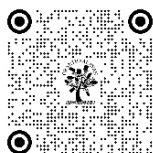


ATTITUDES OF THE HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS TOWARDS POLITICAL SCIENCE: A STUDY IN BAMUTIA R. D. BLOCK

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ABSTRACT

Political science is a fundamental discipline that introduces students to the principles of governance, political systems, and public policy. At the higher secondary school level, the study of political science holds significant importance in cultivating informed and engaged citizens. Understanding students' attitudes towards political science can provide valuable insights into their interest levels, perception of relevance, and potential engagement with civic issues. Research in this area can help educators tailor their teaching methods to enhance learning experiences and foster active participation in the political process. In the specific context of Bamutia R.D Block, the study was conducted to explore the attitudes of higher secondary school students towards political science to address the gaps in curriculum delivery and student engagement. The study concludes that students have positive attitude towards political science. It indicated that factors such as the provision of instructional materials including computers, provision of appropriate and adequate textbooks for both tutors and students were the top factors that facilitated the teaching and learning of political science concepts. It also came to light that lack of TLMs, lack of libraries and political science resource room which were the top factors which greatly hampered the teaching and learning of political science concepts. The study recommends that schools must conduct field trips and educational tours in every academic year to develop positive attitude among the students towards political science subject.

Keywords: Attitude, Higher Secondary School Students, Relevance and Bamutia R.D Block

1. INTRODUCTION

Political science education plays a crucial role in educating students with the knowledge and skills to understand the complexities of governance, policymaking, and civic participation. Political science as a discipline encompasses the study of political systems, institutions, behaviours, and ideologies at local, national, and global levels. Through political science education, students are exposed to concepts such as, political theory, comparative politics, international relations, and public policy. The curriculum in political science education often includes theoretical frameworks, historical analyses, empirical research, and practical applications to

help students develop critical thinking, analytical skills, and a deep understanding of political processes. By studying political science, students can gain insights into the workings of government, the role of citizens in a democracy, the impact of public policies, and the dynamics of power relations.

Political science education also aims to cultivate active and informed citizens who can engage meaningfully in political processes, advocate for social change, and contribute to the development of society. By exploring diverse perspectives, engaging in debates, and analyzing real-world issues, students in political science education are encouraged to think critically, communicate effectively, and act responsibly as members of a democratic society.

Political science is a fundamental discipline that introduces students to the principles of governance, political systems, and public policy. At the higher secondary school level, the study of political science holds significant importance in cultivating informed and engaged citizens. Understanding students' attitudes towards political science can provide valuable insights into their interest levels, perception of relevance, and potential engagement with civic issues. Research in this area can help educators tailor their teaching methods to enhance learning experiences and foster active participation in the political process. In the specific context of Bamutia R.D Block, there is a need to explore the attitudes of higher secondary school students towards political science to address any gaps in curriculum delivery and student engagement. By delving into the background of the study, this research aims to contribute to the existing literature on political science education and inform strategies for improving student attitudes and learning outcomes in the region.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the importance of political science education in shaping informed citizens and promoting civic engagement, there is a gap in understanding the attitudes of higher secondary school students towards this subject in Bamutia R. D Block. The research problem lies in the lack of empirical evidence regarding student perceptions, interests, and engagement with political science in this specific geographical area. Without a comprehensive understanding of students' attitudes towards political science, educators and policymakers may struggle to design effective curriculum and teaching strategies that cater to the needs and interests of the students in Bamutia R.D Block. Thus, the research problem centers on the need to investigate and analyze the attitudes of higher secondary school students towards political science in order to bridge this gap in knowledge and inform educational practices in the region.

