



THE ROLE OF ELECTORAL LITERACY CLUBS IN STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY THROUGH YOUNG VOTER PARTICIPATION: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The Role of Electoral Literacy Clubs in Strengthening the Democracy and Young Voter Participation an Analytical Study This research article will learn about the participation of young voters in democracy. In a democratic system, there is a practice of citizens choosing their rulers. In this regard, there is an opportunity to choose a good government through general elections. In a democracy, Electoral Literacy Clubs have been established with the aim of attracting the youth community, who were constantly staying outside the polling stations, to the polling booth. With the aim of instilling democratic values in the minds of young people at the learning stage. With the basic idea that no voter should be left out of voting and that every vote is valuable, the Election Commission of India has provided opportunities for the establishment of Electoral Literacy Clubs and election awareness groups targeting young voters. In this regard, how Electoral Literacy Clubs and election awareness groups function and how they are working for free and fair voting in elections and what are the obstacles to young voters participating in the voting process more effectively and what are the solutions to it. The article sheds light on how Electoral Literacy Clubs are working. The research article also covers the basic idea of effective implementation of Electoral Literacy Clubs, in which data was collected and analyzed through the questionnaire method.

Keywords: Democracy, Young Voter, Participation, Election, Public Interest, Political System, Leadership, Voter Education

1. INTRODUCTION

Democracy is not just a system; it is a way of life. The political system of a country is an important determining factor in changing the direction of a country. Many countries in the world follow the democratic model of government and it is the best system. This democratic system has developed gradually since the time of the Greek civilizations and the period of Mahajanapads of India. In the present technological era, Democracy has developed through various dimensions. In this democratic system, elections are its pillars. The participation of present youth in the effective implementation of this democratic system is very important. As Kautilya mentioned in his Arthashastra, the powers and duties of the king, how the king should govern for the welfare of the citizens and how the citizens should behave and through which the citizens should achieve their prosperity have been explained. Similarly, for the country to be secure, the representatives who rule us must be correct. Therefore, the continuous awareness of the citizens is the lifeblood of democracy. The role of the

youth is very important in changing the direction of a country. In this regard, democracy should be strengthened further and the youth should participate more and more in the elections and vote, thereby With the basic objective of fulfilling the aspirations of the people themselves, the Election Commission of India has facilitated the establishment of Electoral Literacy Clubs from secondary level to college level and universities for the literacy and awareness of young voters. How did they are working? This research article attempts to understand how today's young voters are participating in the voting process and upholding democratic values in strengthening the grassroots level of democratic system. This article also highlights the fact that the adoption of today's information technology is essential for the youth in the present elections.

1.1. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) The present study is to take steps to remove the barriers to young voters participation
- 2) How Electoral Literacy Clubs are functioning in elections
- 3) To study the voters who are on the threshold of grassroots democracy and who are eligible to
- 4) become voters
- 5) To find out the loopholes in the formation of Electoral Literacy Clubs
- 6) To develop a culture of electoral participation
- 7) To create awareness among young voters about the electoral technological tools of the modern era

2. RESEARCH GAP

There has been no research on young voters and Electoral Literacy Clubs in democracy till now, but various articles have been published by the Election Commission of India on Electoral Literacy Clubs. However, the number of young voters participating in elections is decreasing, especially in urban areas, and it is a challenge for the Election Commission of India to fill this research gap through this article.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative and qualitative methods have been used for the study of the present article and for the analytical study on the role of Electoral Literacy Clubs in strengthening democracy and young voter participation, studied Ancillary sources Books and news papers and some articles from the internet have been used for the study and questionnaire method has been used for the study of this article

4. RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the present article, it is necessary to form Electoral Literacy Clubs in schools, colleges and professional educational institutions in order to make the subject of democracy interesting mainly among the youth and to implement them effectively. In this regard, what are the obstacles for the effective implementation of Electoral Literacy Clubs and what are the disadvantages in following up on their implementation? Why have these Literacy Clubs not been able to reach the people so far and why today's young generation is showing apathy in coming to the polling stations and voting enthusiastically in elections and showing apathy towards politics? This article is also based on the subject of the studies.

