

Political Awareness A Link to Civic Responsibility

V.Sasikala & Dr. S.Francisca

Abstract:

The present study examines the relationship between political awareness and civic responsibilities of history students. The sample comprised of 1611 students studying B.A.(history) in various arts and science colleges in the districts of Tamilnadu. Descriptive method using survey as technique was used to solve the present problem. Political Awareness Test (PAT) and Exercise of Civic Responsibility Scale (ECRS) developed and validated by the Sasikala, V. and Francisca, S. (2016) were used for collecting the required data. The findings revealed a positive correlation between political awareness and civic responsibility and its dimensions such as political responsibility, democratic responsibility, national responsibility, personal responsibility and ECR in total. But there existed a negative correlation between political awareness and environmental responsibility of history students.

Introduction

“Education not only equips citizens with the cognitive skills that active youth engagements require, but it also install norms of civic obligation” (Evaristus,

2015). Individual’s evaluation on national and local affairs and political issues forms the background knowledge concerning political awareness. It also includes political concepts as well as the procedures by which political institutions operate (Sasikala & Francisca, 2015). Generating informed citizens, awakening their political skills and persuading for political and community participation are the virtues of being aware with the political information’s.

Political consciousness produce young men and women, who can evaluate, identify problems, analyse and come up with rational decisions. The students should be well aware of the basic political knowledge in order to bring a real democracy within the country and to take active participation in the political system as a future leader (Ijaz, 1976).

Significance of the Study

Any nation depends on its youth for its development. Political system is the decision making process and youth’s knowledge, behaviour and attitude towards it plays a crucial role.

Having acknowledged the importance of youth role in a country's political system and their civic engagement, this study intends to investigate on the relationship between political knowledge and exercise of civic responsibilities. These understandings will help to realise the present situation and frame approaches to encounter the negative effects and construct and devise strategies to guide the future leaders.

The urge need of youth involvement in politics and National development process justifies the need for more aware and responsible citizens. The study portrays how political knowledge base could be a groundbreaking approach to develop civic responsibility among the student community. The contribution is exclusive in a nation context as in this competitive world where all other countries are in pivotal mode of educating their youth with civic education and encouragements for their political participation. The novel perspective of the study is to strengthen the networks of social, national, political, environmental and personal oriented responsible behaviours and generate additional insights via their political awareness.

Objective

To find out the significant correlation between political awareness and exercise of civic responsibility and its dimensions of history students.

Null Hypothesis

There is no significant correlation between political awareness and exercise of civic responsibility and its dimensions of history students.

Methodology

The investigators have employed descriptive method using survey as technique to study the relationship between political awareness and civic responsibility and its dimensions. Political Awareness Test (PAT) and Exercise of Civic Responsibility Scale (E CRS) developed and validated by V.Sasikala and S.Francisca (2016) were used for collecting data. The investigators had drawn a sample of 1611 students studying B.A (history) in various arts and colleges in Tamilnadu using simple random sampling technique.

Null Hypothesis

There is no significant correlation between political awareness and exercise of civic responsibility and its dimensions of history students.

Table 1

Correlation between Political Awareness and Exercise of Civic Responsibility and its Dimensions of History Students

Exercise of Civic Responsibility and its Dimensions	N	Calculated 'γ' value	Table value		Remark
			1%level	5%level	
Political Responsibility	1611	0.141	0.0258	0.0196	S**
Social Responsibility		0.005			NS
Democratic Responsibility		0.207			S**
National Responsibility		0.188			S**
Environmental Responsibility		-0.028			S**
Personal Responsibility		0.095			S**
ECR in total		0.166			S**

*(S**-significant at 1%level, S*-significant at 5%level, NS-Not significant)*

It is inferred from the above table that the calculated 'γ' values are greater than the table value for all the dimensions of exercise of civic responsibility except for the dimension of social responsibility. Hence, there exists a significant positive correlation between the political awareness and exercise of civic responsibility and its dimensions such as political responsibility, democratic responsibility, national responsibility, environmental responsibility, personal responsibility and ECR in total of history students. But, there exists a significant negative correlation between the political awareness and environmental responsibility of history students. There is no significant correlation between political awareness and social responsibility.

