CHAPTER III

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND YOUTH

LEADERSHIP

There is a saying if children are the future of a nation; its youth are its present resource. The dynamic role of youth in the growth and prosperity of any society is extremely vital. A constructive and active participation of youth can build a strong and integrated nation. In every aspect of social interaction, there is a leader and the led. In view of this, an effort is made in this chapter to analyze the role of youth in political processes and their leadership qualities.

The role of youth in political participation is very crucial. The history of political movements of many countries revealed that youth were instrumental in bringing political changes. In America, youth played an important part in the awakening of political consciousness.

A large number of youth have identified themselves with president Kennedy, not because he represented any new philosophy or programme, but out of sympathy with his youthful style. After his death the young Black felt increasingly alienated: their demands and expectations found little response on the part of new political leadership and the frustrations of young finally crystallized around the war in Vietnam and the war in the ghettos. In Yugoslavia, the
generation of the partisans of the Second World War still holds most of the important political positions.

The partisan period, a time of intensive participation, had been followed by a period in which the participation of those who had been too young to be partisans was only formal. This led to dissatisfaction, which the ruling party tried to dispel by much talk about the importance of youth. In reality, the official youth organizations tried to integrate young people into the prevailing system and to educate them towards obedience and even subservience. Even in Spain civil war, and Czechoslovakia’s socio-political and economic reconstruction, youth rebellions played important role in western political situations.

This is also true in case of Indian National Movement. Youth were with Gandhi’s Quit India Movement, Swadeshi Movement etc. Netaji’s revolutionary organization could not have been successful without massive youth support. They actively participated in 1970’s Naxalbari Movement and political development in Assam.

The present student unions are the best examples of youth’s political participation. It may be mentioned here that it was mainly the youth force which was responsible for the creation of Pakistan state in 1947 and independent Bangladesh in 1971. But the history of youth participation in political movement of the country is never objectively appreciated.
But, in the present transitional Indian society where tradition is in conflict with modernization, the youth are divided ideologically and politically. They are more or less chained to the vested interest groups at different levels. Their energy and power is not properly utilized, in turn the politics has divided their villages, their family members. This is mainly due to the economic dependence and lack of adequate training and orientation.

In addition there is also absence of their powerful organizational base. They merely serve as propaganda for instrument of different interest groups. As a result more often their energies are used for destructive purposes than constructive ones as it happened in Punjab, Assam, Nepal, Mizoram etc.

The reason is lack of strong unity among youth Even today the gap between rural and urban youth has continued. Rural youth, who in fact are much larger in number and closer to Indian psyche, have no opportunity to share their experiences with urban youth. The semi-urban and rural youth hardly get chance for higher studies due to the financial constraints and other problems. Hence the major portions of creative youth, who could do much more given half the chance in all fields, remain away from mainstream. This led to again unrest among rural youth.
Many studies conducted on rural youth in Karnataka have pointed out the changing rural leadership and power from the traditional elders to their youngsters. For example,

Dr Punit [1973] has given reference of Haviks while writing about the political organization and leadership in a Karnataka village. He describes how the old leadership is changing in the village Totagadde.

"One of the most important divisions in the competition for Havik leadership intoTtagadde based upon age. A few years ago the ura-yajamaanaru began to withdraw and retire from active village politics, and this fact was the main cause for a recent change in the power structure initiated by the young men of the village. As long as the ura-yajamaanaru was active, he was strong enough to enlist co-operation of feuding individuals and faction groups and the affairs of the village could go ahead. As he began to participate less and less, however, new undertakings began to fail. In this situation younger people banded together and blamed their elders for inefficiency and a ‘do nothing’ platform. Reflecting a belief in ‘progress’ and in the utility of a structured organization, the young man took over a non-governmental village organization, the Gram samiti, through which they tried to initiate their programmes"
G.K. Karanth [1981] also in his study of Rajapura village [Karnataka] discussed the changing phenomena of youth leadership in villages. He writes ‘The headman of the village was a young man of 29 years of age. He was studying for the Bachelors degree in science when his father died. Being the eldest member of the household he was compelled to return to his village. His father was sitting member and the Vice- president of the Grama Panchaayat at the time of his death. During his lifetime he was known both in Rajapura and in the neighboring villages for his leadership qualities and judiciousness. Following his death his son was called upon to head the household and also occupy all the political positions his father held during his lifetime.’

