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## **The perspective of the young generation towards politics in my locality**

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### **Abstract**

*This project report presents an attitude, belief, and level of engagement related to politics in Bheemdatt Nagarpalika (B.D.N.P)-10, Sukasaal, from the young generation's point of view. For the past ten years, there has been increasing concern over the extent of political engagement among young people, as attitudes and beliefs about politics among them are crucial for the future of governance and civic engagement. The perceptions of the youth from the ongoing political situation will be ascertained, as the interest of the youth in political participation, and what influences their political views. This research design is a mixed-method approach incorporating surveys and interviews to collect information from a sample of young individuals within B.D.N.P-10, Sukasaal. The findings have revealed the complicated relationship of the youth with politics, a combination of engagement and indifference. While many young people are interested in politics, a lot of them are also turned off by the system as it is perceived to have a lot of ills, like corruption, lack of transparency, and many unkept promises. The report continues to discuss the role of social media in shaping the view of political life among the youths and the influence of education on the political awareness of youths. This study brings to the forefront a demand for more inclusive and youth-oriented political strategies to ensure more participation*

*and belief in the system. The insights gained through research will, therefore, help policymakers and political leaders interact with the younger generation and their problems to provide a more active and participatory democratic process within B.D.N.P-10, Sukasaal.*

**Keywords:** Political participation, Political attitude, Youth perspective, Local politics

### **Introduction**

The word "politics" is derived from ancient Greece; it comes from the Greek word "polis, meaning city or community. The notion of politics, which had to do with governance concerning the community and decision-making processes, was aggressively pursued by Greek philosophers, one of whom was Aristotle, who even went as far as to pen a seminal work titled "Politics." Later, it would be adopted and the term and ideas passed on to other civilizations-wherein it contributed immensely to developing political thought and systems in various settings and ages. Some of the definitions presented by various philosophers are listed below:

Aristotle, "Politics is the art of achieving the maximum amount of freedom for individuals that is consistent with the maintenance of the social order."

Harold Lasswell, "Politics is who gets what, when, and how."

Max Weber, "Politics means striving to share power or striving to influence the distribution of power, either among states or among groups within a state."

In the words of John F. Kennedy, "Let us not seek the Republican or Democratic answer, but the right answer. Let us not seek to fix the blame for the past. Let us accept our responsibility for the future."

According to George Orwell, "Political language. is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind."

Youth political participation is quite a complex issue, and a consensus exists that the forms, actions, and goals of the involvement of young people are changing and diversifying. New and unconventional forms of participation become increasingly common, which is indicative of shifting towards a more dynamic participatory landscape (Barrett & Zani 2015; Norris 2004).

However, today's young people are less engaged in conventional forms of political activity than older generations, as demonstrated by historically low voting figures and reduced party-political activity in Europe (International

IDEA 2008). This suggests that research on youth political participation cannot be conducted with an oversimplified birth cohort concept and a binary representation of participation either, for that matter (Harris et al. 2010).

The adult-centric view, anchored in the political behaviors of past generations, overlooks the fact that youth are full citizens. The participatory transformation hypothesis attempts to account for the political agency of youth; however, it risks overestimating the positive contribution that new and exciting participatory repertoire will have on political life, at the expense of the importance of more conventional institutional forms of politics and the subtle, day-to-day forms of political engagement.

Nepal today works as a federal democratic republic with a multi-party system, with the major parties being the Nepali Congress, the Communist Party of Nepal, and the Communist Party of Nepal. It is usually dominated by big parties like the Nepali Congress, the Communist Party of Nepal, and the Communist Party of Nepal. The general political environment encompasses coalition governments, changes in leadership, and political instability, further fueling normal feelings of disillusionment among youths. No wonder, then, that most youths seem to believe that today's leaders are more interested in power struggles than in tackling critical issues affecting their lives.