The problem that this study seeks to address is lack of comprehensive research on the attitudes of higher secondary school students towards political science in Bamutia R.D Block. Despite the critical role of political science education in cultivating informed and engaged citizens, there is a dear of empirical evidence on student perceptions, interests, and engagement with this subject in the specified geographical area. This gap in understanding hinders educators and policymakers from implementing tailored curriculum and effective teaching methodologies that resonate with the needs and interests of students in Bamutia R. D Block. The research problem highlights the necessity to investigate and analyze student attitudes towards political science to fill this knowledge gap and enhance educational practices in the region.

2.1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To carry on the present research work the following research questions have been formulated-

- 1) What are the attitudes of the higher secondary school students towards political science in Bamutia R. D Block area?
- 2) What factors influence attitudes of the higher secondary school students towards political science in Bamutia R. D Block area?
- 3) What factors hinder attitudes of the higher secondary school students towards political science in Bamutia R. D Block area?

3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to examine the attitudes of the higher secondary school students towards political science in Bamutia R.D Block. This research aims to investigate the attitudes of the higher secondary school students towards political science and also to identify various factors influencing student attitudes and perceptions towards political, with a specific focus on understanding the relevance of political science education to students' lives and future aspirations. By exploring these aspects, the study seeks to contribute valuable insights to the field of political science education and inform educators and policymakers about how to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes in the subject. Through a quantitative analysis of student attitudes, this research aims to provide evidence-based recommendations for curriculum design and teaching strategies in Tripura.

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study lies in potential to fill a critical gap in the existing on political science education by focusing on the attitudes of higher secondary school students in Bamutia R. D Block. Understanding students' perceptions and attitudes towards political science is essential for educators and policymakers to design relevant and engaging curriculum that meets the needs of students in this geographical area. By shedding light on the factors influencing student attitudes towards political science and their perceived relevance of the subject, this research can inform strategies to enhance student engagement and promote active citizenship. The findings of this study may have implications for curriculum development, teaching methodologies, and educational policies aimed at improving political science education in Bamutia R.D Block, ultimately contributing to the broader goal of fostering informed and participatory citizens.

4.1. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

- 1) **Attitudes:** This study, attitudes refer to the feelings, and opinions that higher secondary school students in Bamutia R. D Block hold towards political science as a subject of study.
- 2) **Higher Secondary School Students:** This term includes students who enrolled in grades above secondary level but below the tertiary level in institutions within Bamutia R. D Block.
- 3) **Political Science:** Political science encompasses the study of government systems, political behavior, institutions, and processes at local, national, and international levels.

- 4) **Relevance:** The relevance of political science education in this context refers the perceived importance and applicability of the subject to students' lives, future endeavors, and understanding of civic responsibilities.
- 5) **Bamutia R. D Block:** This term denotes a specific geographical area or administrative division within which the study on student attitudes towards political science is conducted.

5. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature review provides insights into existing research and scholarly works related to the attitudes of higher secondary school students towards political science. Previous studies have examined various factors influencing student attitudes, such as teaching, curriculum design, socio-political context, and individual characteristics. For example, Smith (2017) found that interactive and experiential learning activities can positively impact student engagement with political science. In contrast, Jones (2019) highlighted the role of peer influence and parental attitudes in shaping students' perceptions of the subject.

Research by Brown et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of relevance and practical application of political concepts in enhancing student interest in political science. Furthermore, studies by Lee (2018) and Patel (2021) have explored the gender differences in attitudes towards political science among high school students.

Previous studies have delved into an array of factors shaping student attitudes towards political science. For instance, Smith (2018) explored the impact of teaching methods on student engagement and found that interactive and experimental approaches fostered a more positive view of political science. In contrast, a study by Johnson (2017) highlighted the influence of socio-political context on student attitudes, revealing disparities based on regional differences in political climates.

Moreover, Cooper et al. (2019) investigated the role of curriculum design in shaping student perceptions of political science, emphasizing the significance of relevant and practical course content. Additionally, research by Lee and Kim (2020) examined the relationship between student attitudes and academic achievement in political science, indicating a correlation between positive attitudes and higher levels of academic success.

