



POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS: RECIPROCATING ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF YOUTH

Vidushi Srivastava

Arka Mouli Bhowmic

Hrithvik Dhananjay Deshmukh

Institution: University of Mumbai

Department of Geography

Abstract:

With India emerging as one of the important world powers, understanding the political consciousness of the youth regarding socio-cultural and political terrains would be a prime concern. The perceptions of youth could be decisive in shaping various discourses on culture, society, environment, and development. The power of the youth can be cultivated for constructive activities and hence their perceptions and attitudes need to be rationalised. To shape a country with a better future, the youth need to be educated and trained to think politically. Political rationality and neutrality would be one of the vital characteristic features needed to be acquainted with the increasing intensity of socioeconomic and environmental problems. The opinion-making of the younger generation is expected to be unbiased and without the influence of politically vested interests and party agendas. It would be apt to hence reflect upon the political consciousness of the younger population. Consciousness shapes perceptions of a person vis-à-vis how they acknowledge the current situation in society. Understanding the perception of youth would thus reflect the larger political processes that are shaping the young generations' political perceptions.

The research engages in making enquiries into the current socio-economic conditions, political situations, and other such relevant issues to investigate their perceptions. The research also makes the generation indulge in questions of policies, policy-making and their implications.

The youths from the cities have been targeted specifically to understand the process of shaping political consciousness. As the cities are powerful in terms of politico-economic positions and seat of various political deliberations, it is presumed that the city youths are privileged to have well-defined perceptions on various issues with academic backgrounds and wider exposure.

The proposed research attempts at mapping the “political consciousness” of the younger population to understand how their political perceptions have been shaped. The research also attempts to capture how far the youth are aware of the current socio-cultural and politico-economic issues. Finally, the research attempts to culminate the dialogue with the younger population to grasp their preferences regarding their own lives and the community at large.

Keywords: *Political Consciousness, Nationalism, Perceptions of Youth.*

Copyright © 2023 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.



Introduction:

According to UNICEF Adolescents statistical data 2021, there are 1.3 billion adolescents in the world today, making up 16 per cent of the World's population. India's 1.3 billion people make it the second most populous country in the world, but with an average age of 29, it has been one of the youngest populations globally¹.

India is one of the countries with a higher young population, it is important to get an idea of how their views and opinions are shaping the country's structure and future. The development of the country depends on how much the upcoming generation is conscious and aware of the country's social, cultural, political, environmental, and economic scenario. The younger population will contribute significantly to realizing the country's growth potential. In 2004, 50% of the Indian population was aged 30 years or younger; however, only 35 out of 543 Lok Sabha members (6%) were aged under 35 and around 62.5% of India's working age population is aged between 15 to 59 years and that will give India a demographic advantage till 20553. The Indian youth hold a significant place of value in Indian politics and also in the Global world order. There has been a significant rise in the representation of Indian youth in International Organisations as well. So, it is very important to know the perception of youth on Indian politics and the larger world geopolitics. In a country like India where nearly 40 per cent of the population is aged 13 to 35 years making it the largest youth population in the world. The median age in India in 2010 was just 25.2 years whereas China has 34.5 years which has now turned into an old population, as it is evident that their population is aging. The population of people over 60 years old in China is projected to reach 28% by 20404.

Therefore, the perceptions of the Indian youth towards Indian and World Politics hold a significant place as this section of the population is going to represent

themselves at several places in the political order. Even in the current political setup, we have a few dynamic political leaders who are leading from the front such as Tejaswi Surya in Karnataka, Aditya Thackrey in Maharashtra, Rishabh Mukati in Madhya Pradesh, and many more across India. Moreover, the Indian youth must be aware of the importance of youth rights and the essential representation they need in a country where a huge chunk of the population is under the age of 35 years.

Objective:

- ▶ The objective of the paper "political consciousness: Reciprocating on the perceptions of youth is to analyse the current socio-political situation in the country from today's youth perspective.
- ▶ Understanding how much the young generation is aware of today's socio-political scenario in society by doing a field survey.
- ▶ And where they see themselves and the society in future.

