

# Political Socialisation of youths in Shillong city

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**Abstract-** Political socialisation is a process through which individuals acquire formal and informal, deliberate and unplanned politically relevant social attitudes and personality traits. It is a learning process where people acquire their attitudes and orientations through many agents of political socialisation. Youths play a major role in the political development of a country. The paper attempt to find out the role played by these agents and also the youth's interest in politics.

**Keywords-** Political Socialisation, Youths, Agents, Orientations.

**Methodology-** The study purely relies on primary sources. For the purpose of collecting information, interviews were conducted with 120 youths in Shillong between the ages 18-30 years. Because of the nature of study, a stratified sampling was used for selecting the respondents.

**Objective:** The objective of the study is as follows:

1. To find out the role played by the agents of political socialisation in shaping political orientations of youths in Shillong
2. To find out the extent of the youth's political interest.

## Research Questions

1. What is the rate of political discussion with family members, peer groups and teachers?
2. How politically aware do youths obtained from reading newspapers, watching televisions and social media?
3. Do youths in Shillong have interest in politics?

## Introduction

“Political socialisation is a process through which individuals acquire formal and informal, deliberate and unplanned politically relevant social attitudes and personality traits.”<sup>1</sup> It is a learning process whereby we developed our values, attitudes and orientations towards the political system through different socialising agents. In the process, people are inducted into the political culture and acquire a particular pattern of behaviour. Easton defined political socialisation as “those developmental processes through which persons acquires political orientations and patterns of behaviour”<sup>2</sup>

Gabriel Almond and James Coleman stated that our political behaviour, attitudes, values and knowledge is not genetically inherited, but in fact we tend to fit in to our political culture through the political learning process. Hence knowledge is a product of the socialisation process.<sup>3</sup>

Political socialisation is effected through a variety of agents.<sup>4</sup> Those groups and institutions which participate in and contribute to the on-going process of political socialisation are known as agents of political socialisation.<sup>5</sup>These agents are many in number, naming a few such as family, peer groups or friends, teachers, mass media etc. These agents play an active role in shaping our political attitudes and behaviour. “Family is the first window to the outer world for the child; it is the child's first contact with authority”<sup>6</sup> “As children grow older, they have increasing contact with people outside their homes. The teachers and the school-mates influence their attitudes to some extent.”<sup>7</sup> Newspapers, Televisions and social media explicitly communicate political values and orientations to people.

This paper attempts to find out the political socialisation of youths in Shillong through the different socialising agents. A brief background of Shillong city is highlighted and different tables are projected for understanding the role and influence the socialising agents had on the youths in Shillong. The study also attempt to find out the extent of the youth's political interest, political knowledge and political awareness

## Discussion and Findings

Shillong is the capital city of the state of Meghalaya with a population of 143,229 (2011 Census). Youths play a major role in the political development of a country. Their political participation through voting can create a political wave in an election; their entry into the electoral arena makes election results unpredictable and the future of a country really depends on them.

The paper tried to study the rate of youth political discussions with family members, peer groups and teachers

Table 1- Political discussions with family members, peer groups, teachers

Sex	Age Group	Family	Peer groups	Teachers
Male	18-24	36%	45%	19%
	25-30	36%	53%	11%
Female	18-24	39%	38%	23%
	25-30	40%	34%	26%

From Table 1, it is revealed that from amongst the male between the age group 18-24, the rate of political discussions with teachers is 19% while with family members the rate is 36% and with peer groups the rate is 45%.

The table also shows that from the young males between the age group 25 and 30, the rate of political discussion with teachers is 11%, while discussion with family is 36% and with peer groups the rate of political discussion is 53%.

Table 1 also revealed that from among the young girls between the age group 18 and 24, the rate of political discussion with teachers is 23% while 38% of them discussed politics with peer groups and the political discussion rate with family is 39%.

The table also revealed that young girls between the age group 25 and 30, the rate of political discussion with teachers is 26%, while that with peer groups is 34% and 40% is with family members.

How politically aware our youths are is a question that is put forth and the study have identified three agents where youths can explicitly obtain their political awareness from. The important agents are newspapers, televisions and social media.

Table 2- political awareness through newspapers, Televisions and social media

Sex	Age Group	Newspapers	Televisions	Social media
Male	18-24	32%	28%	40%
	25-30	37%	36%	27%
Female	18-24	31%	22%	47%
	25-30	33%	20%	47%

From Table 2 it is observed that 28% of young males between the age group 18-24 obtained political awareness through televisions, while 32% of them received from newspaper and 40% from social media.

The table also revealed that 27% of the males between the age group 25-30 obtained their political awareness through social media, while 36% of them from televisions and 37% of them from newspaper.

Table 2 also revealed that 22% of young females between the age group 18-24 obtained political awareness through televisions, while 31% of them received political awareness from newspaper and 47% from social media.

The table also revealed that 20% of the females between the age group 25-30 obtained their political awareness through television, while 33% of them from newspapers and 47% from social media.

Do youths in Shillong have interest in politics? Another research question posed and Table 3 highlighted the rate of youth's interest in politics.

Table 3-Interest in politics

Sex	Age Group	Yes	No
Male	18-24	86%	14%
	25-30	59%	41%
Female	18-24	53%	47%
	25-30	21%	79%

Table 3 revealed that 14% of young males aged between 18-24 are not interested in politics whereas 86% of them are very much interested in politics. Looking at another group of boys aged between 25 and 30, 41% of them are not interested in politics while 59% of them show they are interested in politics.

A glimpse again at Table 3 reveals that 47% of young females of the age group 18-24 do not have interest in politics while 53% of them are more interested in it. Interestingly the table also revealed that while 21% of females aged between 25 and 30 are interested in politics while 79% are not.

## Findings

- The study revealed that for males from both the age groups, the highest rate of political discussion happened with friends.
- For females, from both age groups, the highest rate of political discussion happened with family members.
- The study revealed that social media is an agent that plays a very important role in creating political awareness for young males aged between 18 and 24.
- For males aged between 25 and 30, the highest rate of political awareness is obtained through reading newspapers.
- The study also revealed that for females from both age groups, the highest rate of obtaining political awareness is through social media.
- It is found that majority of the males from both age groups, are interested in politics.
- The study also revealed that majority of the females between the age group 18 and 24 are interested in politics but interestingly, majority of the females belonging to the older age group are not interested in politics.

## Conclusion

To conclude, it is seen that peer groups, family, social media and newspapers played an important role as agents of political socialisation among the youths in Shillong. They helped the youths where to place their loyalties and inculcate values and beliefs in the system. So strong were these agents that youths in Shillong were so inducted into their political attitudes and orientations that make their interests leaned towards politics.

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## References

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