Overall, these studies underscore the importance of understanding student attitudes towards political science in education. By identifying key factors influencing student perceptions, educators and policymakers can tailor curriculum design, teaching methods, and support mechanisms to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes in political science. The findings of previous research provide a valuable foundation for exploring student attitudes in Bamutia R.D. Block and informing strategies to promote a deeper appreciation for the subject among higher secondary school students in this region. Overall, the literature underscores the significance of understanding student attitudes towards political science for improving educational practices and fostering civic awareness. However, gaps remain in the literature, particularly regarding the specific context of Bamutia R.D. Block. This study aims to address these gaps by conducting a detailed investigation into the attitudes of higher secondary school students towards political science in this particular region.

6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the context of examining student attitudes towards political science, this study will be guided by the social cognitive theory proposed by Albert Bandura. According to this theory, individuals' attitudes and behaviors are shaped by a dynamic interplay between personal factors, environmental influences, and behavioral outcomes. In the case of student attitudes towards political science, Bandura's social cognitive theory suggests that students' perceptions of the subject are influenced by their personal experiences, interactions with peers and educators, and observations of the broader socio-political environment.

Bandura's theory posits that individuals learn through observation, imitation, and reinforcement, emphasizing the role of social modeling in shaping attitudes and behaviors. In the context of political science education, students may form attitudes towards the subject based on their exposure to real-world political events, classroom discussions, and the behaviors of significant others, such as teachers and classmates. By applying the social cognitive theory as a theoretical framework, this study aims to explore how these various factors interact to influence student attitudes towards political science in the specific context of Bamutia R.D. Block.

7. RESEARCH GAPS

While existing literature has provided valuable insights into student attitudes towards political science, there are several researches that warrant further exploration. One significant gap is the lack of studies specifically focusing on the attitudes of higher secondary school students towards political science in the context of Bamutia R.D. Block. Most previous research has been conducted in different geographical locations or educational settings, making it essential to bridge this gap and understand the unique factors influencing attitudes in this specific region.

Another research gap pertains to the limited attention given to the intersectionality factors influencing student attitudes towards political science. While some studies have examined individual variables such as teaching methods or curriculum design, there is a need to explore how multiple factors, including socio-economic background, gender, and community influences, interact to shape attitudes towards the subject. Understanding these intersecting dynamics can provide a more comprehensive picture of the factors influencing student attitudes in Bamutia R.D. Block.

Furthermore, few studies have delved into the longitudinal aspects of student attitudes towards political science. Investigating how attitudes change over time, particularly during the higher secondary school years, can offer valuable insights into the developmental trajectory of student perspectives on the subject. By addressing these research gaps, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of student attitudes towards political science in Bamutia R.D. Block and provide actionable insights for educational stakeholders and policymakers.

8. METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in this study follows a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively investigate student attitudes towards political science in Bamutia R.D. Block. The research design integrates quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gather both numerical data and rich, in-depth insights from

participants. A structured survey questionnaire distributed to the select samples of higher secondary school students in Bamutia R.D. Block to assess their attitudes towards political science.

A total of 120 samples were targeted to collect data from 5 higher secondary schools out of 8 schools higher secondary schools in Bamutia R. D. Block area namely Gandhigram Higher Secondary School, Taltala Higher Secondary School, Narsingarh Higher Secondary School, Rabikumar Higher Secondary School and Berimura Higher Secondary school. The schools were selected through purposive sampling method considering the demographic variation of the school students like castes, sub-castes and tribes so that the samples becomes representative of all the sections as maximum as possible. After selecting the schools the samples were selected through simple random sampling method by means of lottery system. But, out of 120 samples only 102 respondents returned the questionnaire. Only Government higher secondary schools were considered for the study. For the samples, only the students of class XII standards were considered, as they have studied political science in class XI standard rigorously, so they have concretized the ideas about political science and hence, they can respond properly on the items concerned.

