IJARETY

International Journal of Advanced Research in Education and TechnologY (IJARETY)

An Analysis of Youth Political Engagement and Voting Decisions across Disciplines: Perception of College Going Girls

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ABSTRACT: Opinion polls are surveys conducted to gather the opinions, attitudes, and preferences of a specific group of people, often a representative sample of the larger population. These polls provide a snapshot of public sentiment at a particular moment in time, helping to understand the prevailing mood on political, social, or economic issues. Anyone attempting to predict election results faces significant challenges in comprehending the interaction of overlapping socio-economic cleavages in one of the most demographically diverse nations on earth, high political volatility in a multiparty system, and the complexity of a developing economy. Furthermore, contrary to popular belief, opinion poll-based studies of elections aim to provide a nuanced understanding of the various factors that influence the outcome of an election, including the reasons behind people's voting decisions, historical changes and continuity, and potential future developments. As far as matters concern India, it can be harder to study elections in India than in other countries, which is one of the largest democracies in the world.

In recent times, we seem to be having frequent parliamentary elections in addition to a number of state assembly elections. Even as this article is being written, we are heading for the 16th state assembly election in Rajasthan. The main theme of this article is to gather information from youth who will use their right to vote for the first time. The universe is defined as we gather information from girls' students who are students of one of the reputed institutes in Jaipur and enroll in different schemes. We used the primary research methodology to collect inferences and try to present the ideas of youths towards the procedures of the election. Through this research paper, we try to showcase how girl students present themselves in the political arena.

KEYWORDS: Opinion polls, nuanced, assembly elections, voting decisions, popular belief

I. INTRODUCTION

Opinion Polls on public, especially those conducted before an election, spark a lot of discussion and conjecture among the public, media, and political figures. In essence, opinion surveys seek to express the public's sentiment on a given topic at a specific period in time. Polling organizations or commissioners of such surveys may choose to conduct opinion surveys on any social or commercial issue, but they are typically carried out on voting intentions and preferences for leadership. In addition to drawing from journalism and market research, the study of public opinion polls attracts scholars from the fields of history, sociology, psychology, and communications. (Macreadie, 2011)

As India is one of the biggest parliaments in the world with multi-party system. Although initially India had majorly two party -congress on major side and BJP as a minor opposition. India after independence conducted its first parliament election in 1952 under Election Commission. (Hosmath & Halakerimath, 2019)

The popular media surveys started in the 1980's when Prannoy Roy (beginning in 1979-80) conducted opinion polls during elections to find out the mood of Indian voters. The proliferation of electronic media in the 1990s made the election surveys and exit polls popular in India, and they started capturing the imagination of people. Pre- elections surveys and exit polls have since become a regular feature in the last one and half decade (Rai, 2014). All major national and state elections in the recent times have been covered by exit polls. The agencies conducting these polls now recruit the services of highly qualified experts for this purpose. (Karandikar & Basil, 1999) Relationships between citizens and leaders, between public opinion and democratic governance, are complex. Many people worry that when choosing what policies to push, politicians in today's world too frequently follow the tide of public opinion. However,

the use of polls as a direct, dominant direction for developing public policy is problematic due to the inherent fragility and ambiguity of public opinion.

Opinion poll is a method, not a philosophy. The writers of this issue don't come to disparage or glorify polling. They do concede, though, that technology has becoming increasingly significant in our democracy. Ronald Reagan's "trust but verify" policy is emphasized. Furthermore, they exhort us to keep in mind the crucial distinction between the notion that the people ought to rule and the practice of using polls to influence public opinion or set public policy. (Dionne et al., 2003)

There is minor difference between opinion poll and exit poll as in Opinion Poll the survey which is conducted before election by voters about their opinion of coming election, future Prime Minister, future government is called Opinion-poll. (Hosmath & Halakerimath, 2019)

Exit Poll: on election day the information is collected by survey method from voters for whom they cast their vote and predicting the result is called exit-poll. Like opinion-poll exit-poll also sometimes predict correct result and sometimes failed to predict near results also. (Hosmath & Halakerimath, 2019)

