are concerns about the increasing presence of lawmakers with criminal charges, which can undermine the integrity of the political system.

- Executive Accountability: The concentration of power in the executive branch has raised concerns about accountability and the potential erosion of democratic institutions.

**1.2 List of current youth politics issues:** There are several issues which are deemed "youth politics" by politicians, mainstream media and other sources.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age of candidacy</li> <li>• Child labor laws/right-to-work laws</li> <li>• Climate change</li> <li>• Drinking age</li> <li>• Education policy/reform</li> <li>• Environmental issues</li> <li>• Healthcare</li> <li>• Minors and abortion</li> <li>• School reform</li> <li>• Voting age</li> <li>• Youth service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age of majority</li> <li>• Corporal punishment</li> <li>• Conscription or the draft</li> <li>• Driving age</li> <li>• Emancipation of minors</li> <li>• Global warming</li> <li>• Immigration</li> <li>• National service</li> <li>• Student rights</li> <li>• Youth participation</li> <li>• Youth vote</li> </ul>
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**1.3 List of current youth politics organizations:** There are thousands of youth political organizations and programs around the world.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad</li> <li>• All India Socialist Youth Council</li> <li>• All-Polish Youth</li> <li>• Bus Project</li> <li>• College Republican National Committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bibeksheel Nepali</li> <li>• British Youth Council</li> <li>• Canadian Youth Policy Association</li> <li>• Christian Democratic Youth</li> <li>• College Democrats of America</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Democratic Youth Movement</li> <li>• Indian Youth Congress</li> <li>• International Federation of Liberal Youth</li> <li>• National Youth Organisation</li> <li>• Communist Youth Movement</li> <li>• Young Democrats of America</li> <li>• Young Democrats for Europe</li> <li>• YIP Institute</li> <li>• UK Youth Parliament</li> <li>• Turkey Youth Union</li> <li>• Teenage Republicans</li> <li>• Traction</li> <li>• Scottish Youth Parliament</li> <li>• Scottish Young Liberals</li> <li>• Scottish Socialist Youth</li> <li>• Young Liberals of Canada</li> <li>• Youth wings of political parties in Denmark</li> <li>• Youth of the Popular Movement against EU</li> <li>• Young Americans for Freedom</li> <li>• Young Ecologists</li> <li>• Not too young to run</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communist Youth of Côte d'Ivoire</li> <li>• Communist Youth of Greece</li> <li>• Puerto Rico Statehood Students Association</li> <li>• Egypt Youth Party</li> <li>• European Free Alliance Youth</li> <li>• European Liberal Youth</li> <li>• Green Youth, Germany</li> <li>• Green Youth, Sweden</li> <li>• High School Democrats of America</li> <li>• JONG</li> <li>• Jugendverband REBELL</li> <li>• Malaysian United Democratic Alliance</li> <li>• Northern Ireland Young Communist League</li> <li>• Sangguniang Kabataan</li> <li>• Sveriges Social demokratiska Ungdomsförbund (Sweden)</li> <li>• Young Independence</li> <li>• Youth of the Danish People's Party</li> <li>• Youth of the Progress Party</li> <li>• Young Communist League of Germany</li> <li>• Young Republicans</li> <li>• National Youth Council of Nigeria NYCN</li> </ul>
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**2. OBJECTIVES:**

1. To study encompasses youth policy that specifically has an impact on young people (for example, education, housing, employment, leisure).
2. Identify the Emerging trends in Indian Democracy, Opportunities & Challenges.

3. To study and determined Indian politics Impact on Policy Making.

**3. METHODOLOGY:**

Methodologically, a mixed-methods approach is employed, incorporating interviews, surveys, and content analysis of social media platforms. The research sample is selected to represent the diversity of India's youth across geographical, socio-economic, and educational spectrums. This approach allows for a nuanced examination of the intricate factors influencing youth engagement.

**4. DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION:**

**PERTAINING TO OBJECTIVE 1**

**01. TO STUDY ENCOMPASSES YOUTH POLICY THAT SPECIFICALLY HAS AN IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE (FOR EXAMPLE, EDUCATION, HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, LEISURE):**

Trends the Indian political arena has witnessed some new characteristics in the 21st century that are not to be truly democratic. The growing significance of corporate world in the political arena has made the politics as business entity. The media is not truly representing the voice of people rather than image of politicians of their vested interest. The media in India does not merely report; it is a player in Indian politics and elections.

**1. BUSINESSMEN BECOMES POLITICIANS AND VICE**

**VERSA:** While there may not be a concerted attempt to stifle voices which are independent, the media does take sides and tends to editorialized news reporting. The news are manufactured to suit their choice of leaders or party. Owning a new entity has become a practical necessity for political parties in India. These features are neither of dictatorship nor of totalitarianism rather do they depict declining capacity of welfare state. The effects of globalization on Indian politics has created an imbalance between interests of social classes and corporate interests which compelled the political regimes to adopt certain measures that can be called 'post democracy'.