**Youth and Political Participation**

Youth participation in civic and political processes is increasingly recognized as an important development objective. Opportunities for civic and political participation may influence young people’s development and the type of transition they make to adulthood. In India, the National Youth Policy 2003 argued for greater representation of youth in appropriate bodies and more extensive youth participation in the design and implementation of programmes. Information on the extent to which young people participate in political processes and the
factors that facilitate it, is limited. In this section an attempt is made to analyze the political interest of the rural youth.

Table-3.1

Representation of Respondents in Political Parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Political party</th>
<th>Male youth</th>
<th>Female youth</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>J.D.S</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>B.J.P</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Samaajavadi</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1 shows 26 per cent of the youth have represented Congress party, 23 per cent respondents represent J.D.S party. Only 19 per cent respondents represent B.J.P. 2 per cent represent Samajavadi Party, some 2.8 per cent represent others and 26.8 per cent respondents are not having interested in joining any political party.

On the whole, the data indicate that more than 70 per cent of the respondents are representing one or other political party. Hence the
data indicates the sizable portion of rural youth shown interest in identifying themselves with some political party.

**Rural Youth and Election**

It is sure that rural youth be the deciding factor in the general elections. Rural youth must come together breaking caste and religious barriers to work for a united and secular India as the strength of our country lies on them.

Between April to May 2009, more than 700 million eligible voters cast their votes. A majority of voters this time around belong to the age group of 18-35 years with many voters casting their vote for the first time. And this has forced a change in the way these elections have been approached by all the stakeholders. An unprecedented number of online ventures are augmenting the campaigning, informational and voter registration activities –making this election move away from the traditional methods employed so far. Not only the election campaigning has been happening online-keeping in mind the media preferences of the youth; a number of online initiatives are aiding these voters first time or otherwise, to go out and vote.

This segment is large enough to swing the votes for any political party. Thus for obvious reasons, political parties have ensured that the major theme of their campaign focuses on the youth. A number of ventures have ensured that first time voters know more about the
general elections and that they go out and register voting. Particularly this intended for rural youth.

With the rural youth being better informed and more vocal about their needs, and the last general election has witnessed change and it has shown the way Indian citizens participate in the election process. With an increased awareness of election processes and facts and just by sheer numbers- this segment is already necessitating change. Last election has heralded a change. Being a young nation, this definitely augurs well for the biggest democracy in the world.

Hence, in the present study, information was collected on the role of youth in election with regard to their voting behavior, propaganda, involvement etc. The responses are arranged in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Role of Youth in Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Type of role</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Only voting</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>64.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Propaganda</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Contesting elections</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fully involved</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Not interested</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>130</td>
<td></td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
<td>250</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.2 reveals that a majority of respondents [64.8 per cent] have taken part only in voting. 10 per cent of the youth have participated in party propaganda during elections. Only two male youth were contested from Gundagatti and Doodihalli village. About 20 per cent youth are not interested in politics. Hence the above data clearly indicate that they prefer only voting in elections, as they consider it as their right. But when it comes to contesting in elections and involvement, very less number of respondents show their interest.

The overall political participation of respondents is assessed by asking a question, to what extent you are involved in political activities. The responses are given in Table 3.3

Table 3.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political participation</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fully involved</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately involved</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>64.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less involved</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.3 reveals that 15.2 per cent of the respondents are fully involved in political participation. 64.8 per cent of the respondents said they are moderately involved with politics. Some 20 per cent of respondents said they are less involved in political participation. Hence it is clear that majority of the respondents moderately involved with political activities.

Above table shows that only 3 female fully involved and 27 female youth less involved in political activities, which speaks more male youth actively participate than female youth. Hence the formulated hypotheses ‘More male than female youth participate actively in village politics.’ is proved.

**Figure 3.1**

![Respondent's Political participation [Male]](image-url)
An effort is also made in the present study to analyze the link between caste and political participation as shown in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste groups</th>
<th>Fully involved</th>
<th>Moderately involved</th>
<th>Less involved</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Caste</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle caste</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low caste</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square value 21.16 **

** Significant at 1per cent level of significance
Table 3.4 shows that among 130 respondents belonging to upper caste groups 23 have been already involved and 92 moderately involved. Among 20 middle caste respondents, 8 are less involved in political activities. Among 90 low caste respondents, 63 moderately and 19 are less involved in politics.

The Chi-square test is applied to the above data, related to caste and political participation. Chi-square value 21.16 significant at 1 percent level of significance. Hence, our formulated set of hypotheses ‘Higher the caste status of respondents higher their political participation’ is proved.

