



## POLITICAL EDUCATION OF CITIZENS IN RURAL AREAS OF INDIA - ISSUES AND SUGGESTIONS

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### ABSTRACT:

*In a democracy political knowledge is considered to be a basic requirement of every citizen for political stability and its effective working. The awareness and participation of the citizens in the democratic process of the country is essential for the successful functioning of the democracy. The citizens can contest, vote, campaign, communicate their ideas and share various views, participate in the election process from the grassroot level to the national level politics. It will act as a stable factor for the country. The post election promises made by the political leaders individually and political party wise need to be monitored by the citizens so as to build the nation in almost all the spheres. It will reduce the inequalities in the society and do justice to the people. Political education makes the people to think rationally and opt for right choice of choosing the representatives to rule them on one hand and to fulfill their requirements viz., social, economic, political and so on.*

**KEYWORDS :** Citizens, Political Education, Political Stability, Elections, Rural India, Contesting, Voting, Political Parties.

### INTRODUCTION

In rural areas the rural population has formed many informal type of groups based on caste, income, occupation, life style, education, language, religion, customs, traditions etc. They show more interest in the local informal group relations. The rural population focus on the caste, community and religion to vote in the elections. The political parties allot seat to the candidate based on caste, religion, economic status and so on. The economically powerful contestant belonging to the dominant caste usually wins the election. The rural people belonging to different castes often resort to physical and verbal conflicts during campaign in the wards of the rural areas. The contesting candidates make several promises and on many occasions the candidates just request the rural citizens to vote for them. The citizens do not think rationally as to what the political parties will do after the elections or what will they provide them in the field of welfare schemes, taxation, support to agriculture, employment opportunities, income generation from various sources and so on. They usually think that for whom to vote and to which political party based on caste, political party, candidate and several other factors.

### OBJECTIVES

The study has the following objectives:

1. To study about the political scenario of rural India.
2. To study the political educational level of the rural population.
3. To highlight the challenges of imparting political education to the rural masses in India.
4. To suggest measures to overcome the issues in imparting political education in rural India.

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### **SIGNIFICANCE OF POLITICAL EDUCATION TO RURAL POPULATION**

In India the political scenario is a very complex phenomena. The rural population are highly motivated at the time of elections on the basis of caste, religion, language, infrastructure, leadership of major political parties and so on. At this juncture the political education becomes the most important for the rural population because they need to understand the functioning of the democratic process, structure of the political parties, agenda of the political parties, future developments to be made by the contestants. The rural population need to think rationally about the choice they need to make about the representatives they vote for. The political education will make the rural population to take rational decisions about whom to vote, whether to contest in the elections, what is the agenda of the political parties, capability of the candidates, experience of the candidates, opinion of the experts on elections, their previous contribution to the society, functioning of the Parliament, State legislature, rural and urban governments, welfare schemes, support of the business tycoons to the political parties, etc.

### **SCENARIO OF RURAL INDIA**

Majority of the population i.e., 83.3 crore as per the Census of India 2011 reside in the rural areas. Due to various diversities in physical, social and economic factors the socio-economic conditions widely differ from part of the country to the other. The living standards differ based on caste, religion, culture, economic status etc. They respect the traditions, customs, values etc. There is socio-economic backwardness compared to the rural and urban areas. Literacy rate is low compared to the urban areas. Most of the population depend on agriculture. Majority of them lack the skill to work in the skilled industry requirements. During lean season the rural population especially in the drought areas migrate to the urban areas in search of employment and usually get absorbed in the construction business. The political awareness of the rural population surrounds mostly about the leaders in their local areas and to some extent about the most popular leaders of the national and state political parties.

### **POLITICAL SCENARIO IN RURAL INDIA**

The political parties allots seats to the candidates they trust and has popular support by the public. Other than the political parties the individual candidates also contest in the elections. The eligible citizens vote in the elections for the candidate they wish and it also depends on numerous factors. The political parties or the independent candidates try their best to motivate the citizens in various wards in their area to vote for them. On several occasions the voters are found to be conservative and in outlook as they wish to opt for the candidate or political party in which their caste or community is represented. It is often found that the rural population lack the exposure to the world at large. They are not bothered about other states. They do not care for the major social, political, economic issues that have an impact on the whole nation. They are more concerned about their caste and village. The educated youth and few on the other hand had a positive opinion on the holistic development of the nation.