4.1. MEANING AND TYPES OF DEMOCRACY

The word democracy is familiar to everyone, but it cannot be explained in a single sentence to encompass all its meanings. The concept of democracy is multifaceted and is a composite concept that encompasses many elements. The English word 'Democracy' which is a compound form of the Greek words 'Demos' and 'kratos' which means people and power or the power of the people. The great Greek democrat Pericles defined democracy as a government in which the people are the powerful. Overall, in democracy, the process by which the citizens themselves choose their rulers is a process in which democracy is not a government of a few but of many. It is a system of participation of the majority and

a system that allows the participation of ordinary citizens in the administration of the state. We can see whereas types of democracy.

4.2. DIRECT DEMOCRACY

Direct democracy means that the will of the state is expressed directly or immediately through the people. The famous political thinker James Garner said that this type of democratic system could be seen in the Greek city-states in the past. And Direct democracy or pure democracy is a form of democracy in which the electorate directly decides on policy initiatives, without elected representatives as proxies, as opposed to the representative democracy.

4.3. INDIRECT DEMOCRACY

Indirect democracy, also known as representative democracy, is a system where citizens elect representatives to make decisions and laws on their behalf. This contrasts with direct democracy, where citizens directly vote on policy decisions. In an indirect democracy, elected officials act as delegates, representing the interests of their constituents in the legislative process. Indirect democracy is a system of government in which the citizens themselves elect their representatives and run them through representatives. Today, this model of democracy exists in many countries around the world. In addition to these, representative democracy, parliamentary democracy, and Presidential democracy, participatory democracy, socialist democracy, and many other models can be found in democracy.

4.4. ELECTORAL LITERACY AND YOUTH VOTER AWARENESS AGENCIES FOR DEMOCRACY

For people to participate in democracy, proper education is essential for voters, especially young voters, because continuous awareness is the lifeblood of democracy. In this regard, the Election Commission of India is a program targeting young voters, that is, voters between the ages of 18 and 25 and voters who have reached the threshold of voting. Such as,

4.5. ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Articles 324 to 329 in Part 15 of the Constitution describe the structure and working methods of the Election Commission of India. It is the supreme body of voters that conducts all general elections in the whole of India. These constitutional bodies, from the national level to the State Election Commission and the District Election Committee, are engaged in the work of creating voter awareness step by step.

4.6. SYSTEMATIC VOTER EDUCATION AND ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION (SVEEP)

SVEEP is the flagship program of the Election Commission of India for voter education, spreading voter awareness and promoting voter literacy in India. It is a multi-intervention programme that reaches out through different modes and media to educate citizens, electors, and voters about the electoral process in order to increase their awareness and promote their informed participation. SVEEP is designed according to the socio-economic, cultural, and demographic profile of the state as well as history of electoral participation in previous rounds of elections. The Commission produces several voter awareness materials and disseminates the same through various mediums/platforms of communication i.e Print Media, Electronic Media, Social Media etc.

The Election Commission has been making many efforts to provide voter education since 1950. In recent years, some programs have been introduced following systematic measures. One of the major programs is SVEEP, which was implemented since 2009. This program was first implemented in the state of Jharkhand, mainly because SVEEP is an eligible voter and they have failed to register to vote. It was implemented in three phases.

First phase from 2009 to 2013

The Election Commission of India organized an awareness program during the elections in 21 states and 2 union territories under this banner.

Second phase from 2013 to 2014

In this phase, the assessment of the improvement of the conditions of the polling booths and voter education were implemented.

Third phase from 2014 to Till

Priority was given to the awareness of youth and women voters in urban and rural areas for election awareness.

5. FORMATION OF ELECTORAL LITERACY CLUBS AND ITS FUNCTIONS

An Electoral Literacy Club is a platform to engage school students through interesting activities and hands-on experience to sensitize them on their electoral rights and familiarize them with the electoral process of registration and voting. ELCs are also present in colleges and rural communities.