Moreover, youths comprise a huge chunk of the population in B.D.N.P-10, and their political trends reflect broader societal trends. The engagement goes beyond voting to actually influencing policy and practice that shape their future. Understanding their views, the therefore, is key to ensuring the political system agrees with the needs and aspirations of community. Such reasons for researching the younger generation given politics will relate to gaining insight into their belief, attitudes, and involvement in politics. Through this research, ways of finding those factors influencing participation in political activities will be known, it will inform policy on how to address the problems of interest to the youth and also understand the ways of encouraging civic engagement among the younger population. Accordingly, some of the key objectives are:

- i. To know how digital media and technology influence political awareness and engagement among younger generations.
- ii. Major issues for young voters and ways in which such priorities compare across different demographics.

iii. To see if there is a generational difference in political ideologies and affiliations among the youth.

### **Literature Review**

Social media has particularly transformed political mobilization and youth activism into the facilitation of "connective action," whereby people engage in political activities without formally organized entities through personalized and personalized online interactions. This has allowed the effective organization of movements to take place in record time, as evidenced in events such as the Arab Spring.

Digital literacy is an increasing driving factor for political awareness among youths; this is because it potentially exposes the youth to all forms of political arguments and affords them critical thinking over information, notwithstanding disparities in access affect variations in engagements. According to Kahne & Middaugh, 2012, these factors apply in the case of civic opportunities. However, on the converse, digital media acts as a contributor to political sarcasm-as one would observe, the sensationalized and polarized nature of content breeds disillusionment with the processes of politics (Coleman & Blumer, 2009).

Peer networks influence the political behavior of youth in the digital age. Social media have increased the role of peers in the participation of an individual. According to Settle, Bond, and Levitt (2011), despite these opportunities, digital media are also associated with political apathy, partly as a result of perceived inefficacy and information overload. Therefore, improvements should be made in political education and responsive institutions. This is according to O'Toole, Marsh, and Jones (2003).

While Pathak and Sharma (2020) examined the voting behaviors of Nepali youth in the 2017 local elections, they found that employment, education, and corruption are considered major issues with prominent differences between urban and rural voters. Regarding changing generations, Adhikari and Dahal (2021) see generational shifts toward progressive, issue-oriented politics among the younger Nepalese as opposed to a traditional party politics orientation among the older generation.

Karki and Magar, 2018 have identified the problems of political participation faced by rural youth. Though digital media increases political awareness among these people, their participation is limited due to various socioeconomic and technological barriers. Singh and Rai, 2020 addressed

the prevailing general mistrust among Nepali youths about the political institutions in the country. Because of that, most of them prefer activism and social media campaigns over more conventional forms of political participation.

Pokharel and Shrestha (2017) dwell on the influence of education on political ideologies, asserting that schools and universities have major social functions of teaching critical thinking and encouraging questions about taken-for-granted knowledge of traditional political discourses. Lastly, Karki and Kunwar (2019) analyze the participation of young people in electoral processes, something that shows a complex interplay between enthusiasm and apathy, where social media motivates some and at the same time demotivates other young voters. Loader et al. (2014) noted that digital media have made "everyday political talk" even more accessible and informal, thus lowering the threshold for political participation.

So, Valenzuela's (2013) findings confirm that active social network site users are more likely to engage in any political process from voting to protesting. Of course, there's also the possibility for several challenges such as mis- and disinformation, and echo chambers on social media, to distort political perception, as Tucker et al. (2018) referenced. Regardless of such challenges, most effects of digital media on the political participation of youth have proved to be quite positive, proffering new avenues for involvement. While there is variation based on demographic factors, including socioeconomic status, educational background, race, and geographic location, youth seem to focus more on those concerns that involve their future.

The most addressed issues in the thought of youth seem to be climate change, education, and economic opportunities. Henn & Foard (2014) noted among young people, environmental issues-especially climate change of growing importance, as well as economic injustice and assured access to quality education, especially for people emanating from low socioeconomic backgrounds. While there is somewhat of a generational divide according to Dalton's study from the United States in 2016, issues such as racial equality and LGBTQ+ rights have greater emphasis among younger voters than their older counterparts.