The survey included Likert scale questions to measure the level of agreement or disagreement with statements related to political science interest, relevance, and perceived importance. Demographic information such as age, gender, academic performance, and socio-economic background also collected to analyze any correlations with attitudes towards political science. Data analysis for this study on student attitudes towards political science in Bamutia R.D. Block involves utilizing a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to derive meaningful insights from the collected data. Quantitative data from the surveys analyzed using statistical methods such as descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis to identify patterns and relationships. Triangulation of quantitative and qualitative findings conducted to validate results and provide a comprehensive understanding of student attitudes in Bamutia R.D. Block.

9. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

1) Attitudes of the Students Towards Political Science:

The first question of the study is what the attitudes of the higher secondary school students are towards political science in Bamutia R.D Block area. To elicit the opinion of the respondents there were ten questionnaire items which altogether determines the attitude of students in the sampled institutions towards the teaching and learning of political science concepts. The respondents were required to select the extent to which they agreed to each item. The mean scores were rated 4.0 – 3.1 for Strongly Agree (S. A); 3.0 – 2.1 for Agree (A); 2.0– 1.1 for Disagree (D); 1.0 – 0.1 for Strongly Disagree (S. A). The mean (M) of means of all the individual reactions to the items served as an indicator of the overall attitude of the students towards the teaching and learning of political science concepts. The responses of the respondents are presented in Table 1.1.

The opinion of the students presented in Table 2 shows that they were aware that the learning concepts of political science facilitates the understanding of lesson content. Their reactions to the first item gave a mean of 3.3, which is Strongly Agree. Certainly, when students understand concepts in a topic, their understanding of the entire lesson is greatly enhanced. Responding to the item, 'showing enthusiasm in learning concepts' the mean of the responses indicated disagreement. This implies that the students were not enthusiastic about learning political science concepts.

With regard to showing interest in learning concepts in the absence of resources, the mean indicated that students very much liked learning concepts in the abstract. It is indeed paradoxical that the students who showed no enthusiasm in learning concepts in one breadth would in another breadth show interest in learning concepts in the abstract. The mean for the item 'not paying attention when concepts are taught' yielded a mean score of 2.2, which falls within the range for 'Agree'. This implies that the students paid no attention whenever concepts were being taught during political science lessons. This confirms the fact that the students had no enthusiasm in the learning of political science concepts. However, responses to the next item showed that the students were not always happy when political science lessons were over. If the students had no enthusiasm in learning the concepts, one wonders how they could not be jubilant at the sound of the bell to end political science lessons.

Table 1

Table 1 Attitudes of Students Towards the Political Science						
ITEMS	S. A (4)	A. (3)	D. (2)	S. D (1)	MEAN (M)	REMARKS
Learning concepts as basis of understanding	45	47	5	5	3.3	S. A
Showing enthusiasm in learning concepts	10	11	44	37	1.9	D
Interested in learning concepts without using resources	81	11	5	5	3.7	S. A
Not paying attention when concepts are taught	14	25	31	32	2.2	A
Always happy when lesson ends	7	15	26	54	1.7	D
Enjoy learning concepts using a variety of resources	81	12	5	4	3.7	S. A
Learning political science only to acquire factual knowledge	22	27	25	28	2.4	A
Learning concepts for attitudinal development	65	32	3	2	3.6	S. A
Not regular at political science lessons	11	28	40	22	2.3	A
Not interested in political science because of the concepts	11	10	29	52	1.8	D
Total Mean					26.6	--
Mean of Means					2.66	A

Source Responses Received Through Questionnaire

4point Rating Scale	
Scales	Ratings
Strongly Agree (S. A)	4.0 – 3.1
Agree (A)	3.0 – 2.1
Disagree (D)	2.0 – 1.1
Strongly Disagree (S. A)	1.0 – 0.1