### **CHALLENGES OF IMPARTING POLITICAL EDUCATION IN RURAL INDIA**

Several significant challenges are identified on political education in India and they are mentioned below:

1. The rural population usually hesitate to listen against the caste, religion, traditions, practices etc.
2. They are motivated by the informal group leaders and members.
3. They rarely choose to make their own choice in electing the candidates.
4. The women voters usually listen to the head of the family or husband or a male member of the family.
5. They choice of representative depends on the popularity in the ward members.
6. There are no separate centres to impart knowledge on political complexity.
7. Their choice depends on group clashes.
8. They are at many instances emotional and sensitive about their choice during elections.

9. The lower caste candidates in majority of the cases wins on the basis of reservation.
10. Money or gift play an important role in the elections.
11. Illiteracy and semi-literacy poses to be an issue in imparting political education.
12. Non-Governmental organizations have not taken any lead in providing political education to the rural population.
13. The governmental agencies are not focusing their attention to provide political education to the rural citizens in particular and rural population in general.
14. Poverty of the rural masses also acts as an hindrance to provide political education to the rural population.
15. Women are not usually allowed to participate in the events that impart political education.
16. Group clashes act as an impediment in imparting political education.
17. Politicians are not showing any interest in imparting political education to the rural population in their constituencies.
18. Majority of the rural population are concentrating more on voting in the elections and expecting something by the political parties before the elections or from the individual candidates.

### **SUGGESTIONS TO OVERCOME ISSUES IN IMPARTING POLITICAL EDUCATION IN RURAL INDIA**

The suggestions are as follows:

1. The government should start a new programme and open centres for imparting political education in rural and urban areas through information and communication technology.
2. The conservative approach of the rural population with respect to caste, religion, community, etc., should be overcome through inculcating rational way of thinking and making decisions.
3. The democratic process should involve the rational behavior of the people and for that the news and print media should focus on imparting political education for the rural population in particular.
4. The literacy rate of the rural population should increase with the collective efforts of the government, corporate sector and non-governmental organizations.
5. The women should be given informal and formal forms of political education so that they choose the right person who could solve their issues after winning the elections.
6. The economic status of the rural population should be improved so that they elect right person rather than vote for the candidate who offers money or gift at the time of elections and do not show interest in their offers and make his own choice of electing the representatives to rule them and fulfill the demands of the rural population.
7. The social workers should undertake weekend special sessions on imparting political education to the rural population.
8. The State or Central universities should organize workshops and conferences to impart political education to the rural population and resolve their doubts through subject experts.

### **CONCLUSION**

The society around us is rapidly changing and the rural population need to make every effort to understand its complex nature. They are the major change makers in a democratic country like India because they being in majority are indirectly responsible for the political parties to win the elections and form the government. If their decisions are conservative and not rational then our country may fall into the wrong hands and innumerable issues may crop like mushrooms due to the irrational decision taken by the rural population and it may cause huge loss to the development of the nation and lead to many issues throughout the country. The politicians are unable to convince the urban educated youth because they understand and study the behavior and agenda of the political leaders and political parties and vote for the right person and right political party. On the other hand the rural population is strictly confined to the caste, religion, region and so on that infact doesn't indicate the rational choice of electing the right person voting for the right

political party and many political leaders though corrupt or criminal and so on very easily motivates the rural population to vote for him utilizing the conservative approach of the rural people. The major political parties either in the state or at the national level are utilizing the regional languages and though are not up to the mark in fulfilling the promises made by them are motivating the rural population to vote for them again and again every five years and after that they are rarely seen around the rural areas or at the district level to should their accountability to the voters that in what way they are fulfilling their demands effectively and timely. To overcome this major issue the best solution is to educate the rural population about the political scenario and make them responsible for the success or the failure of the government they infact happen to be the majority population and the success and failure of the political parties depend on their rational choice.

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