

# PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH IN PARLIAMENT AND THEIR LITERACY RATE - AN ASIAN PERSPECTIVE

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## **Abstract**

*There has been a marked change in the attitude of Youth towards political participation in the world. The coming of youth to the Parliament of any country is a positive effort. This paper has based on three main objectives. First, to know the representation of Youth (Female and Male) under the age of 30, 40 and 45 in the Parliament of the Asian countries. Second, to know the literacy rate of adult in the same countries. And the third and most important objective, "Does literacy affect the participation of Youth in Parliament or not?" has to be discussed. The findings indicated that there are a large number of countries in Asia where despite having a good educational level, youth are absent of the Parliament, which shows the lack of political interest of the youth.*

## **Keywords:**

*Youth Politics, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Gender Studies, Asian, Youth leadership, World Bank*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Youth participation is essential, be it social, economic or political because when Youth participate, it attracts their expertise as well as enables them to exercise their rights as a citizen in a democratic society, and also imparts fundamental knowledge and practical skills by promoting personal development [1]. Youth participation in politics holds a vital place. Still, its fundamentals raise questions about what political participation is, who the participants are, what they do, and how literate are they?

Worldwide the Youth (Female and Male) representation rate under 45 years old is 30.2%. Which shows that the Youth has yet to struggle to achieve equality in politics? According to World Bank 2020, the literacy of adults (Women and Men) aged 15 or more is 86.47%, which is more than the youth leadership in politics.

Social barriers can be overcome to some extent by the Youth becoming active in politics. This transformation of the political development of Youth is visible in the form of political power. Political upliftment of Youth is not the basis of their economic and educational status. The youths have long waited for the coming of politics with struggle as most parties give preference to experienced politicians and do not give Youth a chance in politics. The statement is not false that illiteracy is dangerous for freedom, economic and technological development, and society's moral welfare [2]. Politics and education are both fields that focus on learning. Indeed, every teacher, at one point in time, a student and every leader must have been an apprentice at some point or the other. Without training, one can neither earn education nor become a leader.

Equality is it political or social, economic or educational, makes a healthy society. Equal rights have been given to every person in the community, yet the representation in parliamentary seats among the Youth is meagre.

The age for a person to vote in a public election is a minimum age established by law and the Constitution. Currently, the general voting age in most countries is 18 years old; while in some countries (Malta, Brazil), it is less than 16 years of age and even up to 25 years of age. In this study, female's literacy has been taken more than 15 years, because there are still many countries where members of 16 years can vote to participate in democracy.

The aim of this paper to gather information from different sources, makes sense of general proposals, and learn about the participation of Youth in parliament. This research tries to highlight that the political system is not a socio-political base, and the politics of Youth and educational participation affect each other or not? Keeping the above points in mind, in this study, an attempt has been made to know the representation of youth in Parliament and their literacy, as well as the effect of literacy on political representation, has been discussed.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

About half of the world's youth (Female and Male) population resides in Asia. Countries close to Asia differ in terms of different languages, cultures, religions and political systems. The economies of many countries in Asia are overgrowing [3]. In many countries, such as China and Vietnam, there are restrictions on the freedom and political expression of the press/media called the fourth pillar of democracy. There is no independent human rights organization in these countries with limited space for civil society. Youth participation in all walks of life becomes imperative for developing countries. Today's Youth is more prone to technological gadgets. Attachments and information grow up believing that they can influence the events around them. Vietnam and China generally have higher participation in the labor market than countries in the world. Like China or Vietnam, the situation is very different in the Philippines, which has a multi-party democracy, freedom of the press, vibrant civil society, and independent human rights institutions. Political action and social activism allow young people to participate in democracy [3]. Political participation can be seen in many forms. Generally, one can be active in politics by participating in events organized by particular political parties. In many countries, it is 18 or 21 years old (sometimes 16 years old). In the state of Indonesia) as a citizen, the youth general election can exercise the right to vote in elections and by-elections.