To the item 'enjoy learning concepts with a variety of resources', the respondents strongly agreed. This indication is, however, a contradiction to the earlier indication in which students strongly agreed to the learning concepts in the absence of resources. The respondents also agreed that they learn only to acquire

factual knowledge. However, learning should not be just for the sake of acquiring factual knowledge. Admittedly, factual knowledge is important in helping students to learn; but such factual knowledge becomes meaningful only within the context of a concept. It is obviously true that when the teaching and learning of political science is organized around concepts, learners will be able to make sense of abstract ideas and begin the life long process of acquiring knowledge. The item 'learning concepts for attitudinal change' attracted a mean score of 3.6, indicating strong agreement. It has been suggested that a person's attitude is directly related to the amount of exposure that person has with learning concepts. Regarding irregularity at political science lessons, it was revealed that respondents sometimes absented themselves from political science lessons. Absenteeism limits students' capacity to learn and understand concepts. The nature of concepts makes it difficult for most students to learn and understand them personally without the guidance of the teacher. Since people perceive concepts differently, it is important that students attend political science lessons regularly so they can have a common experience and perception of concepts under the guidance of the teacher. Reactions to the item 'not interested in political science because of concepts' yielded a mean value of 1.8 which falls within the range of scores for 'Disagree'. In other words, the students were not interested in learning political science for reasons other than the presence of concepts.

Out of the ten items for the research question, 4 means are related to Strongly Agree, 3 to Agree, another 3 to Disagree, and none to Strongly Disagree. This indicates that 7 out of the 10 means are positive (Strongly Agree and Agree), while 3 are negative (Disagree). The 'Mean' of 'Means' of the individual items is 2.66, which belongs to the group of positive means. Generally, therefore, the respondents and for that matter, students of higher secondary level had a positive or favourable attitude towards political science.

2) Factors Influencing Students' Attitudes towards Political Science:

Students' opinion was elicited about the factors that influence attitudes towards political science in Bamutia R.D Block area. Certain factors positively or negatively affect the teaching and learning concepts, like other subjects in political science too. Hence, the formulation of this research question to investigate them. A questionnaire items required students to list five factors that facilitate the learning of political science concepts. The recurrent factors are presented in Table 1.2.

Table 2

Table 2 Factors Influence Students' Attitudes Towards Political Science			
S.L No	Factors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Use of appropriate techniques	8	7.8
2.	Going on fieldtrips to places of interest	6	5.9
3.	Resourcefulness of teachers to motivate students	10	9.8
4.	Providing textbooks for both students and teachers	11	10.8
5.	Establishment of political science laboratory	10	9.8
6.	Provision of help by resources persons	11	10.8
7.	Provision of TLMS, including computers	17	16.7
8.	Group learning	4	4
9.	Use of real objects and examples in teaching	5	4
10.	Teacher's good attitude towards the subject	4	4
11.	No Responses	16	15.7
12.	Total	102	100 (99.3)

Source Responses Received Through Questionnaire

Students' opinion on the factors that influences attitudes towards political science teaching and learning shows diversity in opinion. Table 3 suggests that the opinion of the students on the use of appropriate techniques to teaching political science constitutes 7.1% and going on fieldtrips to places of interest calculates 6.1%, which play significant role in motivating and learning political science. The provision of TLMS including computers (16.7%), the use of resource persons (10.8%), provision of textbooks for both students and teachers (10.7%), establishment of a political science laboratory (10.7%) and resourcefulness of political science teachers (9.6%) greatly facilitate the teaching and learning of political science concepts.

All these factors imply that the successful teaching and learning of political science concepts depends largely on the availability of required instructional resources and the teacher's commitment and enthusiasm in the teaching of the subject. No one can deny the vital role that instructional resources play in ensuring the understanding and internalization of concepts. Teaching-learning materials facilitate the learning and understanding of concepts by students. Similarly, the use of resource persons in teaching political science not only breaks boredom but more importantly adds meaning, vitality and interest to the regular classroom experiences.