Discussion

Political Awareness and Exercise of Civic Responsibility and its dimensions

There exists a significant positive correlation between the political awareness and exercise of civic responsibility and its dimensions such as political responsibility, democratic responsibility, national responsibility, personal responsibility and ECR in total of history students. The positive relationship indicates the increase in knowledge over politics naturally help in promoting the civic responsible behaviour. The reason may be that education as a process makes a man aware and responsible simultaneously. Students who are aware about the political system do their duties in a balanced way. History club activities endorse the skill of participation in group activities with common goals and aid in accomplishment

of duties as a citizen. The organisation of national day celebrations, model parliament, visits and talks of great personalities help in the broadening political knowledge and connecting history student's share of contribution in promoting democratic ideals and national spirit. This knowledge helps in development of values, ethics and empathetic behaviour. Learning of Indian history and world history, helps in developing civic sense, political competence, and transmits interest over politics. Awareness of the rights and duties develop the power of reasoning and judgement and also promotes the responsible behaviour. The study of **Kikrunainuo Kuotsu (2016)** supports the present finding and reports that higher the level of political awareness, higher would be the level of participation in electoral activities. It further reveals that political awareness is important for being a member of a political party. It is likely to generate an interest to take part in electoral activities as well as to acquire information about politics. The study of **Josh Pasek, Kate Kenski & Daniel Romer (2006)** also supports and highlights that civic activity is positively associated with political awareness. The study of **Hanlong**

Fu, Yi mou, Michael J. Miller & Gerard Jalette (2011) projects that the citizens become involved in politics as they developed a higher need for processing cognitively demanding political information.

There exists a significant negative correlation between the political awareness and environmental responsibility of history students with respect to total sample. The reason may be history provides a strong back ground for political knowledge but lacks in ecological knowledge. The contents dealt in history mainly focus on political history of various countries, comparative governments, Indian constitution, women rights, archaeology, and architecture etc., History projects also give more weightage on National and political aspects this may be the reason for high political interests and knowledge of political system and less acquisition of environmental concepts. The conservation, preservation of resources and environmental activities are mainly concentrated by the science students. These might be the reason for the increase in political awareness and lessened environmental responsible behaviour of the history students. **Chandra, S. C. & Morgan, H. (2001)** study findings support

the present study and report that political awareness has little to do with people's decision to recycle or not. In addition, a person's environmental and conservational attitudes have no direct relationship with their political awareness.

There is no relationship between political awareness and social responsibility. Results of the research by **Fariba Ebrahimi (2016)** contradict the present study and shows that meaningful correlation exists between level of political awareness of women and their degree of social participation.

Conclusion: A civic responsible person is an active citizen, who addresses society's problems in an informed manner. Youngster's involvement in civic activities will definitely contribute for a social change in a positive direction.

References

- [1]. Chandra, S. C. & Morgan, H. (2001). The relationship between political awareness and conservation attitudes and behaviors. *National Undergraduate Research Clearinghouse*, 4, retrieved from <http://www.webclearinghouse.net/volume>
Fariba
[2]. Ebrahimi (2016). Evaluation of the relationship between women's political

awareness and their social participation in the contemporary society of Iran (Ardabil province), *International journal of Asian social science*, 6(4), 262-271, retrieved from [http://www.aessweb.com/pdf-files/ijass-2016-6\(4\)-262-271.pdf](http://www.aessweb.com/pdf-files/ijass-2016-6(4)-262-271.pdf).

[3]. Hanlong Fu, Yi Mou, Michael Miller & Gerard Jalette., (2011). Reconsidering Political Cynicism and Political Involvement: A Test of Antecedents, *American Communication Journal*, 13(2), 44-61, retrieved from http://ac-journal.org/journal/pubs/2011/summer/Cynicism_Proof.pdf

[4]. Josh Pasek, Kate Kenski & Daniel Romer (2006). America's youth and community engagement how use of mass media is related to civic activity and political awareness in 14- to 22-year-olds, *Communication research*, 33(3), 115-135, retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0093650206287073>.

[5]. Kikruneinuo Kuotsu (2016). Political awareness and its impact in political participation: a gender study in nagaland, India, *International journal of innovative research & development*, 5(8), Extracted from <http://www.ijird.com/index.php/ijird/article/view/99378>.