The term political participation refers to an activity whose intent or effect is to influence regional, national or supranational governance, or by directly affecting the formulation or implementation of public policy or indirectly selecting individuals [4]. Political participation takes many forms, such as traditional, for voting, campaigning, and elections. Running and non-traditional include signing petitions, participating, political demonstrations, displaying symbols, membership of political

campaign organizations, writing letters to politicians and public officials, etc.

Political participation needs to be viewed comprehensively. There can be many factors affecting the political participation of an individual, such as political socialization by family and the school system, media agenda setting and personal experiences. Prior studies in different regions of the world have shown that participation can be almost non-existent due to indifference to politics [5, 18]. Prior research indicates that young people not only vote but also lack a clear interest in political parties, which is less as a member of political organizations than older people [6] Youth Participation in East Asia Young women is also more interested in some forms of political expression than younger men. Young people in better educated and developed countries are more likely to be politically involved and interested [7].

Youth is the future of any democracy. If seen, today’s youth are the leaders of tomorrow, and they can already bring new ideas to solve problems. Getting change in society requires that young men and young women be involved in formal political processes and have a role to play in shaping the strong politics of today and tomorrow. Political participation is a fundamental political and democratic right of the individual and essential for building stable and peaceful societies. Globally, the participation and representation of young women and men in institutional political processes and policy-making are relatively low. People below 35 are found in various parliaments, public administration and decision-making institutions such as committees on peacebuilding and constitution-making.

In Malaysia, “National Youth Policy 1997” refers to Youth aged 15 to 40 years. Many political parties in Malaysian politics are ethnically and racially based due to the three major ethnic Malay, Chinese, and Indian being in Malaysia. Malaysian citizens have minimal political rights and freedoms; due to some laws, students are no longer allowed to be members of, or show support for, any political party or engage in many off-campus activities. That is why Malaysian youth are indifferent to mainstream politics. Not looking at Youth as a problem or victim should be seen as a significant contributor to the planning and implementation of long-term solutions.

Several prior studies suggest a relationship between education and various forms of political participation. Literacy acts as a force, and its power has been seen primarily with the possibilities of economic development, equality of opportunity and freedom and democracy. Evils have been carried in the society by the illiterate, but as literacy was associated with freedom, a change was seen. Literacy is an integral part of its use as an instrument of governance. Literacy, schooling, education and intelligence are linked to the economic and social responsibilities of individuals [8, 2].

## 2.1 EDUCATION AND POLITICS

The politics of education in the study area is closely associated with educational administration. Educational administration is more interested in management and legitimacy and politics of denial than in tackling the causes of social inequalities. Education is primarily associated with politics called political engagement. The ‘16 ± 19 ‘of the Council for Economic and Social Research (ESRC) on the British Youth in the past In a recent study, educated citizens who were interested in politics, were more

likely to receive education and vote after 16, discuss politics with family and friends, and watch political broadcasts [9,10].

A study on UK adults found those degree holders, that is, educated, vote less than the average, with the exception that educated politics in other countries also Participate in Based on their sample, imperfect people with university degrees polled 33.3% [11]. Those receiving college education voted 82.6%, suggesting that traditionally low-income, highly educated people disapprove of the turnout. We do. And pay less attention to political participation. Voting members play an important role in elections for healthy democracy because the level of voting in elections is considered as an indicator of the health of democracy [12]. However, elsewhere in Western Europe, declining rates of electoral participation are a general trend. Taking less interest in voting in politics by adults is inconvenient for a healthy democracy. So lowering the voting age in elections may prove to be a borrowing solution. To increase the voting percentage, cities and towns in the United States and around twenty countries, including Austria, Brazil, Ecuador, and Norway, have reduced the age for voting Austria is the only European country where 16-year-olds have the right to vote. Children under the age of 16 have more turnout than 18–21-year-olds [13], Voting in elections to participate in politics in a healthy social environment Doing has a positive effect on a youth’s political socialization.

