



# School's role in Political socialization of students in Shivamogga district

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## Abstract

There are many formal agents in socializing children. School is one such, agent which effectively socializes children towards politics through its curriculum and extra-curriculum. Schools are traditional means and mode of learning. They have been imparting education through ages. It is in school that political culture is formally transmitted and acquired. The teacher may communicate political attitudes and orientations through overt expression in class room discussions or even outside the classroom as students may feel less constrained in behavior outside the class. The school develops citizenship qualities, such as discipline, co-operation, social awareness, tolerance, patriotism, rationalism and leadership. At the same time, students learn sincerity, discipline and regularity in the school. But there is another agent which socializes children through informal education in terms of rituals and practices. Culture is an ongoing learning process. The educational institutions influence the child's social and political values and thereby help in implementing the political culture in their minds. The democratic experiences are deepened, enriched and expanded to the wider circles in educational institutions. An attempt is made in the present article to assess the role of school in the process of political socialization of the children.

**Keywords:** *socializes, school, teacher, political*

## Introduction:

The most important agents in the process of political socialization is educational institutions. We aware that education is the potential instrument of social transformation and also an important means of national development which helps in national reconstruction. It is open secular and universalistic in nature. The success of national development largely depends on the quality of young people in any nation. Unless the youth are properly trained in social and political dynamics, group learning and living, they may not be able to shoulder their responsibilities in the near future. Thus, the school and teachers play a pivotal role in socializing the children towards politics.

Education has always been regarded as an important variable to analyze the political behavior of an individual. The basic foundations laid in the family are consolidated in the school. The school is an informal educational institution than the family. The democratic experiences are deepened, enriched and expanded to the wider circles in the educational institutions.

Historically speaking, the schools are traditional institutions of learning. They have been imparting education through the ages and have practically monopolized the sources of knowledge. It is in the school that the political culture is formally transmitted and acquired. They not only transmit the formal knowledge about culture but also the ethical sentiments, political attitudes and customs. “The children in early stages they uncritically absorb the culture to which their teachers give expression to” Among the educational institutions, the elementary school plays a crucial role in teaching conceptions and beliefs and attitudes about the operation of political systems. The child is taught to become a good citizen through the class rituals and ceremonies such as pledging allegiance to the flag, singing the national anthem and other patriotic songs. The teacher may communicate political attitudes and orientations through overt expression in class room discussions or even outside the classroom as they may feel less constrained in behavior outside the class. The real experience about democratic living can be provided to the child through curriculum and co-curricular activities organized in the schools. Thus, the school develops citizenship qualities, such as discipline, co-operation, social awareness, tolerance, patriotism, rationalism and leadership. At the same time, students learn sincerity, discipline and regularity in the school.

Almond and Verba have rightly pointed out that, “the more extensive an individual’s education, the more likely he is to be aware of the governmental institutions to have more political information, to offer opinions on political matters, to engage in political discussion with a wider range of people.

Gandhiji believed that, by spreading value-based education one can develop political orientations in a society and become politically aware and to become an active member of a democratic political system. In this way he believed that, education acts as a vehicle for the overall development of human personality. Educational institutions play a crucial role in the political socialization of the students. This article explicates an analysis of the school as an agent of political socialization in shaping and molding students’ political orientations among the school’s students.

**Objectives of the study.** The present study includes the following objectives, which are:

1. To know the nature of political socialization among the students and their common understanding about politics.
2. To study as to how different agencies of political socialization shapes the student’s political attitude and behavior.

3. To understand the parental influence over the students political learning.
4. To know the role of socio-economic and educational factors of family in shaping and molding the attitudes and outlooks of student towards politics.
5. To assess the students' political orientations, such as political awareness, political participation and evaluative orientation.

## Hypothesis

The present study in addition to the objectives also set the hypothesis namely.

1. A sense of political consciousness develops along with the growth, age and education among high school students.
2. In the initial stages Girls tend to be more politically conscious than the boys.
3. Political awareness, political participation and evaluative orientations are found high among the students of lower caste and the students of towns than compared to the village student
4. Mass media, Parents education, profession and income tend to affects the process of political socialization of students.
5. Government high school students are more politically aware, participation and evaluative orientation than the students of aided and unaided schools.