3) Factors hinder attitudes of students towards political science:

Several factors are there to hinder students' attitudes towards political science in teaching and learning. Students' opinions on the factors that hinder attitudes of students towards political science are presented in Table 1.3.

Table 3

Table 3 Factors That Hinder Attitudes of Students Towards Political Science			
S. L. No	Factors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Lack of TLMS	19	18.6
2.	Lack of funds to organize fieldtrips	16	15.7
3.	Inadequate number of seminars and workshops	13	12.8
4.	Lack of well equipped libraries and resource rooms	19	18.6
5.	Infrequent use of problem –solving techniques	11	10.8
6.	Lack of journals, magazines and newspapers	10	9.8
7.	No response	14	13.7
8.	Total	102	100.0

Source Responses Received Through Questionnaire

It is revealed from the table 1.3 that among the factors that hinder effective teaching and learning of concepts in political science, lack of TLMS (18.6%), lack of funds to organize fieldtrips (15.7%) and lack of well- equipped libraries and resource rooms (18.6%) were ranked high. The importance of fieldtrips, well-equipped libraries and political science laboratories cannot be over-emphasized. Educational trips beyond the regular classroom encourage students to become active learners, and provide a way of relating theoretical study to practical problems in the world, thus enhancing the learning experience. The teaching and learning of political science should not therefore be confined to the four walls of the classroom because every community, however small it is, has resources that can be used to strengthen the learning of political science.

Other significant factors are the infrequent use of problem solving techniques to teach political science (10.8%) and lack of journals, newspapers and magazines (9.8%) hinder the attitude of the students in learning political science. Problem –

solving constitute an integral part of the teaching and learning of political science like other subjects of social science. In the view of the programme, the teacher using the problem-solving method “should not furnish students with the data but rather help them to identify problems and make decisions. This method of teaching political science shifts the role of the teacher from an expository one to the role of a guide and resources person; and it shifts the role to the learners from being passive recipients of pre-packaged information to that of active, direct problem solvers. As a result of its contribution to developing essential skills and promoting worthy values for democratic living, many political science educators regard problem solving as an integral part of the teaching and learning of political science. The use of journals, news-papers and magazines are equally important in political science. Newspapers, journals and magazines are ideal resources for teaching current events in political science.

10. FINDINGS

The present study was conducted to elicit the attitudes of higher secondary school students towards political science in Bamutia R.D Block. The following findings came up from the study.

- 1) The attitude of the students under study are quite favorable towards political science. They have positive attitude on political science content.
- 2) The factors such as the provision of instructional materials, including computers, provision of appropriate and adequate textbooks for both tutors and students were the top factors that facilitated the teaching and learning of political science concepts.
- 3) It also came to light that lack of TLMs, lack of funds to organize fieldtrips, lack of well- equipped libraries and resource rooms were ranked high which hinder the attitude of students towards the learning of political science besides other significant factors like infrequent use of problem-solving techniques, lack of journals, newspapers and magazines.

11. SUGGESTIONS

In the light of the present study the following suggestions have been made.

- 1) Sufficient fund should be allocated for TLMs and teachers should use appropriate TLMs in transmitting curriculum to the students. In this regard the teachers should be given proper training.
- 2) Schools must conduct field trips and educational tours in every academic year to develop positive attitude among the students towards political science subject.
- 3) Teachers need to establish Political Science Lab/ Subject Room in their respective schools to develop positive attitude towards political science subject among students.
- 4) Teachers should conduct political science exhibitions, mock parliament, organize Gram Sabha like activities to grow interests among the students.

12. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the present research and the elaborate methodology followed by the researcher the study concludes that, students have positive attitude

on political science content. Students perceive that political science develops national integration among students. Most of the high school students are not participating in political science exhibitions. The study recommends that, schools must conduct field trips and educational tours in every academic year to develop positive attitude among the students towards political science subject. Teachers need to establish political science lab in their respective schools and also to conduct political science exhibitions to develop positive attitude towards political science subject among the students.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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