## 3. METHOD

The study compared the age-based representation of Youth (Female and Male) in the Lower house of Parliament of countries in the continent of Asia and the literacy rate (above 15) of adults (female and male). Data collected from Inter-Parliamentary Union website <https://data.ipu.org/> and World Bank website (<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS>) until December 2021. A total of 24 countries in Asia were selected from the nearly 89 countries in the world given in the IPU website, whose World Bank website was available at the literacy rate.

## 4. PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH IN POLITICS

### 4.1 GLOBAL AVERAGES ONLY LOWER CHAMBER

As the policy direction of a country is determined in its Parliament. A healthy democratic parliament works with the ideas and interests of the society to shape the country’s future socially, politically and economically (IPU, 2009).

Table.1. Representation of Youth in parliament with literacy rate - World average

(Single House) Total Seat	Percentage of Youth			Adult literacy
	(<30)	(<40)	(<45)	Ages 15 and above
12333	2.94	20.17	34.87	86.47

Youth in any society is considered a symbol of the continuity of future generations in all walks of life. Whatever the society, Youth in almost every society is regarded as the future of the society. An educated Youth (Female and Male) also serves to give

a new mirror to society. In modern times the politics of most countries around the world are being represented by Youth.

Youth (Women and Men under 45) are under-represented in world politics (see Table.1). Out of the total 38,755 seats globally, only the youngest people below the age of 45 constitute 34.87%. Representatives under the age of 30 are only 2.94%, which indicates that it is challenging or complex for the Youth to come into high politics. Whereas in contrast, the literacy rate of the total population (above 15 years) globally is 86.47% and 86% of people over the age of 15 are literate all over the world. While there are many countries in which more than 95% have basic literacy skills.

#### 4.2 REPRESENTATION OF YOUTH IN PARLIAMENT: REGIONAL COUNTRY

Significant progress has been seen in the recent past, especially in European countries, where the representation of Youth (Female and Male) under 30 years, 24.63% under 40 and Youth up to 45 years of age (female and male) in the Single House of Parliament up to 40.36%. According to the IPU report 2020 (see Table.2), we can see a difference between regional countries regarding the political representation of Youth. In modern times, Youth have the highest political participation in European countries, while the Middle East and North Africa countries are the least represented. At the same time, in Sub-Saharan Africa, 39.34% of Youth (under 45) are described in the single house of Parliament. In American countries, 34.66% of Youth (Female and Male) are represented in single dwellings. Asia, which is the world's most populous continent, has only 27.36% of its Youth (under the age of 45) participating in the Single House of

Parliament, which is very low in terms of the youth population. And if we talk about the Pacific countries, there is only a little less participation from Asia with 25.83%. The status of the Youth can be estimated from the data; how low is the political participation of the Youth?

Table.2. Representation of Youth in parliament– Regional country

Region	Total seats (Single House)	Percentage of Youth		
		(<30)	(<40)	(<45)
Americas	1829	3.17	20.34	34.66
Asia	2675	1.53	14.77	27.36
Europe	4990	4.01	24.63	40.36
Middle East and North Africa	952	0.95	10.50	20.80
Pacific	151	0.00	13.91	25.83
Sub-Saharan Africa	1736	3.17	21.31	39.34

#### 4.3 REPRESENTATION OF YOUTH IN PARLIAMENT: ASIAN COUNTRY

Asia is the continent with more than half of the world's population. Similar to other global regions, a quarter of residents in Asia are under the age of 15. As of 2015, the most populous countries globally are China and India, both located on the Asian continent. The median age in China in 2015 was 37 years old, i.e., half of China's population was young, while half of the population was of another period.

