

Political Awareness among Voters of Different Age Groups: A Study

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Abstract: Political awareness or consciousness is an important tool for success of democracy. Without proper knowledge of political atmosphere a voter cannot enjoy his democratic right fully. In a highly sophisticated world, voters should try to understand the different political phenomena in a logical way. Though in a country like India it is not happening in full scale, researchers should try to find out the problems and its solutions. However, it is not easy to assess the human political behaviour expecting a higher percentage rate, yet we can understand it to some extent in a systematic way. How much do the people are aware of their political system is the basic question here. Along with this it also important to study how can age be a factor of political awareness. In this paper, we have tried to find out the political awareness among voters of different age groups and their consciousness on the basis of age through an empirical study.

Keywords: Awareness, Political, Voters, Age, Difference.

I. INTRODUCTION

Success of democracy mostly depends on the political awareness among people. Without peoples' participation (mostly the voters), a democratic country could not be a developed in real sense. That is why, it is important to study their knowledge and consciousness towards a political system so that we can find out the hurdles to strengthen the system. To attain this goal we have to encounter with the term of political awareness. Awareness is the state of being consciousness. Thus, political awareness implies the political consciousness of the people regarding various political phenomena or happenings of a political system. Alexander Hamilton said, "The people are turbulent and changing; they seldom judge and determine the right" (Lodge, 1904). In democratic political set up or structure people take part in various political activities directly or indirectly and their participation in (in various activities) marks its success or failure. Here is a question come to our mind that how do people get the political knowledge. The answer is; there are many factors like political parties, mass media, leaders, pressure groups etc. which work together to shape voters consciousness. To aware people or to attract people, political parties and leaders even used 'political marketing' and the first mention of political marketing in academic literature dates back to the 1960s and 1970s (Kilter and Levy 1969, McGinnis 1969, Namo 1973, Shame 1973). So from the marketing perspective of politics, an election can be seen as a object of sale; the point of sale, the point of choice, where voters employ the knowledge they have about a candidate or political party and make their choice (Aaker, 1991; Gundlach and Murphy 1993, Keller 1993). Thus, in that way people get involved in political arena. Likewise, mass media has also a wonderful communication of political awareness. Political messages which cover verbal or non-verbal statements as well as visual presentations such as dress, make-up, hairstyle, or logo design including all those aspects that develop a political identity or image should be deliberate (McNair, 2005). Furthermore, various civic associations or pressure groups also help to aware people politically. So to lead a prosperous life in a democratic country every citizen needs the political knowledge.

Political awareness is a multi-dimensional concept and its interpretation is complicated and most importantly the literatures on political awareness is still scant as the aspects of societies (i.e. political, economic, civic etc.) are getting more complex day by day. In addition, it is hard to get actual political knowledge in all the time as many factors works together in shaping voters'

behaviour. So, we have to move in a systematic way so that a desired result can be achieved. Here in this paper we have tried to trace out the political awareness of voters of different age groups. Who are more aware to their political system? Are these the young people or the matured? Or something else i.e. there is no such difference in different age groups. To find out all these we have done an empirical study in Batiamari village of Assam (India). We have made 3 groups of voters on the basis of age to know their political consciousness.

II. RESEARCH DESIGN AND SAMPLING METHOD

Descriptive research design has been used to analyse the political awareness level of different age groups. For factorial analysis, we have used one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test.

Primary data has been collected from field observation. Sample population is consisted of 30 voters of different age group (10 voters from each group) selected randomly throughout the study area. We have made three groups for our study namely-

1. Age group " x_1 " = from 18 to 34
2. Age group " x_2 " = from 35 to 51
3. Age group " x_3 " = 52+

Self-structured questionnaire is set to know the political consciousness of voters. Along with this informal interviews have also been conducted to know some related aspects

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

There are three prime objectives of the study. We have tried to find out-

1. Is there any difference between various age groups of voters regarding political awareness?
2. Is age a factor of political awareness?
3. If there is some difference, which group shows more political involvement?

UNIVERSE OF THE STUDY:

The study has been carried out in a rural area of Assam (India). We made our study in a village called Batiamari in the district of Barpeta. The samples are taken from among the voters of different age groups in that village.

HYPOTHESIS:

H_0 = There is no difference between different age groups of voters regarding political awareness. In other word, $\mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3$

H_1 = There is difference between different age groups regarding political awareness.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As stated earlier, we have studies 30 voters of different age groups through questionnaire set for the purpose. We have given scores on each question and compiling scores of different age groups separately completed our study. We have used ANOVA test to study the variables. The following ANOVA table shows the result:

TABLE I

Score of variations	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean squares	F ratio
Between	36.067	2	18.034	10.293
Within	47.313	27	1.752	
Total	83.38	29		

In the above table (table 1), we have found the F ratio as 10.293 and the critical value (2, 27) is 3.3541 at $\alpha=0.05$. Since F ratio $10.293 > 3.3541$, the result is significant at the 5% significance level.