Advantages of Conducting an Opinion Poll-
Opinion polls allows to ask your demographic an objective question about your brand or project. Its result largely reflects their opinions and feelings, leaving you with the decision for further processing. Few advantages of opinion poll are-
• The best way to find out what the general public believes or feels about a certain topic is to conduct opinion surveys.
• The main goal of opinion surveys is to interview your audience at random without giving them anything to consider.
• Opinion surveys provide a forum for individuals to view the issue impartially, which is a direct benefit.
• Compared to other platforms or avenues, opinion surveys are far cheaper.
• Opinion surveys require the least amount of time.
• Because opinion surveys save time, money, and effort, they are also inexpensive for everyone.

Disadvantages of Conducting an Opinion Poll
As no doubt opinion poll are easy to cover large area of population to draw inferences, but ironically it is not possible to conduct opinion poll every time on fairgrounds. Apart from number of advantages, opinion poll has number of disadvantages also.
● Influence Could Also Be Negative
● Chances of Inaccuracy as Since opinion polls only ever take in a yes or no, or objective data getting a clear picture can be difficult.
● It leaves room and scope for interpretation, and sometimes, it could turn into misinterpretation too.
● Altering Answers as Depending on their access to the results, the participants could also change their answers to side with the majority.
("Opinion Polls: Advantages and Disadvantages," n.d.)

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The patterns and developments of election participation in India since 1952 are discussed in the book titled "Elections in India book" written by Sanjay Kumar (2021). It involves to discussions on the peculiarities of India's multi-party electoral system and how they affect Indian citizens' voting patterns. The book explores the history and development of the nation's electoral institutions as well as the difficulties and protections for holding free and fair elections in the largest democracy in the world for state and national elections. The relationship between turnout trends and electoral outcomes in local and national elections is examined by the author.

The book 'Politics and Society between Elections' written by Swaminathan, S., & Palshikar, S. (Eds.). (2020). Public Opinion in India's States explores patterns of public opinion on elections in Indian society. Opinion poll acts as a state barometer using questionnaire responses from 24 Indian states. The book investigates how citizens evaluate the social and political environments in which they live. It looks at how people behave in society, friendships between people in different social groups, gender roles and relationships, views on government, the ease with which one can access public services, the relationship between the citizen and the state, and confidence in political institutions. This book investigates how the public views ordinary government operations, such as how it interacts with residents, how it delivers regular public services to them, and how it upholds public order, in the interim between elections. In research

article "The Use of Public Opinion Polls by Political Party Organizations" written by Dexter in 1954 describes the kind of information which a campaign organization needs, makes several proposals to existing polling organizations, and describes the kind of poll a political party could profitably commission. There has been a good deal of argument about the alleged or actual "bandwagon" effect of polls of candidate popularity upon the voters. This argument for the most part ignores something which might be called the "organizational weakening" effect of polls.

The article titled "Polling Pandith's or Pantars" written by Trupthinath and R Satyamurthi, that there is a lack of skill and knowledge of social science scholars and journalists those who conduct election survey in India. Media and survey agencies fail to have good statistical model. In the run-up to the elections, the voter gets flattering attention from political parties and candidates alike. His views are indispensable and his voting intentions become a subject of scientific research by pollsters. His opinion is gauged by opinion poll, exit poll and post-poll analysis. "Comparative study of survey polls and actual result of Parliament election – 2014 in India" done Hosmath, & Halakerimath (2019) by throw light on how People of India are not just interested about politics even media houses and survey agencies and different social science and political science experts come forward to know about election, political parties, campaigns, voters' behaviour etc.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary research is conducted for an analysis of youth political engagement and voting decisions across disciplines. The universe of the research is pre-defined in nature. The area of study is narrow in outlook as questionnaire is created and circulated in college students especially girls of reputed institute of Jaipur. The theme of the research is to gather ideas and view of the girl students who will cast their vote for the first time in state elections and also know about their political awareness. In this study the primary data is collected from students of different programmes of the university. The questionnaire is created to explore the overall view of the students. The questionnaire is created on google form and circulated among students' group. The study is done through quantitative content analysis to draw the exact conclusions among the students regarding the importance and awareness of voting as well as political activism.