At ELCs, learning meets fun. Activities and Games are designed to stimulate and motivate students provoking them to think and ask questions. Through ELC, Election Commission of India aims at strengthening the culture of electoral participation among young and future voters. With the basic aim of creating and mainstreaming electoral literacy among the youth and future voters for continuous electoral literacy and democratic education, Electoral Literacy Club were formed on the occasion of National Voters' Day 2018. These Electoral Literacy Club function in three phases.

In the first phase, Electoral Literacy Club are formed for students studying in classes 9 to 12, i.e. between the ages of 14 and 17.

In the second phase, Electoral Literacy Club are formed for students studying in college and university level between the ages of 18 and 21.

In the third phase, Electoral Literacy Clubs are formed in Gram Panchayats with the aim of reaching out to the youth outside the schools and colleges of rural and community. The supervision of these is maintained by the Zillah Panchayats. These Electoral Literacy Clubs are actively participating in the election process and voter registration program and actively involve young voters. It works with the main objective of ensuring that no one is excluded from the voting process to participate in democracy under the SVEEP activities.

6. ROLE OF ELECTORAL LITERACY CLUBS IN YOUNG VOTER PARTICIPATION

The Election Commission of India has made it mandatory to establish Electoral Literacy Clubs at school, college and university levels for the awareness of young voter's education. Under them, every year, school parliament elections are held and mock parliament's sessions are held. As part of the celebration of National Voters Day, essay competitions, painting competitions, rangoli competitions, and posters and play cards painting competitions are held at the taluk, district and state levels to create voter education awareness among young voters about the values of voting. However, the fact that today's youth are neglecting to participate in the voting process has made it necessary to implement a compulsory voting policy.

7. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

the present article deals with the role of young voters and Electoral Literacy Clubs in strengthening democracy. In an analytical study, students of various schools and colleges were surveyed through questionnaire method in which 198 students responded to different questions in different ways.

1) Established Electoral Literacy Clubs in your educational institution?

SL NO	Respondents	Percentage
YES	79	39.90%
NO	26	13.00%
DONT NO	93	47%
TOTAL	198	100%

In the above table, out of 198 students, 39.9% of the respondents answered yes, 13% of the respondents answered no, and 47% of the respondents said that they do not know anything about the formation of Electoral Literacy

Clubs. This is evident from the data provided by the respondents that Electoral Literacy Clubs should be strengthened to a greater extent.

2) Voter education awareness programs would conducted under the Electoral Literacy Clubs?

SL NO	Respondents	Percentage
YES	98	49.50%
NO	32	6.20%
DONT NO	68	34.30%
TOTAL	198	100%

In the above table, are voter education awareness programs conducted under the Electoral Literacy Clubs? 98(49.5 %) students responded yes, 32 (6.2 %) students responded no and 68(34.3 %) students responded that they did not know, but compared to the respondents who answered both questions, no and do not know, it is revealed from the above figures that 50% percent of the students studying in schools and colleges are not aware of the awareness programs of the Electoral Literacy Clubs and voter education

3) Do you participate in voter registration awareness programs conducted in your school and college?

SL NO	Respondents	Percentage
Effectively	64	32.17%
partially	73	36.4. %
Did not Participete	61	31.30%
Total	198	100%

In the above table, 32.17% of the respondents answered that they participate effectively in the voter registration awareness programs in schools and colleges. 36.4% of the respondents responded that they partially participated and 31.3% of the respondents responded that they did not participate, which emphasizes the strengthening of Electoral Literacy Clubs

4) Have you tried to get registered your name in the voter list through your college?

SL NO	Respondents	Percentage
YES	85	42.90%
NO	86	43.40%
DONT NO	27	13.60%
TOTAL	198	100%

In the above table, 42.9 percent of the respondents responded yes to the question, "Have you tried to get registered your name in the voter list through your college?", while 43.4 percent of the respondents responded no. This indicates that effective Electoral Literacy Clubs need to be implemented in schools and colleges for voter registration and awareness, and 13.6 percent of the respondents responded "I don't know" which highlights the strengthening of voter education issues.