We will now do Turkey's post-hoc analysis to find out which groups differ from each other.

$$HSD = q\sqrt{\frac{MSw}{n}} = 4.49\sqrt{\frac{1.752}{10}} = 1.88$$

Now, $\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2 = 2.8 - 5.3 = -2.5$; Group \bar{x}_1 and \bar{x}_2 differ

$\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_3 = 2.8 - 3.2 = -0.4$; Group \bar{x}_1 and \bar{x}_3 do not differ

$\bar{x}_2 - \bar{x}_3 = 5.3 - 3.2 = 2.1$; Group \bar{x}_2 and \bar{x}_3 differ

N.B. We will only be concerned with the absolute difference, so, we will ignore the negative signs. We will then compute the difference scores with the HSD value. If the difference is larger than the HSD, the difference is significant.

V. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- i. There is difference between age groups regarding political awareness. Age has a direct impact on political awareness.
- ii. Middle aged people are comparatively more conscious than young or old ones. They are more active in all activities. Most of the people of that age group take active participation in political activities.
- iii. Young voters specially the college students are not much concern about the political aspect. Except a few, most of them seem to be not interested in political happenings. Though they have more or less political knowledge, they don't want to take active participation in decision making.
- iv. Women voters are found lagging in various political activities in all categories in comparison to male voters. They hardly get involved in others political activities (except a few) but perform the vote casting duty to a commendable level.
- v. Old aged voters (mainly the voters of above 70) are found more or less uninterested in political activities. They only perform their voting duty in the elections with the help of others.

VI. CONCLUSION

To conclude, it can be said that to study political awareness among voters is not an easy task as it is related with human behavior. But one can able to get a desired result if one goes through a systematic scientific way. As our study is comprised of a small no of samples, there is always scope of macro studies which can bring clearer picture. On the outcome of the study, it is seen that the young people particularly most of the college students found reluctant in political sphere. For a democratic country it is not a good sign as they share a huge number in voting as well as part of political environment. The political parties, mass media and civil societies have a great responsibility in this regard. They should come forward in a positive way so that the young along with the others get a healthy environment to create a strong political system minimizing the age differentiation regarding political awareness.

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APPENDIX - A

ABBREVIATIONS:

P.M.	POLITICAL MEETING
C.V.	CASTING VOTE
W.P.T.S.	WATCH POLITICAL DEBATE SHOWS
I.P.N	INTERESTED IN POLITICAL NEWS
C.P.D.	CURRENT POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS WITH OTHERS
P.I.S.	PARTY IDEOLOGY SUPPORTED
P.T.	POLITICAL TEACHINGS (GIVEN TO OTHERS)
R.P.A.M.	READING PARTY'S ANNUAL MENIFESTO

N.B: Casting vote has two meanings-

- (a) Regular in casting vote (Y)
 (b) Not regular in casting vote (O)

SCORE DESCRIPTION:

Y	1
N	0
O	0

N.B: Note the difference between alphabetical letter "O" and number "0"

Age group “x₁” = from 18 to 34

Different parameters	No of Voters										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
P.M.	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	
C.V.	Y	O	Y	O	Y	Y	Y	O	Y	O	
W.P.T.S.	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	
I.P.N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	
C.P.D.	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	
P.I.S.	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	
P.T.	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	
R.P.A.M.	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	
Total score Taking “Y”s	3	2	3	4	3	2	4	3	2	2	= 28

Age group “x₂” = from 35 to 51

Different parameters	No of Voters										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
P.M.	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	
C.V.	Y	Y	Y	Y	O	O	Y	Y	O	Y	
W.P.T.S.	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	
I.P.N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
C.P.D.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	
P.I.S.	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	
P.T.	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	
R.P.A.M.	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	
Total score Taking “Y”s	5	8	6	7	4	3	7	6	2	5	= 53

Age group “x₃” = 52+

Different parameters	No of Voters										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
P.M.	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	
C.V.	Y	Y	O	Y	O	Y	Y	Y	Y	O	
W.P.T.S.	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	
I.P.N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	
C.P.D.	Y	Y	Y	Y	y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	
P.I.S.	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	
P.T.	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	
R.P.A.M.	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	
Total score Taking “Y”s	3	4	4	5	2	3	4	2	3	2	= 32

Groups of Voters

x_1	x_2	x_3
3	5	3
2	8	4
3	6	4
4	7	5
3	4	2
2	3	3
4	7	4
3	6	2
2	2	3
2	5	2

The overall mean of the groups $\bar{x} = 3.77$

Individual mean (of each group) $\bar{x}_1 = 2.8$

$$\bar{x}_2 = 5.3$$

$$\bar{x}_3 = 3.2$$

The standard Deviation (SD) of each group:

$$SD_1 = 0.79$$

$$SD_2 = 1.89$$

$$SD_3 = 1.03$$

$$28 \quad 53 \quad 32 = 113 \text{ (Total)}$$