**Rural Youth and Participation in Organizations**

According to Modern Dictionary of Sociology, organization is ‘A relatively stable pattern of social relationships of individuals and subgroups within a society or group, based upon systems of social roles, norms, and shared meanings that provide regularity and predictability in social interaction. In this sense organization is essentially synonymous with social structure.’

There are number of youth organizations which have been working for promoting social development especially in rural areas.

The ICYO [Inner City youth Organisation] is body of youth non-governmental organizations. Its aim is to strengthen youth organizations. They are also an advocacy group. ICYO provides training to social
workers and officers, and serves as a liaison service between donors and youth NGOs.

Volunteering India, a subsidiary of the Society for Promotion of Environment and Sustainable Development (Registrator under Rajasthan Societies Reg. Act No.78, 1958) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental volunteer organization which aims at all-round development of rural India. The organization is based at Jaipur in Rajasthan, India.

The organization is actively involved in:

- Protection of environment, rural and sustainable development, rainwater harvesting, promotion of wastelands, women-child and family welfare education.

The activities of Volunteering India are completely non-profitable. It provides wide range of serving opportunities to enthusiastic youth and optimum utilization of human resources in rural areas.

In Karnataka there are some youth organizations at village level. For example Rajivagandhi Yuva Shakti Kendra, Neharu Yuva Kendra has been functioning in the villages. Hence the present study made an effort to know youth participation in such organization. Table 3.5 shows youth participation in rural organizations.
Table 3.5

Youth Participation in Rural Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Name of the Organization</th>
<th>Male youth</th>
<th>Female youth</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rajiv Gandhi yuva shaktikendra</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Neharu Yuva kendra</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Geleyara balaga</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bhajana manadal</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Not interested</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>130</strong></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.5 shows that about 44 per cent of the rural youth are not involved in any organizations. 22 per cent of the youth are recognized with geleyara balaga. 7 per cent of the youth are in bhajana manadal who play very dominant role. Most of the youth, who involved with village organizations, are working for social services and their personality development.
Rural Youth Leadership

Leadership is an action, not a word.

-Richard P.C

Leadership for [Dr Punit A.E; [1973] means ‘is more than the ability to secure followers. It is the ability to keep those followers in changing circumstances.’ In rural areas leaders of youth organizations have failed to keep the followers in changing circumstances. They could seldom provide a direction to their followers. They fail to set appropriate goals to their followers and are unable to inspire confidence among them. Studies have show that rural youth seem to have become victims of present political situation. Some interest groups in the villages exploit their leadership quality.

Oscar Lewis [1953] in his study of Rampur village writes about the rural leadership in India. He emphasized the following points:

- In Indian rural societies leadership roles are spread out.
- Delegation of entire authority to individuals is frowned upon, not favored.
- The leaders themselves are not in the habit of making independent decisions.
There is a division of labor among the leaders. The older men act as ceremonial leaders, the younger and the more educated men as representatives of the group on secular committees.

Leadership depends upon the following factors in order of importance.

- Wealth
- Family reputation
- Age
- Social-Cultural position
- Personality traits
- Connections
- Numerical strength of the family

Wealth is the basic criterion for leadership. The highest numbers of leaders are those who enjoy authority, which is not intrinsic but is delegated to them by the primary leaders. They act as advisers in secular matters and represent the primary leaders on the school committees and official panchayats and other similar activities that require education.

Education is gradually becoming an important factor in determining leadership. Young and educated persons are gradually making their presence felt in the rural life.

Though men with an aggressive fighting nature are feared and sometimes become leaders, the fundamental requisite for leadership in the village is humility and self-abnegation and hospitality within the in-group.
• Loyalty to the group, keeping of promises, speaking ability is some of the other qualities that command respect.

• The most influential leaders are non-aggressive men.

• The next most important factor for leadership is sufficient time at one’s disposal to devote to various activities which leaders must carry on, particularly in attending panchayats, fighting court cases, collecting contributions to various causes, arranging marriages and for other ceremonial activities. Thus traditionally most leaders have been retired or semi retired men.

• The size of the family also plays an important part. Most of the leaders come from large families.

