Community Perception Towards Students' Involvement in Politics

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Abstract

The core of success of democratic government rests upon the extent of people participation, involvement of organizations and pressure groups, including students' organisations in government machinery. But a research gap is found regarding students involvement in politics from the perspectives of community perception. The present investigation has made an attempt to ascertain the community perception towards students' involvement in politics. Data was collected from a sample of 200 community people including students, teachers, other professional persons, common people and political party people. The study found that attitudes of the majority of students and political party people towards students' involvement in politics are positive and significant; while the attitudes of the teachers, other professional persons and common people are unfavourable towards the same. There is no significant difference between male and female respondents, teachers and other professional persons, and common people and political party people in respect to their attitudes towards students' involvement in politics. But, a significant difference is found between students and teachers in respect of their attitudes towards students' involvement in politics.

ls: Students' Politics, Community Perception, Students' Political Participation, Students' Political Involvement)

INTRODUCTION

Socio-economic development of a nation depends to a large extent upon the political will of the people and their participation in political issues. It is more significant in a heterogeneous country like India so that issues of different castes, communities, religions, languages and even geographical variations can be addressed appropriately in the political as well as government platforms. Moreover, the core of success of democratic government rests upon the extent of people participation in government policies and activities. As such, several organizations and pressure groups actively involved in politics by their demands to government machinery. Several student organizations are also seemed to be involved either directly or indirectly in politics.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of the earlier research studies shows that most of the studies are related to political participation of students at institutional level as well as in the forefront of the democratic machinery. Raill and Hollander (2006) observed that students prefer "political engagement," rather than "politics" to describe the various strategies students use within the public realm to create change.

E.J. Dionne's (2000) quoting about the New Student Politics concludes that, "the great reforming generations are the ones that marry the aspirations of service to the possibilities of politics and harness the good work done in local communities to transform a nation."

Similarly, Harry Boyte (2004), narrates that the "new student politics, is a "sign that today's students in American colleges and universities are beginning to think and act politically, as organizers for change."

Ullattil, J. (2016) revealed that majority (84%) of the students agree that student politics helps to counter the inefficient college management (84%) and to prevent ill-treatment inflicted on the students by the college authorities (80%). Vast majority of students were attracted to join in party politics because of the party's ideology (87.3%); for their safety and protection (78.9%); the frequent and meaningful activities of the party (89.7%) and most of them (92.2%) agreed that joining the party gave them confidence to demand for justice and rights.

Baruah, (2002) observes that North-East India has been a hot bed of student politics for quite sometimes now. Students of this region have been launching massive movements on issues of cultural identity and economic backwardness, at times with secessionist overtones. Politics and societies of all the states of North East India are today greatly influenced by these movements.

Statera (1975) revealed that the new student politics distinguishes itself from the traditional pattern because of its separation from institutionalized national politics. Despite the refrain of the established politicians and intellectuals that students should not be active in politics, young people in their own ways have always been interested in politics.

Easton and Dennis (1989), on political socialization research revealed that young children are not only interested in politics but they are also politicized at a very early age. In consequence, a supportive attitude is built in the minds of young children towards the political authorities, or it might generate hostility towards such authorities.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Students seemed to have somehow taken over the political space in the whole country. This phenomenon is more vibrant in North East India where student organizations have become major political players in some States making or marring fortunes of governments. The investigator, after reviewing the earlier studies found that most of the researchers focussed on rising of new students' politics influencing government machinery (Raill and Hollander, 2006, E.J. Dionne's, 2000, Harry Boyte, 2004 and Statera, 1975) and political socialisation of young child (Easton and Dennis, 1989). Study conducted by Ullattil, J. (2016) was related to participation of students in institutional politics.

However, should students be involved in politics? Does students' involvement in politics affect in quality of education? Does it strengthen the quality of leadership and democratic citizenship? Does it enhance students' indiscipline and youth unrest? These are some significant questions which require immediate solutions so as to find out the ways of role-conflict of students arising in the field of politics. The investigator found no empirical study dealing with those questions and resulting a research gap on the issue of students involvement in politics. Thus, a need was felt to conduct an empirical study to ascertain the community perception towards students' involvement in politics.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study was entitled as *"Community Perception towards Students' Involvement in Politics."*

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the extent to which the community people are favourable or otherwise disposed towards students' involvement in politics.
2. To find out if there is any significant difference between male and female, students and teachers, teachers and other professional persons, political party people and common people, and students and political party people in respect of their attitude towards students' involvement in politics.