Methodology:

This research is a qualitative type of research where ethnographic techniques were used. The data collected was both primary and secondary data. The survey is a one-to-one interview survey, which was done only to a certain age group of 20 to 30 years.

It was done by first preparing a questionnaire which had both Multiple Choice Questions and descriptive form of questions. The questionnaire was prepared according to our aim of mapping the perceptions and preferences of the younger generation and their socio-political ideas of making a society with the qualitative type method.

Therefore, our findings are based upon our observation and the discussion we had while the survey with the respondents and according to the answers that respondents gave to the questionnaire.

Study Area:

The study area for the survey and research was University of Mumbai Vidyanaigari campus. The



postgraduate students of various departments were selected randomly. It was assumed that the postgraduate students would have some clear perceptions and preferences. The selection was also based on the assumption that the postgraduate students get enough exposure to formulate their political consciousness. The teachers, student unions, curriculums, co and extracurricular activities, seminars, conferences and other activities shape their political understanding in a major way. University of Mumbai being a premier institute offers a vibrant learning environment to students.

Findings:

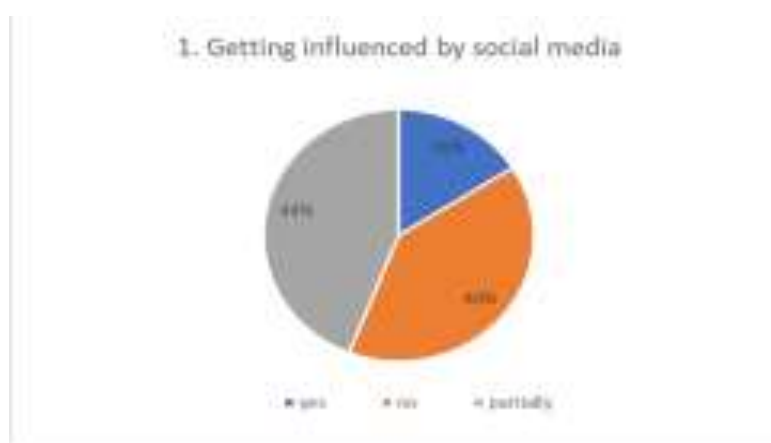
As we move forward to understand the perspective of youth, certain key issues have been selected for discussion like employment opportunities, environmental conservation, various schemes offered by the government and so on.

Political Consciousness of the youth is important to frame the idea of a nation and on what factors the

political perception of a person gets designed. Youth do

not see a political party according to its religious leaning but they choose their leaders according to their idea of a capable party and leader who will contribute to the nation's development. They have their ideas of how a leader should be but they are not very keen to get involved in mainstream politics because of its complex nature (Tamanna, 2015).

Based on our qualitative and quantitative collection of data we got an idea of what bases the young generation get influenced or frame their political perceptions. In the initial days, social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook were just used for posting pictures and connecting, but now it has turned into big platform for discussions and source of information about current events happening all around the world, in some cases, people generally get influenced for their political opinions through social media and form their opinions based on what they see on the internet (Nwenaarizi, 2020).



Hence, we tried to get an idea of how people are shaping their views through social media. And the result was 40% do not get influenced by it and have their understanding, whereas 16% people think that social media does play a vital role in shaping people's perceptions. But 44% of people do not agree with any

one side, they think social media partially affects people's thinking. Therefore, we cannot deny the involvement of social media in forming the perception and making people politically 'conscious'.

Other than social media, many factors frame the young generation's point of view, such as the influence of



family and people's points of view around them. Many people follow a particular ideology of a political party or a particular leader just because they see a wave of the same ideology going around them. The perception of youth towards political awareness is based on various factors, but they have a strong opinion on what they think and voice their idea of the nation which is a pragmatic approach towards the development of the nation.