There has been a sea of changes in nature of party politics, agenda setting, policy priorities, and role of media and aspirations of people. The ideology of the well known political parties is swept away by unethical and unholy alliance. The present article focuses on the features of Indian politics in context of party politics, growing corporate interventions and role of media in the changed scenario of Indian democracy.

There is no doubt that media plays a very important role in politics as it influences public opinion and helps define and take up the issues. It can keep the powerful in check by seeking transparency in their actions. Thus, an independent media is an effective check on government's power and influence over its citizens. The media should be fearless, unbiased and true saver of democracy. Instead, it has become the tool of serving the mighty, powerful politician. The dictator of a regime control and regulate all means of communication so that the opposition parties

activities are not reached to the people and dictators achievements are propagated vigorously. In Indian media are doing various reporting on past and current issues which are very important for democracy.

**2. TRENDS OF MEDIA IN INDIAN POLITICS:** Media is said to be fourth pillar of a democracy. But if they report the issues of their choices, then the rule of land become rule by media. The party politics in India is marked by competition of money power. The political parties are sponsored by big business houses. The ideology of any party is compromised. After winning for a particular election party, the elected representative is switching over to other party for gaining ministerial post or for any other material gain. This growing influence of unethical and unholy alliance in Indian politics is matter of concern for every believer of democratic ideal.

Media is the most powerful entity on earth. It has an undisputable role in a democracy. A free and independent media is considered the watchdog of the government. A stock of the media behavior, therefore, is crucial largely because of the process of agenda setting and gate keeping attached with media. A disconcerting fact is media being an oligopoly. This is a concern in many liberal democracies as this means only a few individuals have massive powers to influence political opinion and undermine a political establishment.

**3. CORPORATE INTERVENTION IN INDIAN POLITICS:** During freedom struggle, the corporate sector donated under influence of patriotic feelings, not for their gains. But in the recent times the political elites of India are in compulsion to become friendly with corporate sector especially the Multi National Companies (MNCs). The governments support them by reducing taxes and allowing flexibilities in regulating their affairs with a view to make the country 'ride the globalization wave'. Indian business could use politicians to get particularistic benefits on one hand and politicians got access to a huge pool of funds from corporate (apart from trivial public contributions). This will be evident from the fact that after 2003, businessmen were allowed tax incentives for their donations. Nature of relationship further changed in a way that these donations have continued to take a form of black money and politicians attempted to conceal the source of funding.

#### PERTAINING TO OBJECTIVE 2

#### **02. TO IDENTIFY THE EMERGING TRENDS IN INDIAN DEMOCRACY, OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES:**

India, as the world's largest democracy, has witnessed significant evolution over the decades. The dynamic nature of its governance, politics, and public participation has brought forth a blend of challenges and opportunities. These emerging trends reflect how Indian democracy adapts to changing societal needs, technological advancements, and global influences.

#### **1. INCREASING USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN GOVERNANCE**

One of the most remarkable shifts in Indian democracy is

the incorporation of technology into governance. E-governance initiatives like Aadhaar-based subsidy delivery and the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system ensure targeted benefits reach the intended beneficiaries seamlessly. The E-Shram Portal, aimed at registering unorganized workers, represents another significant leap toward inclusivity.

The Digital India campaign has further strengthened digital literacy, enabling better citizen-government, citizen-business, and citizen-citizen interactions. Electoral processes, too, have embraced technology with Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs), enhancing transparency and credibility in elections. Platforms like MyGov empower citizens to participate in decision-making by sharing ideas and feedback with the government.

#### **2. SHIFT FROM IDEOLOGY-BASED TO ISSUE-BASED POLITICS**

Indian politics has transitioned from being ideology-centric to issue-driven. Earlier, political parties were predominantly aligned with leftist, rightist, or centrist ideologies. Today, voters prioritize tangible outcomes like improved infrastructure, healthcare, education, and welfare programs. This pragmatic approach highlights the electorate's growing focus on performance over promises.

Simultaneously, new political movements have emerged, focusing on pressing concerns such as environmental protection, women's safety, and digital privacy. These movements underline the electorate's growing awareness of specific issues rather than blanket ideological affiliations.

#### **3. RISE OF REGIONALISM AND COALITION POLITICS**

Regionalism has become a dominant force in Indian politics. Citizens increasingly demand development tailored to their regions, leading to the emergence of strong regional parties. This trend has posed challenges to national parties, making it difficult for them to secure a majority. Consequently, coalition politics has become the norm, requiring political alliances to form stable governments.

This regional focus has not only strengthened the federal structure but also highlighted the diverse aspirations of India's population.

#### **4. COOPERATIVE AND COMPETITIVE FEDERALISM**

Another noteworthy trend is the interplay of **cooperative and competitive federalism**. States now actively compete to attract investments through dynamic policies promoting **ease of doing business**, infrastructure development, and land allocation. This competition fosters economic growth and innovation.

At the same time, cooperative federalism is being emphasized through platforms like **NITI Aayog**, which replaced the erstwhile Planning Commission. State governments now participate in deliberations to ensure their unique developmental needs are addressed. This

participatory approach encourages decentralized planning and state-specific initiatives, paving the way for balanced regional development.