HYPOTHESIS

The present study established the following hypothesis to achieve the second objective of the study.

H_o1: There is no significant difference between male and female with respect to their attitudes towards student involvement in politics.

H_o2: There is no significant difference between students and teachers with respect to their attitudes towards student involvement in politics.

H_o3: There is no significant difference between teachers and other professional persons with respect to their attitudes towards student involvement in politics.

H_o4: There is no significant difference between political party people and common people with respect to their attitudes towards student involvement in politics.

H_o5: There is no significant difference between students and political party people with respect to their attitudes towards student involvement in politics.

METHODOLOGY

The Descriptive Survey Method was followed in the present study. This method describes and interprets views and opinions of different community people in relation to students' involvement in politics. It is mainly concern with the interest, likings and disliking of the respondents about students' involvement in politics.

(a) Population

The universe of this study was defined as all the people living in Dhemaji District of Assam, India.

(b) Sample

The quota sampling technique was used and as such, the unit of the sampling consisted of 200 community people i.e. 40 respondents each from students, teachers, other professional persons, common people and political party people out of which 124 and 76 were male and female respondents respectively.

(c) Tools

In order to collect the pertinent data of this study, a Likert type Attitude Scale was developed to measure the attitudes of different community people towards students' involvement in politics. 19 items, i.e. 10 positive and 9 negative items, arranged on a five point scale were selected for answering the questions. Should students be

involved in politics? Does students' involvement in politics affect in quality of education? Does it strengthen the quality of leadership and democratic citizenship? Does it enhance students' indiscipline and youth unrest? Validity and reliability of the scale was established statistically in a pilot study. The scale, however, yielded a split half reliability index of 0.82.

(d) Data Collection

In this study, the area of data collection was confined to Dhemaji District in Assam. The Attitude Scale was administered to all the 200 community people including students, teachers, other professional persons, common people and political party people. After half-an hour, the response sheets duly filled-in were collected from all the respondents and were scored giving numerical values to obtain attitude index of the respondents.

(e) Statistical Techniques

In this study, percentage (%) and Critical Ratio (C.R.) values were computed for analysis of data and interpretation of results. In order to compute C.R. values, it was also necessary to compute Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and Standard Error of Differences in this study.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

(i) Attitudes of Community People

Table 1: Favourable and Unfavourable Attitudes of Different Community People

Respondents	Favourable Attitude		Unfavourable Attitude		Total
	f	%	f	%	
Students	28	70	12	30	40
Teachers	04	10	36	90	40
Other Professional Persons	06	15	34	85	40
Political Party People	22	55	18	45	40
Common People	08	20	32	80	40
As a Whole	68	34	132	66	200

To find out the extent to which the community people are favourably or otherwise disposed towards students' involvement in politics, the percentage of the total scores were calculated showing favourable and unfavourable attitudes towards students' involvement in politics. From the results, it was found that majority of the students (70%) and political party people (55%) showed favourable attitude towards students' involvement in politics, while 30% and 45% of them respectively showed unfavourable attitudes towards the same. It is to be noted most of the teachers (90%), other professional persons (85%) and common people (80%) showed unfavourable attitudes towards students' involvement in politics, while only 10%, 15% and 20% of them respectively showed favourable attitudes towards the same. As a whole, majority (66%) of the respondents revealed favourable attitudes and about one third (34%) of them have unfavourable attitudes towards students; involvement in politics.

(ii) Differences of Mean Scores between male and female respondents

Testing of Null Hypothesis (H_o1): There is no significant difference between male and female with respect to their attitudes towards student involvement in politics

Table-2: Mean Difference of Attitude Scores between Male and Female Respondents Towards Students' Involvement in Politics

Group	N	Mean	SD	Difference	C.R. value

Male	124	53.94	10.75	1.98	0.64*
Female	76	52.68	8.83		

The differences between the Means of Sub-groups were tested for significance or otherwise employing C.R. value. Table 2 shows the details. The Mean scores of Male and Female respondents are found 53.94 and 52.68 and the SDs 10.75 and 8.83 respectively. The CR value is found to be 0.64 which is not significant at .05 level of confidence. Thus, the hypothesis 1 may be accepted that there is no significant difference between the male and female respondents in respect of their attitudes towards students' involvement politics.