Table.3. Representation of Youth in parliaments with the literacy rate: Asian country

Country	Year	Total seats (Single House)	Percentage of Youth			Adult literacy (Age >15)	
			(<30)	(<40)	(<45)	Year	A%
Maldives	2019	87	3.45	26.44	59.77	2016	97.73
Afghanistan	2018	67	5.84	34.31	50.81	2018	43.02
Singapore	2020	104	1.05	15.79	40.00	2018	97.34
Pakistan	2018	342	2.08	13.69	31.25	2017	59.13
Thailand	2019	489	2.40	16.60	26.40	2018	93.76
Indonesia	2019	575	3.83	14.96	26.26	2018	95.65
Iran	2020	286	0.00	14.44	25.35	2016	85.54
Sri Lanka	2020	223	2.23	11.61	25	2018	91.71
Vietnam	2016	494	1.81	12.30	22.18	2018	95
Japan	2017	464	0.00	8.39	22.15	-	-
India	2019	540	0.79	10.71	20.24	2018	74.37
Malaysia	2018	222	0.90	10.36	18.02	2018	94.85
Nepal	2017	275	0.00	5.09	16.36	2018	67.90
China	2018	2975	1.24	5.61	11.56	2018	96.84
Bangladesh	2018	350	0.29	5.71	10.57	2019	74.68
Bhutan	2018	47	-	-	-	2017	65.56
Cambodia	2018	125	-	-	-	2015	80.52
DPR of Korea	2019	687	-	-	-	2008	99.99
Lao People's Democratic Republic	2021	164	-	-	-	2015	84.66

Mongolia	2020	75	-	-	-	2018	98.42
Myanmar	2020	425	-	-	-	2016	75.55
Philippines	2019	304	-	-	-	2015	98.18
Republic Of Korea	2020	300	-	-	-	2008	97.98
Timor-Leste	2018	65	-	-	-	2018	68.06

In this study (see Table.3), 24 countries of the continent of Asia have been taken. According to the IPU report 2021, the Maldivians have the highest representation of Youth (Female and Male) under 45 at 59.77% in the Lower House of the Parliament of the Asian countries. If you look at the Table.3, you will find that in the Maldives itself, Youth under 30 years and below 40 years represent 3.45 and 26.44% respectively. According to the World Bank Report, 2020, the adult literacy rate here was 97.73% as of 2016, lower than the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Philippines and Republic of Korea. At the same time, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mongolia, the Philippines, and the Republic of Korea does not have a single youth representation in the Parliament Single House. According to the World Bank Report 2020, Afghanistan's youth/adult literacy rate is 43.02% as of 2018, which is the lowest according to the Table.3. In the lower house of the Parliament here, the Youth (Female and Male) below the age of 65 are second in 50.81% representations. In Afghanistan itself, Youth under 30 represent 5.84%. If we look at the youth representation below 40 years of age, 34.31% is the highest among the Youth below 40 years of age. India ranked second in the world after China in terms of population; here, youth (female and male) representation in the Single / Lower House of Parliament is low in terms of the youth population. Youth below 45 years of age is only 20.24% which is less than countries like Singapore, Pakistan, Thailand, Indonesia, Iran, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Japan etc. Youth below the age of 30 represent almost 0.79% in the Parliament, while the Youth below the age of 79 is 10.71%, which is higher than Japan. India's youth literacy rate is 74.37% as of 2018, higher than Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan and Timor-Leste (World Bank, 2020). The Parliament of Lower Bhutan, Cambodia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Republic of Korea and Timor-Leste does not have youth representation. At the same time, the adult literacy rate means education in these countries is good.

## 5. DISCUSSION

Generally, politically experienced men are considered eligible for politics, which is why young people (Female and Male) are often ignored and excluded as political candidates due to their young age, limited opportunities and lack of experience. In its report on youth participation in national parliaments reports that people aged 20 to 44 constitute half of the world's voting-age population, but only 30.2% of the world's parliamentarians. Young people under 30 represent 2.94% of the world's lawmakers. According to Flanagan and Sherrod, 1998, the role of evaluation in helping Youth negotiate the political realities of their social system and change the process is changing. Political participation is an essential tool for promoting good governance, the power of political inclusion and democracy. Every society has equal rights in political activities. Youth participation in politics worldwide is not even half of the youth population [14].