## Area and scope of study

**Area Of study;** The present study centers on the process of political socialization through different political orientations among high school students of Shimoga and shikaripura talluks of Shivamogga district,

**Scope of the study;** The present study relates and restricts to the political socialization of high school students in shivamogga district. The present research study covers the high school children belonging to the age group of 13 to 16 years. Three types of school, namely, Government, private aided and unaided high schools are covered to understand the political orientations among the students.

**Importance of the study;** India is the largest democratic and fast developing country in the world. The study of political socialization is very essential, because the strength and sustainability of the democratic system require more and more citizens' participation, which mainly depend upon the political learning of the people. Thus, political learning has to be started at the early age.

In India more than half of the population belongs to younger group, who are considered as the pillar and resources of a country. They can shape the future of the country. Hence it is more needed to channelize them towards nation building activities and politics. It is through the process of political socialization, they can imbibe democratic orientations, which are very essential for making the political system strong. Thus, pre-adult period is the best period to mould and shape the children towards politics. “What was learned that was learned best.”

**Methodology;** In view of the nature of the problem and techniques to be used, it is very clear at the outset that, the researcher has collected data from both primary and secondary sources. While collecting the data a combination method of survey and observation have been employed. This in turn has contributed to make an in-depth study covering all aspects of patterns and challenges to political socialization of high school students. A comprehensive study of political socialization of students has been conducted in support of the research under study.

**Tools for data collection;** Since the study is a comprehensive one, the researcher has employed several field studies tools. Which include both primary and secondary data. To give validity to the study and to make it exhaustive,

Primary data is collected by using structured questionnaire and schedule (both in English and Kannada medium) to elicit the response from the respondents, namely high school students. The questionnaire broadly encompasses the respondent's personal information, their socio-economic and educational back ground, importance of agents of political socialization and political orientations

Secondary data has been collected from published and unpublished literature on political socialization of high school students to analyze their political awareness, political participation and evaluative orientation. It includes book, reviews, working papers, articles, journals, newspapers and other related documents from D.D.P.I., B.E.O. and statistical department documents regarding number of schools, number of students. Ratio of boys and girls, number of schools government, Private aided and unaided.

**Field work;** The major field work has been conducted in collecting the relevant materials and field data as a continuous process till the completion of the research work. The researcher has adopted non-participant observation technique to supplement the data collected through the questionnaire.

The researcher has selected three types of school such as, government, Private aided and unaided schools in both Shimoga and Shikaripura Taluks. The collected data has been tabulated, coded and decoded manually and also using computers. Analysis of information and tables is done by using percentage as well as verbal descriptions.

**Sampling Method;** In order to make the study more comprehensive two sample methods are employed by the researcher namely, a). Simple Random sampling b). The systematic sampling method. In Shimoga district, there are 343 high schools. of them 150 high schools are situated in the taluks(two)are selected for study. 20% of 150

high schools are selected for make it a scientific study.20% means, 30 high schools, which include both government and private aided and unaided high schools.

**Sample size:** In the present sample study equal weight age has been given to all the three types of schools. From each type of school 10 high schools have been selected. Total 30 high schools are taken to the present study.466 respondents have been drawn from all the 30 high schools.

The educational institutions attempt to instruct skills to the young children through specially designed curriculum in order to enrich the purpose. It is done through inculcating new values and ideas among the children's mind. The educational institutions influence the child's social and political values and thereby help in inculcating the political culture in their minds. To assess the role of school in politically socializing the children, the researcher has scientifically analyzed the field survey which is depicted below.

Table -1

Political and non-political topics discussed by the teachers in the classroom.

Type of school	Political topics	Nonpolitical topics	Both	None	Total
Govt school	32 16.08	115 57.79	51 25.63	01 0.50	199 100
Aided school	13 8.97	98 67.59	34 23.45	–	145 100
Unaided school	10 8.20	62 50.82	50 40.98	–	122 100
Total	55 11.80	275 59.01	135 28.97	01 0.50	466 100

Source: Field survey

To elicit the information about the influence of teacher over the students towards politics, A question was asked, whether your teacher discuss political and nonpolitical topics in the class room. The above table reflects the responses of the respondents. The table above reflects that, majority of the students answered that, the teacher in class room discusses other topics than political topics. About 275(59.01%) out of 466 expressed this opinion. 135(28.97%) respondents said that, their teacher discuss both political and nonpolitical topics. 55 (11.80%) of the respondents agreed that, the teacher in class room discuss political topics. Only 01(0.50%) out of 466 said that, the teachers do not discuss anything about political and nonpolitical topics in the classroom. When we observe at category of schools, the political discussion of teacher in the aided and unaided schools is very low as compared to the government schools. The reason is, in aided and unaided school's teachers' mainly concentrate on syllabus exercise and academic activities. Academic achievement is their priority than the rest.