(ii) Differences of Mean Scores between students and teachers

Testing of Null Hypothesis (H_o2): There is no significant difference between students and teachers with respect to their attitudes towards student involvement in politics.

Table-3: Mean Difference of Attitude Scores between Students and Teachers Towards Students' Involvement in Politics

Group	N	Mean	SD	Difference	C.R. value
Students	40	61.85	9.47	2.77	4.68*
Teachers	40	48.40	8.02		

The Mean scores of Students and Teachers (shown in Table 3) are found 61.85 and 48.40 and the SDs are 9.45 and 8.02 respectively. The CR value is found to be 4.68 which is larger than the tabulated value of C.R. i.e. 1.96 and thus significant at .05 level of confidence. Therefore, hypothesis 2 may be rejected and may be concluded that there is a significant difference between the Students' and Teachers in respect of their attitudes towards students' involvement politics.

(iii) Differences of Mean Scores between teachers and other professional

Testing of Null Hypothesis (H_o3): There is no significant difference between teachers and other professional persons with respect to their attitudes towards student involvement in politics.

Table-4: Mean Difference of Attitude Scores between Teachers and Other Professional Persons Towards Students' Involvement in Politics

Group	N	Mean	SD	Difference	C.R. value
Teachers	40	48.40	8.02	2.65	0.21*
Other Professional	40	48.95	8.72		

The Mean scores of Teachers and other Professional Persons (shown in Table 4) are found as 48.40 and 48.95 and the SDs are 8.02 and 8.72 respectively. The CR value is found to be 0.21 which is not significant at .05 level of confidence. Thus, the hypothesis 3 of the study may be accepted that there is no significant difference between the Teachers and other Professional Persons in respect of their attitudes towards students' involvement politics.

(iv) Differences of Mean Scores between political party people and common people

Testing of Null Hypothesis (H_o4): There is no significant difference between political party people and common people with respect to their attitudes towards student involvement in politics.

Table-5: Mean Difference of Attitude Scores between Political Party People and Common People towards Students' Involvement in Politics

Group	N	Mean	SD	Difference	C.R. value
Political Party People	40	56.80	10.34	2.90	1.90*
Common People	40	51.30	7.85		

The Mean scores of political party people and common people (shown in Table 5) are 56.80 and 51.30, and the SDs are 10.34 and 7.85 respectively. The CR value is found to be 1.90 which is not significant at .05 level of confidence. Therefore, it may be concluded that there is no significant difference between the political party people and common people in respect of their attitudes towards students' involvement politics.

(v) Differences of Mean Scores between students and political party people

Testing of Null Hypothesis (H_o5): There is no significant difference between students and political party people with respect to their attitudes towards student involvement in politics.

Table-6: Mean Difference of Attitude Scores between Students and Political Party People Towards Students' Involvement in Politics

Group	N	Mean	SD	Difference	C.R. value
Students	40	61.85	9.47	3.14	1.61*
Political Party People	40	56.80	10.34		

The Mean scores of students and political party people (shown in Table 6) are found 61.85 and 56.80, and the SDs are 9.47 and 10.34 respectively. The CR value is found to be 1.61 which is not significant at .05 level of confidence. Therefore, it may be concluded that there is no significant difference between the students and political party people in respect of their attitudes towards students' involvement politics.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Majority of the students (70%) and political party people (55%) showed favourable attitude towards students' involvement in politics, while 30% and 45% of them respectively showed unfavourable attitudes towards the same.

2. Most of the teachers (90%), other professional persons (85%) and common people (80%) showed unfavourable attitudes towards students' involvement in politics.

3. As a whole, majority (66%) of the respondents revealed favourable attitudes and about one third (34%) of them have unfavourable attitudes towards students; involvement in politics.

4. There is a significant difference between the Students' and Teachers in respect of their attitudes towards students' involvement politics.

5. There is no significant difference between the Teachers and other Professional Persons in respect of their attitudes towards students' involvement politics.

6. There is no significant difference between the political party people and common people in respect of their attitudes towards students' involvement politics.

7. There is a significant difference is found between students and teachers in respect of their attitudes towards students' involvement in politics.

CONCLUSION

Thus, students' involvement in politics may although strengthen the quality leadership and democratic citizenship, too much involvement of students in political issues may lead to degradation of quality in education and may enhance students' indiscipline and youth unrest. Of course, another research study may be conducted to ascertain whether students' involvement in politics enhances student unrest or to find out the cause-effect relationship between students' unrest and students' politics.

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