



YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN INDIA AND CHINA

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ABSTRACT

In China and India, youth make up a significant portion of the population and political power, therefore their involvement is crucial for social progress, nation-building, and efficient governance. The goal of the current study, "Youth Political Participation in India and China," is to compare the main elements influencing young political engagement, including political institutions, education, digital media, and governmental policies, as well as to investigate the type and scope of such participation. Based solely on secondary data gathered from official publications, government papers, international organizations, research projects, and other trustworthy sources, the study is descriptive and comparative in nature. According to the report, India's multi-party parliamentary democracy offers a variety of ways for young people to get involved, including voting, political parties, student organizations, elections, local government, and digital platforms. In contrast, China uses organized institutional systems like the Communist Youth League, political education, community programs, and national development initiatives to encourage youth involvement. The survey also reveals that in both nations, youth political knowledge and engagement are now significantly influenced by education and digital technologies. Everyone agrees that women's participation in political decision-making is essential to democratic governance and the progress of society. In India, women are still under-represented in positions of political leadership despite significant advancements in gender equality in many fields.



KEYWORDS: Youth, Political Participation, India, China, Political Institutions, Education, Digital Media, Youth Policy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Because young people play a major role in influencing democratic government, economic advancement, and social transformation, youth political involvement has grown in importance as a field of study in political science, public policy, and development studies. Voting, running for office, joining political parties, taking part in protests, joining civic organisations, influencing public policy, and using traditional and digital platforms to voice political opinions are all considered forms of political participation. Young people's active participation in political processes fosters social inclusion, improves accountability, fortifies democratic institutions, and advances sustainable national development (Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 1995; United Nations, 2018).

Youth make up one of the largest demographic groupings in the world. The United Nations (2022) estimates that 1.8 billion individuals, or roughly one-fourth of the world's population, are between the ages of 10 and 24. In order to ensure inclusive governance and accomplish the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 16, which emphasises peaceful, inclusive societies and efficient, accountable institutions, this sizable demographic group must be involved in political decision-making (United Nations, 2015). Despite their demographic importance, young people frequently encounter obstacles such political marginalisation, under-representation, unemployment, low political awareness, and dwindling faith in political institutions.

The two most populous nations in the world, China and India, combined make up over one-third of the world's population and have sizable young populations. With about 27% of its population in the 15–29 age range, India has one of the highest young populations in the world, according to the Population Census of India (2011) and the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation (MOSPI, 2023). In a similar vein, China's National Bureau of Statistics (2023) notes that even tho the country's youth population has decreased as a result of demographic shifts, young people are still essential to governance, technical innovation, and national growth. Young people's political engagement is a critical factor in determining future leadership, policy development, and institutional or democratic stability due to their demographic significance.

China and India have similar populations, yet their political systems are very different. With a multi-party political system, universal adult suffrage, frequent elections, constitutional rights, and decentralised governance via Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies, India is the largest democracy in the world. The constitutional right to vote and to actively engage in elections, political parties, student unions, civil society organisations, and online campaigns is enjoyed by young citizens who are at least eighteen years old. The goal of government programs like the National Youth Policy 2021 (Draft), National Service Scheme (NSS), Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), and voter awareness campaigns run by the Election Commission of India is to promote civic engagement and political participation among young people (Election Commission of India, 2023).

In contrast, the Communist Party of China (CPC) is in charge of China's socialist political system. In China, structured organisations like the Communist Youth League of China (CYLC), educational institutions, local government systems, and community service initiatives are the main channels by which young people participate in politics. Volunteering, involvement in national development projects, political education, and ideological training are all regarded as crucial components of youth engagement. Young people participate in governance thru consultative mechanisms, public service projects, technological innovation, and policy implementation within the current institutional framework, even tho China's political participation is different from that of competitive electoral democracies (Li, 2018; CPC, 2022).

Social media and digital technology have drastically changed how people participate in politics in both nations. For political communication, civic awareness, electoral campaigns, policy discussions, and popular mobilization, online platforms like X (previously Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp in India and WeChat, Weibo, and Douyin in China have grown in importance. While digital platforms have created difficulties like misinformation, political polarization, online censorship, cyber surveillance, and the dissemination of fake news, they have also increased potential for youth engagement (OECD, 2020). As a result, digital political engagement has grown in importance as a component of young people's involvement in modern governance.

In both nations, youth involvement still faces a number of obstacles despite growing political consciousness. Political engagement in India is frequently discouraged by problems including unemployment, caste and regional inequality, criminalisation of politics, poor political education, and a lack of new leaders. The form and extent of civic engagement in China are influenced by institutional structures, policy agendas, and governance systems. These distinctions offer a crucial chance to contrast the ways in which educational systems, political institutions, governance models, and technology advancements affect young people's involvement in two quite different political systems.