The following factors are important in this regard which made them to be alienated:

• The failure of youth leadership due to lack of integration

• The lack of adequate opportunities to participate in politics

• The defects in political system

• Still gerontocracy rules villages

• Caste dominance in leadership

The leaders of the some youth organizations are generally belong to upper caste with or without leadership qualities. On many occasions it results in youth unrest. There is also the practice of gerontocracy in
villages preventing the youth to take active part in politics. The youth also believed in the wisdom of the elders and support them as their leaders. But in the changing rural scenario youth have been playing important role in rural politics. Hence a question was asked to the respondents as to whom you prefer as your leader? The responses are presented in Table 3.6

Table- 3.6  
Support for Youth Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>97.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Old people</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.6 reveals that 97.2 per cent of respondents support youth leadership. Only 2.8 per cent of respondents preferred old people as their leaders. Information was also collected about their preference for youth leadership. Table 3.7 shows the same.
Table 3.7

Respondents Preference for Youth Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Change oriented</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>43.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Progressive ideas</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Zeal and interest</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Positive outlook</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Old people</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>130</strong></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
<td><strong>250</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.7 reveals that, 43 per cent of respondents supported youth leadership because they are changing oriented in nature. 24 per cent of the respondents say that youth leaders have more progressive ideas and bring more developments in the villages. 9.2 per cent respondents said that youth work with zeal and interest, 5 per cent support them for their positive outlook and future of the community.
The opinion of respondents clearly shows that youth leadership is a welcome event for the progress of the villages.

**Figure- 3.3**

![Pie chart for Male Preference for Youth Leadership]

**Figure- 3.4**

![Pie chart for Female Preference for Youth Leadership]

The Ex President of India Dr A.P.J Abdul Kalam also commented in an interview conducted by Outlook 12 January 2004 ‘I believe youth is our wealth. The young were the first to jump into the freedom movement. They will now help us realize the vision of India 2020. Now out of 1000 Indians 260 are poor. We have to lift them up. If a sense of this mission is injected into the young, their minds will be
If 500 million young people say I want a corruption free India, whatever happens I will not help corruption or become corrupt youth can change the world.'

The great industrialist, Anil Ambani also expressed the same views [Outlook, January 2004] ‘India’s youth are very, very ambitious, very competitive. There is a great spirit to achieve success and get reward. We will have 500 million people in the age group of 18-35 in the next 15 years. They will propel India into the future. As a country we are going to play a very major role in the global arena, in literature, art, culture, economics, sport, in all facets of life.’

The present study indicates that the rural youth are expected to play better role in political participation. Though some factors intervene in their participation into politics, the leadership quality of youth is much encouraged. Generally the following factors that come in the way of their active political participation. They are

- poor economic conditions
- low social status
- lack of confidence
- caste restrictions
- parents are not supportive
- lack of organization and skill
- lack of interest
Hence in the present study information is collected from the respondents as regards the factors that hinder their active political participation.

Table-3.8
Obstacles in Rural Youth Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Obstacles</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Poor economic condition</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Low social status</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lack of support from parents</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lack of interest</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 3.8 about 31.6 per cent respondents expressed their inability to participate in active politics for economic reasons. 5.6 per cent of respondents stressed their low social status as a main obstacle, 26 per cent of rural youth do not show any interest in politics. 36 per cent of the respondents said that their parents are not supporters of them in participating in political activities.
Rural Youth and Present Politics

The Indian youth is experiencing what is called as the depoliticisation process or in simpler terms, a disengagement from the world of politics. There’s growing apathy towards political activities and politicians from the youth these days owing to the domination of politics by crime and corruption. Due to the lack of an efficient political system in the country and its contamination by felonious and iniquitous acts, youngsters prefer veering away from politics. However, it was a different story altogether in the early days of India’s independence. India has given the world great, young leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Gandhi and Bhagat Singh, who all fought with utmost passion and patriotism in the nation’s freedom struggle. In fact, the greatest uprising of our country against the British forces i.e. The
Quit India Movement was led valiantly by the Young Turks.

In the post independence era around the 1980’s, the Indian Youth Congress was founded and its objective was to unite the youth of India, to identify itself with their cause and to work with devotion to build a strong, powerful and self-reliant India.

Also, the National Youth Day was declared on the birthday of Swami Vivekananda in the year 1985, who was a young spiritual leader who contributed immensely for the welfare of the society. However, such is the scenario today, that one is hardly aware of any such day.

With materialism being the by product of liberalization, Indian markets as well as the youth is becoming vested in its interests. Values like patriotism and love for one’s country is on a decline as the youth are turning towards MTV, McDonalds and Money making. Also, the interest of a few motivated souls is disillusioned due to the dismal performance and personalities of the current politicians.

As a result, the youth has become cynical and pessimistic in its attitude towards politics. Nobody wants to become a politician nor does any parent want his or her child to venture in this field.