Objectives-
1. Analyse opinion polls impact on election campaigns.
2. Analyse the knowledge of college students for election.
3. Evaluate the understanding of college students about political system and government processes.
4. Draw an idea about the political activities especially in Rajasthan.

Rajasthan Political Scenario-
Since the 10th Rajasthan assembly election in 1993, time then and now, political power has seen an interchangeable shift between the two major principal political parties- The BJP and the Congress Party. So, now looking forward to the upcoming assembly elections the question now arise what will the pattern hold in the forthcoming 16th assembly election? Will BJP return to power following the traditional two-decade trend or will Congress era continue as 2.0?

Penning down the successful management of sources during Covid-19 pandemic by the congress government and numerous welfare programmes being implemented in various areas of health, education, reducing poverty, creating jobs, easing inflation, and followed by the establishment of 20 new districts and three divisions, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot declared the party's objective to fulfil 'Mission 156', a target set to be achieved in the upcoming elections.

Despite, all the welfare schemes, the Government seems to suffer a setback regarding major issue ignored them. The Government failed to pay heed regarding the continuous paper leaks, crimes against Women, discrimination and harassment of Dalits, law and order problems, accusation of corruption against key ministers, etc.

Congress party is a major example of deep-rooted factionalism within it, which might be the reason preventing the party to announce its candidate for numerous seats with barely two weeks remaining before the nomination deadline. So, like congress, BJP on the other hand, too appear to be unsure as to which foot which it must step as its best. Looking toward the statewide popularity of Vasundra Raje, former two-time chief minister, the party is pinning its hopes on the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. PM Modi made about nine times state visit since January 2023. In December 2022, BJP launched the Jan Akrosh Yatra followed up by the Parivartan Yatra in September 2023. The Rajasthan legislative assembly elections for 2023 scheduled to be held on 25th November to elect all 200 members of the state's legislative assembly followed by results on December 3.

Since last two decades the electoral politics in Rajasthan has seen a phenomenal increase in the turnout of women voters and the persistent rise in the overall voter turnout. In the 1993 elections, about 52 per cent women voted as compared to 68 per cent men. Female vote share has not only closed this disparity, but also had exceeded male vote share twice in the past two elections. When in power, both major political parties make a special effort to include the female constituency in the process of formulating policies. The way that women vote will therefore play a significant impact in the upcoming elections.

Keeping all this in mind, majority in upcoming Rajasthan assembly elections will depend on how both the parties deal with the major issues regarding women and youth.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS FROM OPINION POLL SURVEY

As it already mentions that the universe of the research is pre-defined in nature. The area of study is narrow in outlook as questionnaire is created and circulated in college students especially girls of reputed institute of Jaipur. Number of questions are framed in that way to gather ideas of girls on political scenario and upcoming state election of Rajasthan. Through number of diagrams, table and chart, conclusion is drawn on political awareness among the students of three programmes.

Diagram 1

Educational Background
128 responses

- science 12.5%
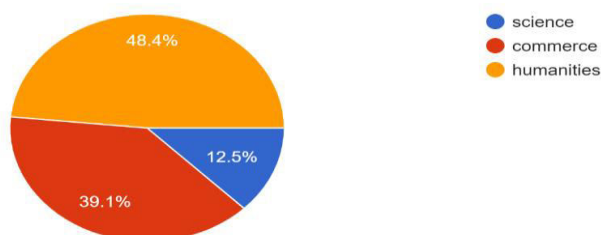- commerce 39.1%
- humanities 48.4%

Diagram No.1 present the educational background of the respondents. On the basis of the research conducted on different programme of college students, total number of responses are 128 in number, in which maximum respondents are of humanities background.