5) Are young people using social media more effectively in voter registration and awareness?

SL NO	Respondents	Percentage
More effectively	56	28.30%
Partially	76	38.40%
NO	20	10.10%
Did not know.	46	23.20%
TOTAL	198	100%

In the above table, the Election Commission of India has introduced social media-based mobile apps for youth voter education and awareness. When asked about the question, 28.3% of respondents said they are using it more effectively, 38.4% said they use it partially, and 10.1% said they do not. 23.2% of respondents said they do not know. If the Election Commission uses social media more in voter registration and awareness, it can mobilize young voters to vote.

6) Electoral Literacy Clubs are effective in developing the political leadership among students?

SL NO	Respondents	Percentage
Very successful	41	20.70%
Successful	87	43.90%
Unsuccessful,	10	5.10%
Do	10	5.10%
Do not know	50	25.30%
TOTAL	198	100%

In the above table, when asked whether Electoral Literacy Clubs are effective in developing political leadership among students, 20.7 percent of the respondents responded that they are very successful, while 43.9 percent of the respondents responded that they are somewhat successful. 5.1 percent of the respondents responded that they are unsuccessful, 5.1 percent of the respondents responded that they are not and 25.3 percent of the respondents responded that they do not know. The main thing to be understood from this is that Electoral Literacy Clubs need to be effectively strengthened at the school-college level, only then will it be possible to develop political leadership among students and thereby, by giving priority to youth leadership, sustainable democracy will be strengthened.

7) Are you interested in knowing about the political phenomena?

SL NO	Respondents	Percentage
YES	146	73.70%
NO	37	18.70%
DONT NO	15	7.60%
TOTAL	198	100%

In the above table, 73.7 percent of the respondents responded yes to the question, "they are interested in knowing about political phenomena?" and 18.7% of the respondents responded no and 7.6% of the respondents responded that they did not know. Today's youth are more eager to know about the political phenomena of the country, so if Electoral Literacy Clubs are strengthened from the school and college levels for the purpose of political participation of young voters, the future leadership and the ruling class will be able to be more youthful,

8) Does the youth have a role in changing governments?

SL NO	Respondents	Percentage
large extent	120	60.60%
small extent	49	24.70%
No	7	3.50%
Don't know	22	11.10%
Total	198	100%

In the above table, when asked whether the youth have a role in changing governments, 60.6% of the respondents responded that it is to a large extent and 24.7% of the respondents responded that it is to a small extent. It is seen that today's youth play a crucial role in changing governments, as prove in many elections. It can be recalled that in the 2023 Karnataka Assembly elections, guarantees were announced in favor of the youth and only 3.5% of the respondents responded that they are not and 11.1% of the respondents responded that they do not know. It can be seen in this article that young voters play an important role in strengthening democracy and changing governments.

8. CONCLUSION

'Eternal awareness is the lifeblood of democracy' therefore, there is a need for today's youth to participate more and more in strengthening democracy. Democratic government is not a government of a few, but a government of many. In this, it is not enough for the citizens to elect their leaders and send them to the legislative assemblies, but it is the primary duty of the citizens to follow the policies and rules of the government. In this regard, since the role of the youth is important in the formation of the government, they need to participate in the elections and cast their valuable votes, that is why the Election Commission of India has provided an opportunity to form Electoral Literacy Clubs at the school, college and university levels to attract young voters to the polling stations. From time to time, the Election Commission has been implementing many innovative programs to strengthen the democratic system, but it is a sad fact that even

today the youth are left out of the polling stations. In the present research article, about 198 students were surveyed and gave different answers to different questions. It is known from the above statistics that the strongest government system in the world is the democratic government system. True democracy is a government that brings about revolutionary change in the social and economic lives of the people without bloodshed. Therefore, there is a need for more and more young people to participate in elections and strengthen democracy.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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