Table-2

**Political discussion with Parents, Teachers and Friends.**

Type of school	Parents		Teacher		Friends		Total
	Yes	NO	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Government school	103 51.76	96 48.24	81 40.70	118 59.30	82 41.21	117 58.79	199 100
Aided school	56 38.52	89 61.38	69 47.59	76 52.41	60 41.38	85 58.62	145 100
Unaided school	63 51.64	59 48.36	67 54.92	55 45.08	48 39.34	74 60.66	122 100
Total	222 47.64	244 52.36	217 46.57	249 53.43	190 40.77	276 59.23	466 100

Source: Field study

The above table clearly reveals the fact that, out of 466 respondents, 222(47.64%) of children discussed political issues with their parents and 244 (52.36%) of the rest did not discuss political issues with their parents. Although, less than 50% of students are benefitted but such kind of discussion generates interest among the children in the political sphere and consequently results in creating greater awareness. The above table indicates that, family as an agent of political socialization influences the children to a greater extent than teacher and friends. When we apply this to various types of school, the greater response came from both government and unaided schools. That is, 103 (51.76%) and 63(51.64%) respectively, whereas, aided school claim only 56(38.62%)

It is commendable to note that, out of 254 girl's respondents, 141 (55.91%) of them discussed political issues with their parents while of 212 boys, 81(38.21%) of them do express positive response towards political discussion with their parents. Thus, girls out number boys in this process. Other factors such as newspaper, radio, and T.V. also play an important in laying down the foundations in the impressionable years of early childhood. It is recognized by now that, the family is the first and major source of learning and inculcating attitudes among the children. Parents as exemplary models transmit values and children imbibe these values in perceptibly very early in life. In this way family as an agent plays an important role in the process of political socialization of the children.

The above table also exemplifies the teachers' influence on children's' political learning. Based on the response of respondents, it is clear that, out of 466 children, 217(46.57%) of them discuss political issues with their teachers' and rest of them 249(53.43%) say that, they did not have any discussion at home. Among those who answered positively, 67(54.92%) of them are studying in unaided school, while 69 (47.59%) and 81(40.70%) in the aided and government schools respectively. It may be noted that, Kapadia (1966) has under lined the influence of education is a potent factor to bring change in the status of female members in family.

It is inferred from the above discussion that, along with the family, school also plays a key role as an agent of political socialization which ultimately shapes children attitudes towards politics. It is during school years that, children are able to learn more political attitudes and behaviors The role of teachers and other educational authority has a significant impact on their political orientation from early age 4 until 18 children spend about 25% of their time involve in educational process.

Besides family and educational institutions, peer group also play a key role in transmitting political values in children. As many researcher findings explicate the fact that, as children grows old they come in contact with their friends. Here, peer group plays an anchor role in moulding the political orientations and values of children when they enter adolescent stage.

Western mode of cultural perception differs in its learning process. It is based on religion. Adherence to religion and following its norms is must. Everyone is ought to behave in an expected manner and they must adhere strictly to its norms. Since India was also one of the colonies of the Britishers who tried systematically to snub and devaluate our practices and customs. They merely called them as superstitions and irrational without having a sound empirical base. Thus, they imposed their culture on us. The native culture suffers from this dependance complexity and tends to think of their own culture as inferior outdated and no longer relevant. Colonizers' imposition of their culture is called 'white mans' burden'. It is through violence colonial master have created colonial states and used both physical subjugation and psychological domination. Education is used to buy them to degrade native values and culture. It led to the decline of our cultural values. Gradually they imposed their own political systems and ideologies on us. Hence, it is found difficult for our students to grasp and understand their imposed political system as they are not part of our experience. Our experience is one, at the same time our explanation is another. It is borrowed one. It is very difficult to adjust oneself to this alien system. So, it is essential to decolonize ourselves from western modes of learning Indian culture is the sum total product of collective awareness of our own beliefs, practices and lifestyles. These are the observations made by the researcher during the survey.