Diagram 2

Opinion regarding first time voting in Rajasthan
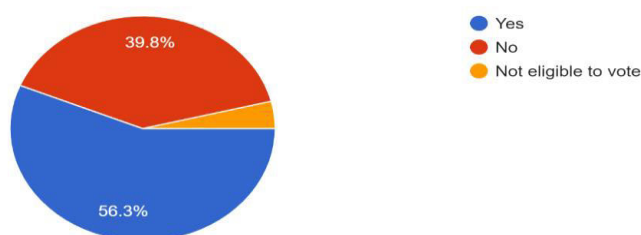128 responses

- Yes 56.3%
- No 39.8%
- Not eligible to vote

Diagram No.2 presents opinion of the girls regarding first time voting in Rajasthan. 56% respondents are eligible and also interested for voting in Nov.2023 while 39% are even not interested in voting this time even after they are eligible for voting. Interested respondents will used their votes on more skill-full basis.

Chart 1
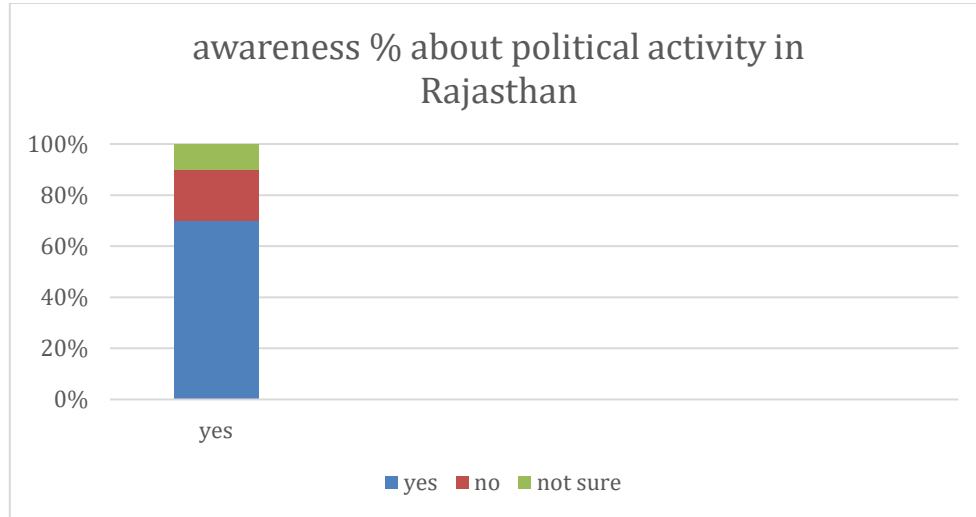

awareness % about political activity in Rajasthan

Chart No.1 is created to reflect the opinion of group for political activity in Rajasthan. The university students reflect their own opinions regarding political upheavals happening in Rajasthan. More than 70% students are aware of political scenario of Rajasthan, they frame their own opinion regarding political manifesto and declaration made by candidates during elections .20% respondents have not their individual opinion regarding political activity.

Table 1 (Scale of political engagement)

Scale of political engagement	Very engaged	Somewhat engage	neutral	Not very engage
% of students	4.7%	29%	43%	16.4%

Table No.1 show the percentage of political engagement of the students. But after being registered voters , belong to 21st century youth and having all knowledge about political incidents, maximum respondents prefer to be politically neutral on various issues.43% students decide to be politically neutral and 29% students are somewhat engage on political ground.

Diagram 3

Views of respondents to understand of the political system and government processes
128 responses

- Very confident
- Somewhat confident
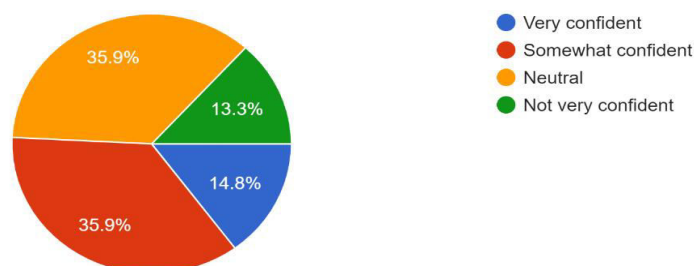- Neutral
- Not very confident

Diagram No.3 show the level of respondents to understand political system and government processes. There is dicey situation among the students as 35.9% inferences collected on both side (somewhat confident and neutral).13.3%

respondents are not very confident about it while 14.8% are confident to understood political system and government processes.