A comparative analysis of "Youth Political Participation in India and China" is therefore important and timely. It aims to investigate the trends, factors, prospects, and difficulties of youth political participation in the two nations. The study also seeks to determine policy approaches that can improve youth representation in governance, investigate how democratic and socialist political systems affect youth participation, and evaluate the role of educational institutions and digital technology in

fostering civic engagement. In addition to providing suggestions for improving significant political engagement among young people in China and India, the results are anticipated to add to the body of knowledge on comparative politics, youth studies, public administration, and development policy.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. To explain why some citizens engage in politics while others do not, **Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995)** created the Civic Voluntarism Model. They contended that three crucial elements influence political engagement: recruitment via social networks, political motivation, and resources (education, wealth, and time). According to the survey, young people who are politically conscious and educated are more likely to vote, join political organizations, and take part in civic affairs. The authors came to the conclusion that enhancing civic education and expanding young involvement opportunities can greatly boost democratic participation.

2. **Dalton (2008)** investigated the shifting trends in youth political engagement in democracies. According to the report, young people are increasingly choosing unconventional ways to get involved in politics over traditional party politics, such as internet activism, social media campaigns, public demonstrations, and volunteer organizations. The author came to the conclusion that technological advancement has changed political participation and opened up new avenues for young people to get involved in government.

3. **The United Nations (2018)** stressed that attaining inclusive government and sustainable development requires young participation. According to the research, youth have a major role in social innovation, policymaking, and democratic institutions. But it also highlighted issues like unemployment, political marginalization, poor civic education, and restricted access to institutions that make decisions. The research suggested enhancing digital engagement, civic education, and youth leadership.

4. **Norris (2002)** investigated the connection between political engagement and democratic institutions. The study discovered that young engagement is positively impacted by political freedom, access to education, and efficient governance. Additionally, research found that societies with democratic institutions that promote civic engagement and transparency have greater rates of political participation.

5. **Putnam (2000)** looked into the role that social capital plays in encouraging political engagement. According to the study, volunteer organizations, community networks, and trust all boost civic participation among people, particularly young people. Stronger social ties promote increased political consciousness and democratic engagement, the study observed.

6. India has one of the largest youth populations in the world, according to the **Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation (2023)**. According to the survey, youth participation in democratic government is strongly influenced by education, employment, digital literacy, and political awareness. In order to increase young engagement, it highlighted the necessity of skill development, leadership programs, and civic education.

7. The Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral engagement (SVEEP) initiative has been successful in raising youth voter registration and electoral engagement, according to the **Election Commission of India (2023)**. The initiative has increased political awareness among first-time voters and promoted democratic involvement thru awareness campaigns, educational institutions, and digital outreach.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the nature and extent of youth political participation in India and China.
2. To compare the factors influencing youth political participation, including political institutions, education, digital media, and government policies, in India and China.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is based entirely on secondary data. It aims to examine and compare the patterns, determinants, and institutional frameworks of youth political participation in India and China. The Election Commission of India (ECI), Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (Government of India),

National Bureau of Statistics of China (NBS), Communist Youth League of China (CYLC), United Nations (UN), World Bank, UNDP, International IDEA, OECD, and other government reports, journal articles, books, research papers, and official publications are just a few of the reputable and authentic secondary sources from which the necessary data will be gathered. To find similarities and contrasts in young political engagement across the two nations, the gathered data will be methodically arranged into tables using statistical methods like percentages, averages, and comparative analysis.

5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A comparison of youth political participation in China and India is shown in Table 1. With 1,428 million people, India's population is marginally greater than China's (1,409 million). China has about 240 million young people between the ages of 15 and 29, but India has 371 million. This suggests that there are more young people in India who have the capacity to participate in civic and political life. Although the voting age in both nations is eighteen, their election processes are different. Young people in India have the opportunity to vote, join political parties, take part in election campaigns, run for office, and participate in political movements thanks to the country's multi-party democracy. The Communist Party of China is in charge of China's socialist political system, which primarily uses institutional and community-based systems to organise youth engagement.

The table also shows that India's youth voter registration and turnout rates are 67.5% and 66.2%, respectively, while China's electoral system and available statistical data differ from India's, making comparable youth-specific electoral figures inapplicable. In India, groups like NSS, NYKS, and student unions offer venues for youth to engage in public and community activities and cultivate civic consciousness. The Communist Youth League of China is a significant institutional conduit for civic participation, leadership development, and youth involvement in China. The figure indicates that, despite both nations' sizable youth populations, youth representation in the national legislature is still comparatively low, with 14.5 percent for India and 13.2 percent for China. Overall, the table indicates that although China prioritizes organized and institutionally supervised youth involvement, India offers more options for competitive electoral and party-based political participation. The form and degree of youth political participation in the two nations are thus largely determined by the political system, electoral structure, youth organizations, and opportunities for representation.