These are further shaped by demographic differences, such as the fact that, according to the Pew Research Center in 2018, young women place more

emphasis on gender equality and reproductive rights than young men, while urban youth place more importance on social and cultural issues relative to their rural counterparts. Generational differences in political ideologies and affiliations also abound. Younger generations, such as Millennials and Generation Z, tend to be more progressive on social issues like same-sex marriage, immigration, and drug legalization. This might be replicated in their political identity in the sense that younger voters are less identified with traditional political parties and more as independents or third-party candidates, an indication of growing disillusionment from the established order.

Lyons and Alexander (2019) further observe that such ideological differences are usually enabled by formative political experiences, whereby those reaching maturity during an economic or political crisis are most likely to support policies that would increase economic security and government intervention, while those from more stable times yearn to return to concerns about individual freedoms and limited government. These generational shifts give reason for the updated values and priorities of the young generation, which is bound to change in the next couple of years.

### **Research Methodology**

This article represents the outcome of mixed-methods approaches regarding qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. The quantification of political views and levels of participation by young people in B.D.N.P-10, Sukasaal, was determined through surveying, whereas in-depth interviews with selected participants reveal qualitative insights into their attitudes and experiences. The targeted population was youths within the age brackets of 18 to 45 years. The sample size was 100, in the sampling technique employed was random, to ensure a good representation of different genders, education levels, and socio-economic statuses. Data collection instruments include structured questionnaires, which capture demographic data, political views, media habits, and participation levels; semi-structured interview guides will also be employed to probe further into respondents' motivations, challenges, and aspirations. In this respect, the secondary sources of academic journals, reports, and news articles reviewed herein provided the context and supportive evidence. Thus, the research study chose Mahendranagar to be the location of data collection, drawing samples from multiple age groups, occupations, and genders.



Data were collected through the non-random sampling technique to describe the political perspectives of the younger generation in the locality. A research methodology combining the quantitative and qualitative techniques was adopted by the mixed-method approach. Major tools for collecting quantitative data involved surveys and questionnaires, which featured structured, closed-ended questions to make them consistent and easy to analyze. These were distributed both online, via facilities such as Google Forms and SurveyMonkey, and in person at various local educational institutions and community centers. To complement the breadth of information from the surveys, in-depth interviews were carried out among a very diverse sample of respondents. Semi-structured interviews allow for open-ended questions that provide qualitative insights into individual experiences and viewpoints. Secondly, focus groups were held to facilitate small group discussions of young people, capturing collective views, and dynamics. All the information collected was contextualized with the analysis of documents extracted from local news articles, social network posts, and public records.

### **Results and Discussion**

First, it presents and analyzes the primary data, in particular, the results from the questionnaire survey. The second section will discuss the analysis of regression models and correlation analysis. Lastly, the concluding remarks on the findings of the primary data analyses are mentioned in the third section.

This research has focused on the study of political attitudes and levels of engagement among youths in B.D.N.P-10, Sukasaal. The section portrays findings from a questionnaire survey conducted among young people with diversified representative backgrounds. The questionnaire contains yes/no questions and some multiple-choice ones. Profiles of the respondents along with their characteristics and the results of the survey have been discussed in the subsections below. Percentage, frequency, mean value, and weighted average mean value have been calculated to provide an in-depth analysis of the items.

#### **Table: 1**

*Total number of Gender Responses*

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| Gender       | Frequency  | Percentage |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| Male         | 49         | 49%        |
| Female       | 51         | 51%        |
| Other        | 0          | 0%         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> |

Outline survey: 2081

The survey data on gender responses shows a balanced participation from both males and females, with 49% of the respondents being male and 51% being female. This indicates that both genders are almost equally engaged in expressing their views on political parties within the locality.

Notably, there were no responses from individuals identifying as other genders, highlighting a potential area for improving inclusivity in future surveys. Overall, the total number of respondents was 100, ensuring a representative sample for analyzing the political perspectives of young people in the area.