Diagram 4

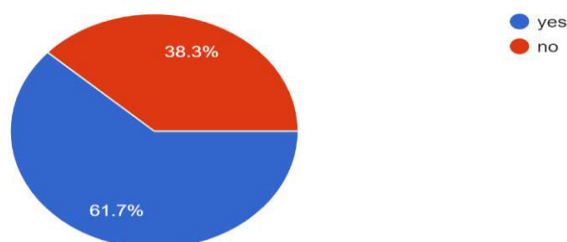Opinion on Rajasthan politics influence by regional communities
128 responses

Daigram No.4 represent the opinion of respondents how regional communites influence Rajasthan Politics.61.7% believes that Rajasthan political scenario work on community ground as existing poltical parties play the community as a trump card to gain the votes in their favour . Respondents believe the political parties made a stirct check while annocing the name of their candidates.38.3% do not believe on it as according to them regional politics do not influence Rajasthan Politics.

Diagram 5

familiar with the candidates for the state legislative election in your district
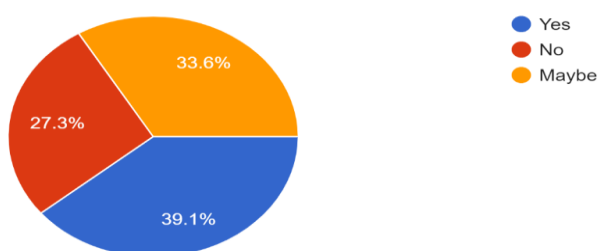128 responses

Diagram-5 show the percentage ratio of familiarity of candidates who supposed to contest the elections this time. Although from the above inferences a conclusion is drawn for the politically activism among the sample unit but there is no concrete conclusion draw on familiarity with political candidates. 39.1% respondents agreed that they are familiar with contestants while 33.6% express their probability of knowing the name of contestants and 27.3% completely denied about contestants.

Table- 2(Most prominent political issue)

Economy & jobs	Healthcare	Education	Environment & climate change	Social justice & racial equality	National security	Immigration
45.3%	4.7%	17.2%	8.6%	18%	3.9%	2.3%

Table-2 indicates the percentage ratio of respondents on most prominent political issue in state politics. Maximum respondents believe that existing government is not able to provide stability in crippled economic conditions of the region as youth power are dis-satisfied for not getting the jobs . Youths put allegations on loose government measures which led the number of incidents of paper leaks. Second most challenging task is government is quite defaulter on social justice and racial equality ground as the ratio of rape cases and physical humiliation of target communities is on increase side. Apart of this , respondents 17.2% respondents consider education is main issue while 8.6% give refences to environmental issue , 4.7%give preference to faulty health care facility ,3.9%consider national security is one of prominent reason and only 2.3 % consider youth facing immigration due to lack of job availability in Rajasthan region.

Table -3
(students updating themselves for political news and current events on)

Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely	Never
27.3%	45.3%	5.5%	21.9%	0

Table -3 represents how often youth consuming political news and current events. 45.3% of youth update themselves on weekly basis ,27.3% youth updated their political knowledge daily, 5.5% youth update themselves on monthly. The students who updated their knowledge monthly as maximum of science streams and the students who updated their knowledge on daily basis are maximums of Humanities streams.

Diagram -6

opinion of students regarding political awareness and education in your college/university
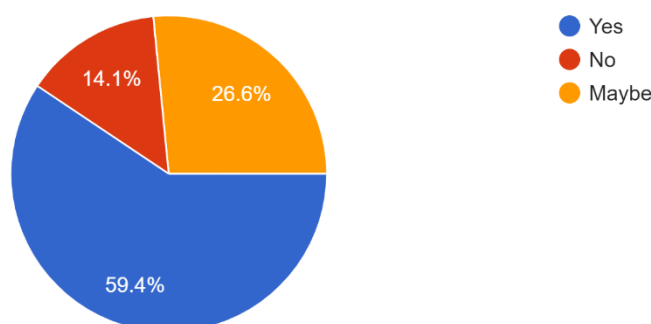128 responses

- ● Yes
- ● No
- ● Maybe

Diagram-6 represent the ratio of political awareness and political education in university. 59.4% of student having Humanities subjects believe that college and university are grassroot level of political structure. These students want more political activities should be conducted in premises .26.6% students have not clear picture regarding political awareness in university and 14.1% completely reject this question. Probably the orange and red colour indicate the students of commerce and science streams.