Table 1: Comparative Indicators of Youth Political Participation in India and China

Sl. No.	Indicator	India	China
1	Total Population (Million)	1,428	1,409
2	Youth Population (15–29 years) (Million)	371	240
3	Voting Age (Years)	18	18
4	Electoral System	Multi-party Democracy	Socialist One-Party System
5	Youth Voter Registration (%)	67.5	Not Applicable
6	Youth Voter Turnout (%)	66.2	Not Applicable
7	Major Youth Political Organization	NSS, NYKS, Student Unions	Communist Youth League of China
8	Youth Representation in National Legislature (%)	14.5	13.2

Sources: Election Commission of India (2024); Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (2024); National Bureau of Statistics of China (2024)

Table 2 lists the several government programs and institutional frameworks in China and India that are meant to encourage young people to participate in politics. China's Medium- and Long-Term Youth Development Plan concentrates on the general development, political consciousness, and national contribution of youth, whereas India's National Youth Policy 2014 offers a comprehensive

framework for youth development, leadership, and civic engagement. Thru initiatives like the National Youth Parliament Scheme, SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation), Electoral Literacy Clubs, NSS, NYKS, and NCC, India raises the political consciousness of young people. Young people have the chance to learn about democratic institutions, elections, citizenship, leadership, and community duties thru these programs.

The Communist Youth League of China (CYLC) and political education initiatives are the primary means of encouraging youth involvement in China. In addition to encouraging youth to engage in civic engagement, national development initiatives, and community service, the CYLC offers leadership training. While China uses student federations and institutional institutions for student engagement, India offers chances for student representation thru university student unions and other student organizations. The emphasis on political education also varies: China's programs lay more emphasis on ideological, civic, and national-development education, whereas India's election Literacy Clubs concentrate especially on election knowledge and democratic engagement.

The chart also demonstrates how young involvement in both nations has grown to include community involvement and internet civic engagement. Young people in India have access to civic and electoral information as well as opportunity to engage in community activities thru NSS, NCC, NYKS, MyGov, and the Voter Helpline App. In China, public participation and civic communication are facilitated by government-sponsored digital platforms like WeChat and volunteer service initiatives. At the local level, China offers participation thru People's Congresses and local committees, whereas India offers opportunity thru Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies. Overall, the comparison shows that China's activities priorities political education, organized young involvement, leadership development, and national growth, while India's initiatives mainly focus on democratic participation, electoral knowledge, and decentralized government.

Table 2: Government Initiatives Promoting Youth Political Participation in India and China

Sl. No.	Initiative	India	China
1	National Youth Policy	National Youth Policy, 2014	Medium and Long-Term Youth Development Plan
2	Youth Parliament	National Youth Parliament Scheme	Youth Political Education Programmes
3	Election Awareness	SVEEP Programme	Political Education through CYLC
4	Youth Leadership Training	NYKS, NSS, NCC	Communist Youth League Leadership Training
5	Student Representation	Student Unions in Universities	Student Federations
6	Political Education	Electoral Literacy Clubs	Ideological and Civic Education
7	Community Participation	NSS, NCC, NYKS	Volunteer Service Programmes
8	Digital Civic Engagement	MyGov, Voter Helpline App	WeChat Government Platforms
9	Youth Representation in Governance	Panchayati Raj, Urban Local Bodies	People's Congress and Local Committees
10	Primary Objective	Strengthen Democratic Participation	Promote National Development and Political Awareness

Sources: Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (India); Election Commission of India; MyGov India; Communist Youth League of China

6. CONCLUSION

According to a study on youth political participation in China and India, youth play a significant role in the political, social, and developmental processes of both nations. Despite having sizable youth populations and offering chances for adolescent involvement in public affairs, China and India have very different political systems, which greatly affect the type, scope, and routes of youth participation. Voting, political parties, student organizations, election campaigns, protests, local government, and digital platforms are just a few of the many ways that young people can get involved in India's multi-party parliamentary democracy. China's socialist political system, which is headed by the Communist Party of China, encourages youth involvement primarily thru organized institutions like the Communist Youth League, educational institutions, volunteer programs, community organizations, and political education.

The study also demonstrates that government policies, digital media, political institutions, and education all have a significant impact on young people's political engagement. Initiatives like the National Youth Policy, National Youth Parliament Scheme, SVEEP, Electoral Literacy Clubs, NSS, NYKS, and NCC promote civic engagement, leadership, and civic consciousness in India. Opportunities for youth engagement are organized in China thru the Medium- and Long-Term Youth Development Plan, Communist Youth League programs, political education, leadership development, and volunteer work. As a result, both nations acknowledge the value of youth involvement, despite the fact that their strategies are influenced by their unique institutional and political structures.

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