The trust and credibility factor which was the important aspect of the yesteryear politicians is nowhere to be found today. We then had charismatic leaders and today we have criminals in the guise of politicians. However, this is not reason enough for the youth to be
disenchanted from politics. After all, world’s greatest wars and rebellions have been led and fought by the youth. The Fascist programme insisted on tapping the vitality of youth, even Hitler created the ‘Hitler Youth’ and endowed the German youth with a purpose. From Tienmian Square to India’s freedom struggle, youth have carried the stick of their beliefs with unflinching courage.

Even the recent past has witnessed some impetuous movements by the youth like the candle march in the Jessica Lall murder case, protests against reservations in educational institutions by the Government and the popular Pink Chaddi campaign against the tyrannical ways of Promod Muthalik. In fact, the emergence of young promising leaders like Rahul Gandhi, Sachin Pilot and Omar Abdullah have instilled some life and dynamism in Indian politics giving youngsters the hope that all is not dark out there.

However, in order to reinvent the zeal of youngsters in politics, certain measures are imperative. Indian political system does not offer any incentives to the youth to engage in politics. Also, it is shameful that until and unless one belongs to a political dynasty, he/she has to face immense resistance in this field to become an MP. Politics is in any case seen as a very dirty career full of cut-throatism and back stabbing and on top of that there is absolutely no premium placed on
community leadership in our country which forms an integral part of US educational curriculum.

The existing political exposure at the university level is petty and driven by the selfish interests of national level political parties. Candidates are selected not on the basis of capability but the influence candidate commands with the major political leaders. As a result of which campuses are no better than deserted islands on the polling day which speaks for the dirty muck dominating college and university level politics.

But the only remedy for this disease is exercising our power to vote and discharge the duties of a responsible citizen. One has to traverse the hard way in order to bring about a better change.

Until and unless we do not put our hands in the muck, it will stay there forever and stagnate even more. Passing the buck won’t help. Almost every field today has its bit of muck, it is just that politics is not as glamorous and convenient an option to opt for.

The media can play a great role in motivating the youth to join politics. Attitudinal changes need to be brought about by reporting of positive changes and developments in politics and not just negative or cynical news stories. By covering events, where the youth has helped in shaping the course of important political issues, the media can compel changes in the existing mindsets. Our youth should be inspired by their
American counterparts who have brought about a revolution in American politics by electing Barack Obama, a young Afro-American leader as America’s President. In fact, Internet and technology played a major role in influencing this historical event. Presidential debates were facilitated by means of sites like You Tube where the American youth were given a forum to address their concerns and queries to the Presidential candidates which proved to be a huge success.

Similarly, steps like facilitating voting via text messages or Internet can further help in engaging the youth. A big factor for Obama winning the elections was that his ideas and values filled with the imagination and hopes of the youth. An organization like Youth Congress should invent ingenious ways to reignite the interest of youngsters and actively involve them in the country’s political process. It is said that ‘in every year of history one law has invariably proved its unchanging truth: youth will always triumph over age.’ This rhetoric can surely be turned into reality if the youth desires.

Hence, an attempt is made in this section to know about the respondent’s opinion about the present politics. The responses are arranged in Table3.9
Table-3.9

Rural Youth’s Opinion about Present Politics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Corruption</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Family politics</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Goondaism</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>False assurance</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Moral deterioration</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>130</strong></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
<td><strong>250</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.9 shows that about 43 male and 55 female respondents hate politics because politics is the place where seeds of corruption are sowed and cropped. Some 4.8 per cent of the respondents said it becomes today a family politics, 12.4 per cent of samples said that there is more goondaism, than public welfare.11.6 per cent of youth hate politics because the politicians always make false assurance which
one never realized. There is absence of morality in the political field, which led to moral deterioration in social, cultural aspects of life, as said by 16 per cent of respondents.

Figure 3.6

Table 3.10 indicates the rural youth opinion about voting at the time of election.

political sense among rural people and made possible the development of rural community. At the same time it has also spoiled rural social environment, by creating fictions and favourism among the rural innocent people.

Table 3.10 indicates the rural youth opinion about voting at the time of election.
Table-3.10

Rural Youth and Voting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>It is our right</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sacred duty</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>It is must</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Not interested</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

About 48 per cent youth take active participation in voting as they treat it as their right. The present study reveals that about 54 female and 66 male respondents treated voting is their right. And 21 per cent youth are not interested in voting. 18 per cent of the youth have considered voting is a sacred task.