Table- 4
(Kind of political participation)

Running for office	Joining a political club	Volunteering political campaigns	lobbying	Others means
9.4%	13.3%	21.1%	7%	49.2%

Table-4 indicates the preference of students in political participation. 21.1% of students volunteer participate in political activities while 49.2% of students not clear about their political participation.13.3% of students want to join any political club to initiate political participation while 9.4% want to run any political office.

Diagram 7

Strategies suggested to increase political engagement
88 responses

- Healthy discussion
- conferences and seminars
- more aware about political issue
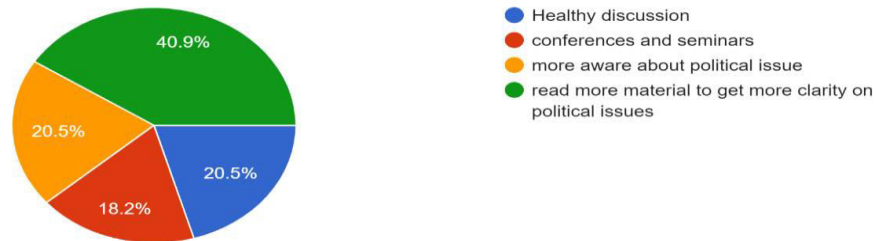- read more material to get more clarity on political issues

Diagram -7 presents the proposed strategies to increase political engagement among themselves.40.9% students prefer reading materials to get more clarity on any political issue while 20.5% students want to create awareness through audio-visual media and healthy discussion through open debate for political engagement.

Table-5
(Primary sources to get information about the election and the candidates)

sources	newspaper	journals	Social media	Family members	News channels	friends	Student debate	Peers
%	23.4%	2.3%	30.5%	13.3%	8.6%	10%	4%	11.4%

Table-5 represents that 30.4% respondents consider various platforms of social media is primary source to get information. 23.4% consider newspaper is also one of the primary sources to get information about election and candidates. 13.3% respondents gather political knowledge from family members while11.4% respondents get information from their peer groups and friends.

Diagram -8

Opinion for intend to vote in the upcoming state legislative election
128 responses

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
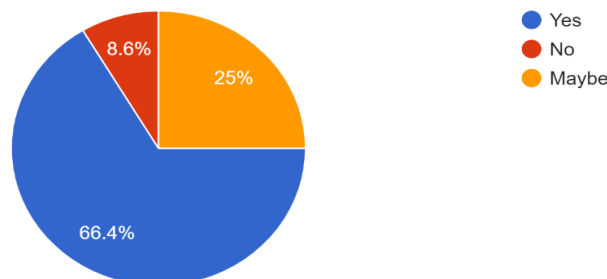
Daigram-8 contain the analysis regarding to vote in the upcoming legislative election.66.4% eager to vote this time. The students of all the three programmes are cast their vote this time while 25% may be cast their vote.

V. CONCLUSION

The research is conduct on students of IIS Deemed university to analysis political engagement of the students. An attempt is to make to interpret the political view of target girls' students which are between age-group 18-22 and will cast their vote first time. Opinion Poll is conduct through google form which represent the political awareness of the students. Through number of questions asked to students, a conclusion is drawn on political awareness of the students. The motto for conducting opinion poll to make student aware about elections and political scenario of Rajasthan.

After conducting this opinion among girls students of IIS university, a conclusion is drawn that students of all programme are aware about political scenario of their region. The girls are aware about the political up-down, intentions behind preparing the list of contestants, how political dilemma create the situation more controversial and how political parties playing their trump cards to gain the power. Through this opinion poll , a situation is clear regarding the overview of the mindset of youth especially girls who will cast their vote first time.

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