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# Educational Attainment and Political Representation and Participation

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## ABSTRACT

*Democracy is not just an election process or a system but it is our matter of life. It ensures that we the people are governed as we deserve. But to ensure that do we have enough educated representatives? Do we have educated and aware people to elect the deserving representatives? Thomas Jefferson, the third U.S president says “Educate and inform the whole mass of the people, they are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty.” The paper scientifically and empirically investigates relationship between educational attainment and political representation and participation. It also calls attention on the connection of educational level of political representation and economic growth. Education is conclusively associated or linked to political participation in political activities, political representation of people on different level and lastly the impact of education on overall economic, social development of the nation. Education plays a vital in these subject matters as it enhances the political activity and benefit the nation. Education of people and their representatives is essential to ensure the welfare of society.*

*In this paper we have focused on the direct relation of political activity and educational variation. We have tried to study how literacy level can affect the development and growth of the nation.*

*Our primary objective is to prove why we need educated politician or leaders. Why need of literate people in country. How the literacy rate is directly proportionate to economic development and growth. Whether the educational levels impacts growth of individual. We have analyzed and observed some quantitative surveys and journals, case studies. After taking those into account we have understood the positive relation between education and politics. Education is one of the elements which can influence political participation and representation. Hence higher level of educational attainments results in higher political activity.*

**Keywords:** *Representatives, Literacy, Voter Turnout, Political participation, Economic Development.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Education discussion over the educational qualification of politicians has been a topic of debate

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from long period. In today's time, education is considered as the major quality in leader or representative. It is assumed that education equips the representatives with governing skills to function and hold the political office. Higher degree is necessary to ensure better governance. Many researches claim that education is the indicator of good leadership. Politicians with skill and knowledge of society can only make better decisions regarding the development and sustainability, ensuring the welfare of people. Education provides transparency and also secure minimum competence. As politicians make decisions for social well being and order, qualified representatives make more rational and beneficial decisions for the state.

Educated law and policy makers would promote growth, as education influences their policies in a positive way. Education and leadership are directly linked. (besly and Reynal- Querol, 2011, peveri,2021). Educated leaders can and would make interest from business. And it is weak, slight and lacking sound reasoning (francois et al, 2020, Gallego, 2009, carnes and lupu, 2016). Many research spotlight that the educated leaders may have an equivocal impact on economic development and growth. Educated legislators might promote positive change and their knowledge influences the policies which serve in public interest more sufficiently (besley and Reynal-Querol,2011). Such leaders attract more investment and automatically lead to the growth and they improve the reforms (Francois et al., 2020). As noted by Carnes and Lupu, 2016 and Lahoti and shahoo, 2020, education may improve the leader's skill but it may not enhance the political capabilities of the leader.

If we take a look back at the ancient period, Plato a Greek philosopher focused on philosopher king or rulers. According to Plato, a ruler should be highly educated in all terms so to govern the society more efficiently and maturely. In the today's world, we do not have educated leaders. In India leader's are elected more on the basis of their gender, criminality and in addition to that religion plays major part. Educational qualifications ensure a level of competence. It ensures the well being of people and educated politicians, ministers can make better and unbiased decisions for the society. According to the discussion paper series of IZA institute of labor economics, May 2022, educated or graduated representatives in state assembly shows positive growth rate a compared to the non-graduate leaders. In Addition, educated leaders in developed nations may have better chances of favorable outcome. In fact, developed countries have more expenses per student than other states. This may helps leaders to improve educational outcomes. In developed nations graduate leaders are more effective than non graduates.

Development involves the application of certain economic and technical measures to utilize available resources to instigate economic growth and improve people quality of life. To understand this on various levels we need well literate and educated leader to shape the country.

We aim to examine if educated politicians are more efficient and driver finer and greater end product.

### **What are the education qualifications of our representatives? What is the relation between education and political representation?**

The Member of Parliament who represents large number of people should be up skilled and qualified for his position. According to PRS Legislative report, 10 percent of MP's in Lok Sabha are matriculates. 13 percent of MP's elected in general elections, 2014 were not even having matriculate degree. If there are educational criteria for all sectors and jobs then why there are no education qualification requirements for member of the Parliament, Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and lower governing bodies.

There are no provisions in Indian Constitution related to the educational qualification of the MP's and MLA's or candidate participating in the elections. In today's date, only simple eligibility criteria's as per Article 173 of Indian Constitution and the RPA (Representation of the People Act, 1951) are there for candidates participating in elections. It highlights the qualifications, disqualifications and other aspects of elected candidate i.e.

1. Resident of the country or particular area which they want to stand and represent the people.
2. Candidate must attain 25 ages and should not hold any office or profit.

Indian Constitution has not mentioned any educational qualifications for election candidates.

The writers and drafters of the constitution were highly educated but currently 40% of the leaders are under graduate. Election of educated representatives makes 03. To 0.45% higher GDP rate per year ( Discussion paper series, IZA Institute of labor Economics, 2020) Electing criminally accused politicians lower the growth rate in night time lights by 24% which is 2.4% decrees in GDP and estimate that legislators increases growth by 15% points ( baskaran et al, 2021). Criminally accused representatives badly impact the state legislative assemblies in India. It results in decline in economic growth of the country. (Lahoti and shahoo, 2020). Criminally accused elected leaders may promote illegal acts and can corrupt the system. These leaders buy votes from uneducated by threatening them or by other means. The members who are facing criminal proceeding had risen by 24 % in year of 2004 to 2014 (Bagri, 2014).