The fact that 51% of respondents are female slightly surpasses the 49% of male respondents, which is significant in understanding gender dynamics in political engagement. This slight majority of female respondents might influence the overall survey results, providing insights into how political issues are perceived differently or similarly by gender.

Understanding this gender distribution is crucial for political parties aiming to address the concerns and interests of all constituents. The survey highlights the importance of gender-balanced representation in political surveys to capture a broad range of perspectives.

**Table: 2**

*Composition of the age of a response*

| Age group    | No. of respondent |
|--------------|-------------------|
| Under 25     | 64                |
| 25-30        | 17                |
| 30-40        | 14                |
| 40-45        | 5                 |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>100</b>        |

Outline survey: 2081



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The survey data on the age composition of respondents reveals that the majority are under 25 years old, with this group comprising 64% of the total. This indicates a significant interest and engagement in political matters among the youngest age group. The 25-30 age group is the second largest, representing 17% of respondents. This is followed by the 30-40 age group, which accounts for 14% of the total. The smallest group is those aged 40-45, making up only 5% of respondents.

These figures suggest that political interest and participation are highest among the youngest demographic and gradually decline with age. The strong representation of respondents under 25 might reflect their higher usage of social media and greater exposure to political discussions online. The smaller proportion of older age groups could indicate either lesser engagement or a lower response rate to the survey.

Understanding this age distribution is essential for political parties and policymakers to tailor their communication and engagement strategies. The data underscores the importance of addressing the concerns and interests of young people, who form a significant portion of the politically active population in this locality.

**Table: 3**

*Education level*

| Education level     | Frequency  |
|---------------------|------------|
| SEE and below       | 27         |
| Intermediate        | 47         |
| Bachelor degree     | 25         |
| Master degree       | 1          |
| Above master degree | 0          |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>100</b> |

Outline survey: 2081

The survey data on the education level of respondents indicates a diverse range of educational backgrounds among the participants. The largest group comprises those with an intermediate level of education, making up 47% of the total respondents.

This is followed by those who have completed SEE (Secondary Education Examination) and below, accounting for 27%. Respondents with a bachelor's

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degree represent 25% of the total, showcasing a substantial portion of participants who have pursued higher education. Only 1% of respondents have attained a master's degree, and there are no respondents with education above a master's degree.

This distribution highlights a significant presence of individuals with intermediate and bachelor's level education, suggesting that political engagement is relatively high among those with mid-level educational qualifications.

The small percentage of respondents with master's degrees or higher might indicate either a lower engagement in political surveys among this group or their lesser representation in the locality. The data suggests that educational background plays a role in political participation, with those in the intermediate and bachelor's categories being more actively engaged.

**Table: 4**

*Influence of social media on changing perspective of the young generation*

| <b>Influence of social media on<br/>Changing perspective of the young<br/>generation</b> | <b>Frequency</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| To a large extent                                                                        | 14%              |
| Occasionally                                                                             | 71%              |
| Never                                                                                    | 15%              |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                             | <b>100</b>       |

Outline survey: 2081

Table 4. provides an overview of how social media affects the perspectives of the young generation in B.D.N.P-10, Sukasaal. According to the data, 71% of respondents report that social media influences their perspectives occasionally, suggesting that it has a moderate impact on their views. This indicates that for most young people, social media plays a role in shaping their political opinions to some extent, but not overwhelmingly so. Meanwhile, 14% of respondents feel that social media affects their perspectives to a large extent, reflecting a stronger influence on their views.

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This group sees social media as a significant factor in shaping their political beliefs and opinions. Conversely, 15% of respondents believe that social media has no impact on their perspectives at all, indicating that they do not consider it a relevant factor in their political thinking. Overall, the data reveals a diverse range of opinions on the role of social media, with a majority experiencing a moderate impact, while a smaller segment either perceives a substantial influence or has no influence whatsoever.

This variation highlights the differing ways in which social media affects the political viewpoints of young people in B.D.N.P-10, Sukasaal, illustrating that its role in shaping perspectives is both significant and nuanced.