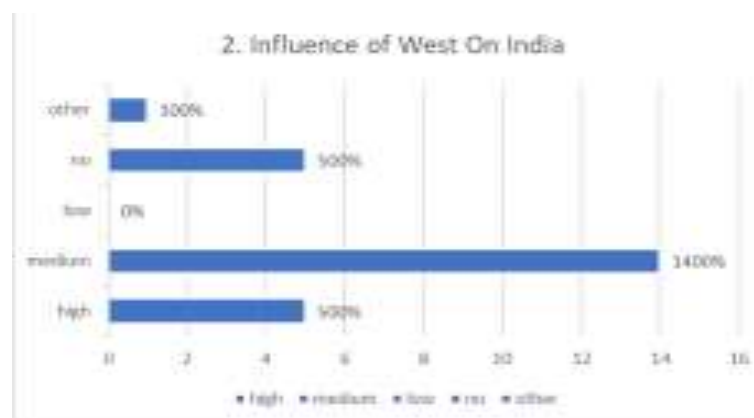
India is emerging as one of the great powers in the world, and youth being the future of the country has a major role in how they perceive the development of the country in every aspect. To understand the trend of development, it is important to know what are the factors and ways by which the new generation's thinking is being shaped and forming society's perspective.

Various times a question has been raised whether development and culture can go hand in hand. So, we

tried to get the youth's perception of how they think development and culture relate to each other.

The contemporary generation is the people adopting the new form of culture and way of living easily, but some people still stick to their old-age traditions. To have an idea of which section dominates society, people were asked

whether the influence of the west on our country is changing the basic structure of society. And the result was 14% of people think that the influence is medium and 5% of people think that the influence is both high and no influence at all equally. Hence, we get the idea that we cannot deny that there is no influence of the west on today's India but there is also not a very high influence. The country is functioning on a modern and old-world structure simultaneously. The study demonstrates that the perception of the youth of the country is a balance of both old traditions and culture and welcoming the new world culture with an open arm.

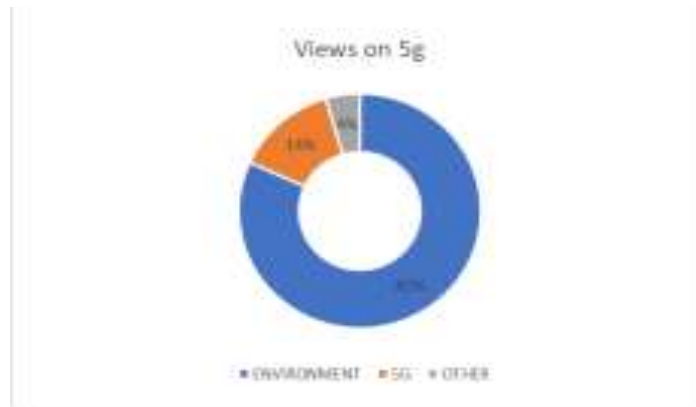


It is also important to mention that the youth have an important role to play in environmental conservation. Not only India but the entire world is facing environmental challenges, majorly in the form of Global Warming and Climate Change. In this study, we tried to analyse how concerned they are with the advent of 5G in India as we know 5G frequencies have some

impact on the environment as well as bird species. We found that almost every response we received was in favour of the environment. Around 82% of people were in favour of saving the environment, 14% people still wanted the facilities of high network and 5G. And around 4% of people were not sure to have views on any one side. It depicts that the youth have definite

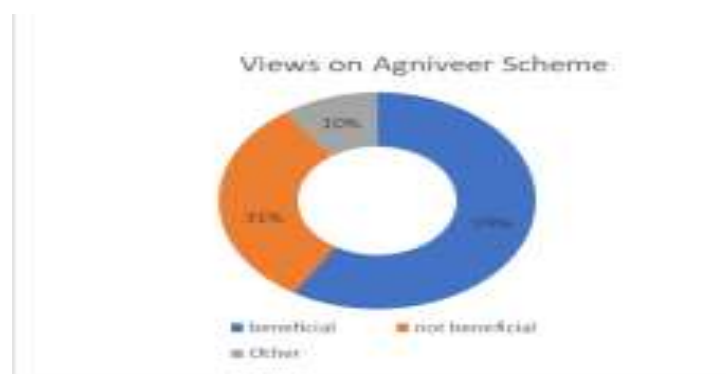
concerns regarding the environment in a digital era where high network bandwidth is so much necessary for day-to-day work, especially after the pandemic where a majority of the workforce has been forced or

voluntarily been made to work from home. We have also seen how the environment has played a vital role in the current geopolitical scenario.