Rural youth feel that, voting is a right and it is more valuable so that we should vote for an able candidate. Further they said that election should be free and fair; the distribution of money and illicit liquor should be controlled.
The quality of leadership is there among rural youth but it requires favorable conditions and scope. Most of the educated rural youth seek opportunities to become leaders. They know that in the democratic set up any body can become leader. Meanwhile the political power is not equally distributed among rural population. In every village the political power is dominated by caste, usually by upper caste. If a little power is shared by lower caste, it is for namesake; again it is the dominant caste, which leads the political power. In present condition rural youth expect that political power seems to be transferred from the traditional elders to the youngsters. That is to say, political power is not shared by youth in general as it is
inherited by youth from elders of the same caste. Other influential in the village are structurally bound to support the traditional leaders and their children.

Generally in Indian villages the dominant caste is economically, numerically and educationally stronger than the other castes. They wield political power through its economic and cultural linkages. Thus, traditional leadership transfers from father to children. This further aggravated the problem of alienation among the rural youth of the weaker sections. The ideals of welfare state, that all have equal opportunity and power is only in theory not in practice. The contemporary rural youth are a replica of the older generation and there seems hardly a change in the structure and content of rural youth. Rural youth are basically tradition oriented, following old traditions through little changes here and there. Structurally and functionally rural youth are still in stagnant stage. They speak about change, and are orthodox. Only minor changes are taking place among rural youth. Somehow the situation of present rural youth is far better than past, now at least they speak about change, progress and development. Now, they want to prove their leadership quality, search opportunity. This only indicates that rural youth are interested in political participation.

The present study tests the choice of rural youth for national leadership, to examine their notion a question is asked on who would
be their national leader? Table 3.11 gives picture about the selection of their leaders

**Table 3.11**

**Rural Youth and their Choice of Leaders**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Their choice</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Vajapayi</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Soniya</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Advani</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Manamohan S</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rahul Gandhi</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Priyanka</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>S.Tendulkar</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>A.P.J.Kalam</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Devegouda</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>None of above</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>130</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.11 reveals that 16 per cent youth are in support of Vajapayi and the same proportion of the youth is in favor of Sachin Tendulkar. 13 per cent of the youth are having their choice towards A.P.J Kalam. Though Rahul Gandhi is a youth but only 2 per cent of
the rural youth are in support of him. It only speaks that rural youth support of their national leaders depending on their popularity in the national politics.

**Youth and Participation in Decision Making**

In developing countries like India, youth participation in decision making is very less. Even in their own community related aspects youth participation is neglected. This led to rural youth alienation. Since last two decades we have seen a growing importance of youth participation in decision-making, as successful efforts by governments to engage youth have led to better policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. Youth involvement strengthens their commitment and understanding of human rights and democracy. Opportunities for youth participation in home, school and community development are especially crucial in conflict and post conflict situations, as well as in protecting the rights of girls and young women. The traditional slogan of ‘youth are the future’ fails to take into account that youth are very active contributors today’s societies.

Youth participation is beneficial for policy making and youth development programme. It is not always effectively practiced. Effective youth participation requires changes in how societies perceive young people. These changes need to be reflected in appropriate funding, in innovative ways to spread information in
training to facilitate intergenerational collaboration and in organizational structures that welcome new voices.

Youth participation in decision-making also reveals the changes occurring in the patterns and structures of youth movements. In many countries, political parties have failed to attract young members. Campaigns that encourage youth to vote seek to reverse the trend reduced political interest by young people. Apathy towards politics and lack of interest to participate in traditional youth organizations seem to characterize the younger generations of many countries. To many young people, the world of politics is too distant from their daily realities of school, leisure and finding a job. Many youth fail to see a connection between those realities and the impact of politics on their daily lives. Also, very few politicians can claim to represent their age group in democratically elected constituencies. Although participation in formal membership based associations is considered a key mechanism to enable genuine social inclusion, there is a marked difference between countries with a strong tradition of youth membership- based organization and those without such structures.

Hence information is collected on the issue. Table 3.12 indicates youth participation and decision making in their communities.
Table 3.12

Youth Participation in Decision Making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation in Decision making</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In college</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In home</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In community</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In organizations</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not interested</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>63.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.12 shows that 19.2 per cent of the respondents participate in decision making in their college activities. 2.8 per cent of the respondents participate in their family matters. 8.8 per cent of the youth participate and take decisions in their community level works. 6 per cent of the respondents take decisions and participation in the village level organizations. Around 63.2 per cent of the respondents are not having any interest in participation and decision making activities.