### 5. EVOLVING ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION

India has witnessed increasing voter turnout, reflecting enhanced political awareness. The provision of **proxy voting for Non-Resident Indians (NRIs)** signifies the government's recognition of its expanding diaspora's importance. The rise of **social media campaigns** has revolutionized political communication, enabling leaders and parties to engage directly with citizens.

### 6. EMPOWERING WOMEN IN POLITICS

Women's participation in Indian democracy is gaining momentum. Initiatives like **women's reservation** in legislatures aim to enhance their representation, leading to gender-sensitive policymaking and budgeting. This inclusivity fosters a more equitable society and strengthens the democratic framework.

### 7. RISE OF DIGITAL DEMOCRACY AND JUDICIAL ACTIVISM

The growing role of digital platforms in shaping public opinion and political discourse signifies the advent of **digital democracy**. Leaders increasingly use these platforms to connect with citizens, bridging gaps between governance and the governed.

Simultaneously, **judicial activism** has emerged as a critical trend. When legislative or executive actions fall short of public expectations, citizens turn to the judiciary for redressal. Proactive judicial interventions often address grievances, uphold democratic values, and ensure accountability.

### 8. ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND NGOS

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and civil society groups are playing a vital role in shaping public opinion and advocating for policy reforms. Their campaigns often influence government decisions, leading to targeted welfare programs such as **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi** and **Ayushman Bharat**.

### 9. EMPHASIS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Indian democracy is increasingly aligning with global sustainability goals. Policies promoting **renewable energy, green economy,** and **sustainable development** are influencing governance. Programs like **Swachh Bharat, Smart Cities Mission,** and **LED street lighting** showcase India's commitment to urban transformation while addressing environmental concerns.

### 10. CHALLENGES TO INDIAN DEMOCRACY

While these trends indicate progress, Indian democracy faces significant challenges:

1. **Un-ideological Polarization:** The absence of strong ideological frameworks often leads to fragmented political narratives.
2. **Populist Rhetoric:** Politicians frequently resort to populist promises, which may not always align with

long-term development goals.

3. **Fake News and Misinformation:** The proliferation of fake news through digital platforms misinforms citizens, impacting their decision-making.
4. **Balancing Social Security and Individual Liberty:** Striking a balance between welfare initiatives and protecting individual rights, such as privacy, remains complex.

### PERTAINING TO OBJECTIVE3

#### 03. TO STUDY AND DETERMINED INDIAN POLITICS IMPACT ON IMPACT AND POLICY MAKING:

The strong commitment of UNDP and other UN entities to foster youth political participation is based on several international conventions and declarations, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the World Programme of Action for Youth and the Convention of the Rights of the Child. They provide a strong frame of reference for a rights-based approach to related programmes of support. Participation is a fundamental democratic right. It should be an end in and of itself to remove existing barriers to youth political participation. For the most part, promoting youth participation needs to be geared towards achieving levels relative to those of the rest of the population. Effective and meaningful youth political participation has one of three attributes: it can be consultative; it can entail youth-led participation, where young people have a direct impact on decision-making within their own youth communities; finally it can involve youth collaborative participation, where young people effectively take part in regular political policy-making processes.

A strengthened, coordinated and effective in India action is essential to achieve the overall goal of progressive and substantive inclusion of young people in political and decision-making processes at all levels. To reach this long-term objective through the definition of tangible objectives, India entities, through the System-Wide Action Plan on Youth, will articulate their action around two main commitments in the area of political inclusion:

1. Support to young people's participation in inclusive political processes and democratic practices, through three measures, covering the wider enabling environment, individual capacity building and a specific focus on young women:

\* The promotion of an enabling environment (legal frameworks, policies and plans) for young people's participation in a broad range of processes and areas (electoral and parliamentary processes, public administration and local governance, including in peace building environments) at local, sub-national and national levels;

\* The promotion of young people's skills and capacities to participate actively in democratic practices, including in local, national, and global processes (leadership trainings, etc.)

\* The promotion of young women's participation and

presence in political office and decision-making at all levels (participation of young women -through both elected and non-elected positions).

2. Support to young people’s inclusion in decision making and in all levels of development processes, through two measures, focusing on India governance and processes, on the one hand, and young men and women’s contribution to the identification and implementation of sustainable solutions, on the other hand:

\* Effective participation of young people and young people-led organizations in India governance and policy-making processes.

\* The ability of young people and young people-led organizations to contribute to the achievement of durable solutions for humanitarian and peace building initiatives –focusing therefore on enabling young women and men to become active leaders in global efforts to achieve sustainable human development as a long-term investment.

**5. CONCLUSION**

Indian democracy stands at a crossroads, offering a unique blend of opportunities and challenges. While modernization and inclusivity are paving the way for growth, threats to core democratic values demand vigilance. By embracing innovation, promoting informed participation, and addressing systemic issues, India can continue to strengthen its democratic ethos and set an example for the world.

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