Education is a human right as well as a powerful driver of development. They were considered one of the most vital tools for reducing poverty and improving health, gender equality, peace and stability. Literacy programs Different approaches have different purposes. There are two general models for this – personal development and empowerment and social change. The unique development model emphasizes the individual development of the individual that enables adults to transform. In this, the role of the teacher is that of a coach and a mentor. The empowerment and social change model emphasize illiterate adults to become critically aware of social and political realities and deserve to make changes in the existing system [15].

According to the theory of generational influence, pre-adult socialization permanently affects political socialization. That is to say, the adolescence of a particular person is a period relevant to the development of political thinking. On this basis, some authors believe in their studies that today's adults are less active because of the older elders never reaching the level of political participation [16]. According to earlier studies, the younger generation was willing to participate in local elections and general elections. Voters of different age groups were close to each other in terms of importance in reading newspapers to get political information in local elections. The fact is that participation in politics is not the ultimate task. According to Pausch, M. 2012, direct political participation is defined by the expression of political interests and political purpose. A politically motivated citizen participates in politics intending to win his favourite political party or personality in elections or to promote his own political beliefs or interests within a particular region. Whereas indirect political participation is a voluntary engagement in social activities or networks with political influence but participates in politics without clearly defined political interests or political motives [14].

Youth (Female and Male) are making their name bright in education and sports and other fields, which show their golden future, but politics is the only field where Youth do not get full opportunities. The research began with a review of existing studies by academic, national and international agencies, organizations on the challenges and opportunities facing the Youth in the political field. We focused on the political participation of Youth (Female and Male) and female literacy in this paper. Efforts have also been made to know their economic, cultural and social conditions. It is known from past research that women are still fighting for representation in politics. Countless have increased in front of women, which compels them to suppress their desires. One of these few obstacles is illiteracy. Through education, the individual's mind, training in logical and analytical thinking, organizational, administrative and management skills, etc., is achieved. The direct result of education within any community is its enhanced self-esteem and improved financial-social status. Therefore, education must be made available to all [17]. There are still many difficulties in the field of youth political empowerment which are yet to be resolved. If

seen, the political representation of Youth globally in the last few years. To some extent, progress has been made in the direction of revolutionary steps are being taken around the world to promote political inclusion among women.

Youth representation and their literacy rate in the parliaments of countries taken in this paper show that literacy is essential in political representation but not mandatory. The Maldives is a country in Asia where Youth (Female and Male) is 3.45% of MPs under 30 years of age in a single house in Parliament, 26.44 MPs under 40 years of age is 26.44 and Youth below 65 years is 59.77% and its adult literacy is 97.73% (see Table.3). The adult literacy rate in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Philippines, Republic of Korea is more than 95%. Still, there is not a single youth representative in Parliament. In contrast, Afghanistan's literacy rate is only 43.02%, but in the lower house of the Parliament, Youth below 45 years of age represents 50.81% in the state.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The data given above shows that youth representation is one fourth in the world parliament, significantly less. This paper has found that in some countries of Asia, youth representation in politics is good, where youth literacy is also good. Like Singapore, Maldives, Thailand, Indonesia, China, Vietnam, etc., literacy is more than 95%. At the same time, there are also countries where there is no youth representation in Parliament. Still, the literacy rate is more than 95, such as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, etc. This study shows that except in some countries in Asia, youth literacy does not act as a barrier to the political representation of youth. Literacy is essential for social and individual progress but not essential for political participation. There is no doubt that the level of political representation of youth in Asian countries is poor while literacy is in good shape.

## 7. FUTURE DIRECTION

This paper helps in understanding the various aspects of youth political participation and their literacy. While the existing literature and the given data provide deeper insights on this topic, we feel that further investigation may be warranted in this area. Some untouched research topics exist for future research. A prospective researcher can identify problems and factors in youth political participation in a variety of ways, such as based on gender, religion and area (urban and rural).

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