**Research study Findings;** The aim of this empirical study is to examine and to assess the nature and extent of political socialization a moong high school students and its impact on their political orientations. Here the researcher has found how children have been successful in acquiring political orientations and the way they

understand the functioning of democratic institutions in India. The following are the findings with regard to the role played by the agents of political socialization.

The first objective of the study is related to know the nature of political socialization of students and their common understanding about politics. To test the level of political awareness questions were asked about the constitution, central, state and local governments, fundamental rights, elections and voting behavior, political parties and Political values such as, national flag, national anthem and the celebration of national festivals. The students are well aware of these issues. Majority of the children possess a great awareness about political values. Parents' discussion at home and teacher's role in school have also made them to acquire the knowledge about such issues.

The second component objective is, affective orientation. Here the attitudes of children are discussed towards their participation in school co-curricular activities, school elections and strikes. About 96.99% of the students have participated in co-curricular activities conducted in their respective schools.

Thirdly, the researcher made an assessment of the level of student's awareness about political system and political issues, which mainly include the knowledge about parliamentary form of government. About 67.39% have extended and supported the existing parliamentary form of government. 98% of them believed that, voting is the most sacred political duty of every citizen of this country. At the same time 66% of the respondents like to prefer right candidates at the time of election. This shows their level of socialization towards voting behavior and their understanding about democracy i.e., "ballet is more powerful than the bullet".

The fourth objective of the study is to assess how different agencies of political socialization shape the student's political attitudes and behavior. The researcher observed that, the joint families as compared to nuclear families influence the children more in acquiring political knowledge and skills. Because, the parents of nuclear families do not get enough time to inculcates these values. About 49.73% of the respondents in joint families do discuss politics with their parents with freedom and frankness.

Similarly, 46.57% of the students discuss political events or issues with their teachers in the civics class. This in turn enriches their knowledge about the politics. 89% of the students have admitted positively that, civics taught in the class room enriched their political knowledge. The same issue when we apply to the sex-wise, it is noted that, girls are in more number expressed positively that, civics topics improve their political knowledge and awareness. In relation to this, they actively participate in programmes like mock parliament conducted in their schools. 63.09% of the students have agreed in this respect. This in turn helps them to develop participatory orientation.

In order to assess the role of parents in shaping and moldings the student's political behavior.47.64% of them discuss political issues freely with their family members. The problem of the remaining respondents was, their



parents are either busy with their work or do not allow or encourage them to discuss such issues. They have a preconceived notion that politics is not meant for them.

The other major objective of the study is related to the role played by socio-economic and educational background of the members of family in shaping and moulding the political attitudes and outlook of the students. The results of the survey exhibit the fact that, all these factors play a greater role in creating the political awareness among them. This is found more in such families which are socially, economically and educationally advanced and the parents have positive outlook to induce political values among their children.

The fifth and final objective of the research study is, to assess the student's political orientations namely, political awareness, political participation and assessment or judgement of political issues. The responses prove the fact that, the level of political orientations among children is found in ascending order. The level of political orientations among children is found in ascending order. i.e., respectively political awareness 103(22.10%), political participation 120(25.75%) and evaluative orientation 192 (41.20%) each out of 466 respondents. The main reason for this is, the influence of three agents of political socialization namely, family, school and political parties. The family plays a crucial role in inculcating political awareness through political discussions. School helps them to develop participatory orientation through its co-curricular activities. At the same time political parties also influence them by exposing them to political outer world.

### **Conclusion;**

At the outset, in India one can confidently argue that, the children of high school are getting exposed to the political socialization process. Though their level of cognitive, affective and evaluative orientations is not up to our ever-demanding expectations. Yet, they have shown keen interest to learn the issues pertaining to political, economics and societal values. If all the students actively participate in all the school activities, they can develop more political and social responsibilities. School children must be constantly made aware of the values of social, political and cultural responsibilities. Text-books should provide motivation, inspiration and proper instructions in order to make them to become responsible citizens of the country. The process of political socialization of the children of high school become more realistic and meaningful, if all agents of political socialization (family, school, peer group, mass media and political parties) play their responsible roles in their respective areas. The process of Political socialization will become a dream when committed and dedicated efforts are not made in this direction. We should not develop a negative attitude among the children towards political socialization. We should take it in a positive sense to train, to guide, to motivate and inspire them to become functioning and responsible members of a political system. The study needs to be carried forward.

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