Several schemes and policies have been launched by the government in the last few years for the development of the country and its ecosystem. Schemes like Skill India Mission, Make in India, Start-up India, National Education policy, Agniveer Scheme, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan etc have been launched to focus upon the skill development of the youth, so it is important to understand the awareness of different schemes launched by government among the youth (Sardar, Himani. 2019). To understand the perception we asked a few

questions based on the latest schemes. One of them was Agniveer Scheme, when asked about their views on if they find the scheme beneficial for them the results were 59% of them think that the scheme is beneficial for the youth, 31% say that it is not beneficial and 10% of them have mixed opinions which indicates that the youth of the country is looking forward to new changes in the system which helps them in developing their skills and give them new opportunities in their career.



All the forming of perception and the framing of ideas start for a person from their initial days of education, hence we can say that education changes the perception. But do people need a change in the education system?

To understand this, a question was asked from the youth that according to them what changes should be there in the education system so they get a better future. Perception of the youth towards the education system



is, Students should be taught the real motto of academic education which involves extra co-curricular activities too, the major emphasis is on the need of practical based approach that is useful in future. Shift from traditional education methodology is an important aspect to bring a change in the root of the structure. Therefore, as mentioned before, forming an idea and perception of a youth starts from the initial days of education, and education is the power of knowledge. In the recent world, technology and infrastructure is developing day by day so it helps a person to have their own identity, own views and present their perceptions after getting a good education.

Conclusion:

India is a nation which has 17.7% of the total world population, also making it the second most populous country in the world and 40% of the population ranges between 13-35 years, which also makes India the country with the youngest population in the world. So, in a country like India, youth play a significant role both politically as well as non-politically. In this research, we tried to study and understand what this young generation thinks about Indian and world politics, and what is their perception regarding the same. It is quite interesting to see that they have a strong opinion on what they think and voice their idea of the nation which is a sensible approach towards the development of the nation. They are very clear with their views and ideas.

There is a considerable fraction of people who also think that social media partially affects people's thinking. Hence, we cannot deny the involvement of social media in forming the perception and making people politically conscious. As social media plays an

important role in the present scenario and it is something we cannot completely write off. Youth is that portion of the population of a country where there is a lot of energy, courage and at the same time innocence and immaturity. This is a stage where an individual develops various aspects of life and later, they serve the nation directly and indirectly. So, it is very much important for a country to build a platform so that this human resource is utilised to the fullest, as this section of the population is going to represent and run the country and it's a never-ending process or a cycle. A country like India which has abundant human resources in the form of a young population has to harness this resource and that is when it can fulfil its dream of becoming a major power in the world.

Through this study, it is quite evident that this contemporary generation has a very clear mindset about what they think and what are their perceptions regarding their political rights as well as about the current political scenario. This generation is quite clear and aware of what is going on around them.

References:

- <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/world-youth-report/global-youth-survey-2021.html>
- www.sciencedirect.com
- <https://indbiz.gov.in/one-of-the-youngest-populations-in-the-world-indias-most-valuable-asset/>
- <https://censusindia.gov.in/nada/index.php/catalog/43474>
- <https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/news/story/narendra-modi-6-important-youth-schemes-launched-by-the-bjp-government-1599910-2019-09-17>
- <https://saralnotes.com/education-changes-perception/>

Cite This Article:

Srivastava V., Bhowmic A.M. & Deshmukh H.D. (2023). *Political Consciousness: Reciprocating on the Perceptions of Youth, Electronic International Interdisciplinary Research Journal, XII, Issues – III, May -June, 2023,55-60*