In India only two states – Haryana and Rajasthan has minimum educational requirements for standing in local body elections. This policy was implemented in year of 2015 in Haryana and 2016 in Rajasthan. Assam has proposed minimum education qualifications for state legislature

candidates. Candidate contesting for state legislature should at least college graduation. There is only little research on impact of educated leaders on economic and overall progress. Carnes and Lupu, 2016 has significantly studied the impact of educated leaders on end result from various prospective at national, state and local level. In India there are only few studies which methodically study the effect of educational attainment of representatives, even though there are numerous researches is done on gender, religion, cast, criminality of the leader and its impacts on election.

## **II. EDUCATED LEADERS AND THEIR IMPACT ON SOCIETY**

Central Government and state legislature both notably impact the society's growth and education of the people. Members of the legislative assembly (MLAs) of the State Government influence education by controlling resources, funds, teachers, bureaucracy. Political leader take hold of children's learning, enrollment and educational resources, given that enrollment of the students are high but the end result of learning continue to be low.

If we observe the Human Development Index levels in India, we see the different levels from high to low. Each state differs in HDI levels. Kerala and Tamil Nadu have high level on the other hand Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are lowest on Human Development Index in India. The education attainment of people and leaders plays a vital role in development ( Lahoti and Shahoo, 2020). In developed states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu, education level of the citizens is high, hence the citizens prefer education. Educated politicians may deliver finer because they are competent in meeting them. On the contrary, the states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar has low literacy rate, hence they don't prioritize education. Educated leader may plan better policies depending of state's development level.

## **III. NEED OF EDUCATED VOTERS**

India is diverse country. Each state of India is characterized by different elements. There are many determinants of voting behavior of people i.e. religion, caste, language, money factor, sub-nationalism, functionalism, literacy and public esteem of candidate.

Caste has deep and significant social roots in India society. Political party often takes advantage of caste by considering caste while designing the policies and selecting candidates for contesting elections. This may lead to politicization of the caste. It influences the voting pattern by manipulating the choices of voters based on their caste. Politicians campaign appealing to a particular caste for their support.

India constitutionally is a secular nation but religion still plays judgmental role in politics and

voting behavior. Many political parties use religious ideas to gain the support from people having faith in that religion. There are political parties and groups that associate or ally with particular religion. E.g. Akali Dal and Muslim League. Candidates contesting elections impact the political strategies by appetizing religious sentiments.

India is multilingual state and language can influence the voting behavior of the people especially in linguistic state like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, and Maharashtra and so on. Linguistic state can have feeling of Sub nationalism. This also contributes to the voting behavior. Religion, Language, Caste, Sub nationalism are dominant determinants of the voting behavior (Biraj Hazarika, IOSR-JHSS, 2015). Education level or literacy level plays a critical role in elections and voting behavior. In states with lower literacy level, politicians manipulate and influence the voters by caste, religion, language and identities. Political leaders exploit illiterate voters and gain the back of the people. On other hand, in regions with higher literacy rates, people prioritize education, development and growth. Hence there are low chances of manipulating voter behavior. The voting percentage in state having higher literacy rate is more than the states with lower literacy rates.

**Data:** We have analyzed the correlation between literacy rates in states of India and voter percentage of respective state. We have collected this data from

Sr.no	Name of the State	Average Literacy rate 2023	Voter turnout Lok Sabha election 2024
1.	Kerala	96.2%	71%
2.	Assam	85%	81%
3.	Tripura	87.75%	80%
4.	goa	87%	76%
5.	Himachal Pradesh	86%	70%
6.	Rajasthan	69%	61%
7.	Bihar	70%	56%

8.	Telangana	77%	65%
9.	Uttar Pradesh	73%	56%
10.	Jammu & Kashmir	77%	58%
11.	Madhya Pradesh	73%	66%

- From above we have observed that state having higher literacy rate like Kerala, Assam, Tripura, Himachal Pradesh have greater percentage of voting turnout in the Lokh Sabha election of 2024. E.g. Assam's average literacy rate is 85% and voter turnout percentage is 81%.
- The states having low literacy rates such as Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have less voting turnout percentage. E.g. Bihar with 70% of literacy rate has only 56% of voter turnout.
- We have analyzing , exploring and inspecting various data of literacy rates in India it's relation to the voting turnout percentage, we can come to the conclusion that literacy rate and voting turnout level has direct relation. They are proportionate to each other. i.e. Higher the literacy rate, higher the voter turnout percentage. Higher literacy rate is often correlated with better understanding of political issues and voting participation. State with higher literacy rates have better economic conditions with lead to the higher voter turnout.
- This relationship between voter turnout and literacy may not be absolute in nature. Other factors like political stability, religion, language, culture play important role in influencing voter's choice.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This paper explores and examines whether having educated representatives in India leads to the better governance and end output. This paper notes the impact of educated politicians on economic development and growth. We also have analyzed and examined the importance and need of literate, educated voters.

The study has observed the positive relation between the literacy rate and voter turnout. The study emphasize on the effect of electing educated leaders on education system of state. The paper highlights the effectiveness of educated leaders and requirement of educated and

informed people.

**(A) Suggestions:**

- Improving education policies in state it will make people aware about their rights and political activities.
- Adding minimum education eligibility criteria for state legislature assembly.

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