**Table 5:**

*Help of social media for getting information about the political leader*

| Helpful           | Frequency  |
|-------------------|------------|
| Strongly disagree | 11%        |
| Disagree          | 13%        |
| Neutral           | 25%        |
| Agree             | 41%        |
| Strongly agree    | 10%        |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>100</b> |

Outline survey: 2081

Table 5 shows the perceived effectiveness of social media in providing information about political leaders among the youth in B.D.N.P-10, Sukasaal. Out of 100 respondents, 41% view social media as a helpful tool for acquiring information about political leaders, reflecting a generally positive assessment.

Additionally, 10% strongly agree with this view, indicating strong support for social media's usefulness in this context. However, 11% of respondents strongly disagree, and 13% disagree, suggesting that some individuals do not consider social media effective for obtaining such information. A further 25% of respondents are neutral, showing uncertainty or indifference.

In summary, the data indicates that while many young people find social media a valuable resource for political information, there is a significant

minority who either disagree or are unsure about its effectiveness. This highlights a diverse range of opinions on the role of social media in political information dissemination among the youth in B.D.N.P-10, Sukasaal.

**Table 6:**

*Effectiveness of social media*

| Effectiveness                 | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Strongly disagree          | 11%        |
| 2. Disagree                   | 10%        |
| 3. Neither agree nor disagree | 12%        |
| 4. Agree                      | 58%        |
| 5. strongly agree             | 9%         |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>100</b> |

Outline survey: 2081

This table presents respondents' perceptions of how effective social media is in shaping their political views. The majority, 58%, agreed that social media is effective, with 9% strongly agreeing and 49% agreeing. However, a notable 21% either disagreed or strongly disagreed (10% and 11% respectively), while 12% were neutral.

These findings suggest that while a significant portion finds social media effective for political influence, a substantial minority remains unconvinced or neutral, indicating varying levels of trust and skepticism towards online platforms in this context.

### **Conclusion**

In sum, the attitude of the youths in my area on the issue of politics reflects a complex interplay with variables like education, media influence, and cultural norms. Although disengagement and hurdles to activism stand as challenges against their struggle for reform and change, Nepalese youth are highly interested in politics.

This, however, calls for a need to tap into the potential of social media to enhance inclusive and participatory democracy by addressing those hurdles that discourage political participation. In this regard, policymakers will be well placed to accord the youth with an opportunity to be more engaged in shaping

the future political landscape of the country by identifying and understanding the needs and aspirations of the young Nepalese. The varied motives and challenges that shape the youths' political attitudes and behavior, as pointed out in this study, should be put into consideration.

Admittedly, there may be a few sections of the youth who may feel disenchanting and dislocated, but definitely, large groups demonstrate eagerness for change and participatory roles. It is both a challenge and an opportunity for policymakers to plan ways for meaningfully engaging youth in political processes, with full capacity to effectively contribute to democratic development in the nation.

The present paper deals with political attitudes and behavior in youths within B.D.N.P-10, Sukasaal, and Sukasaal. It identifies that even though young people are interested in politics, they have also grown increasingly disaffected by the current system of politics. Their views about politics and levels of political interest are effectively molded through certain factors such as education, media, family, community, and status related to the economy. However, despite the presence of impediments, great potential exists for more significant involvement of youth based on civic obligation and a growing interest in alternative forms of political activity.

#### Recommendations to Increase Youth Participation

Several things can be initiated to increase political participation among the youth. Self-initiated organizations and projects by the youth on political participation and leadership development should be supported to bring the younger generation into prominence. This includes also lowering the minimum age limits for standing in local, provincial, and federal elections so that more youthful contests take an active part in the whole political process.

Quotas or reserved seats for young candidates in political parties and government bodies will further ensure their representation. Programs such as mentorship, whereby experienced politicians and leaders guide and support young political aspirants in their political journeys, can be designed to groom future leadership.

Additionally, the capacity-building training programs among the youth on aspects such as leadership, public speaking, policy analysis, and other necessary skills will capacitate them to make meaningful contributions. Social media platforms and other digital tools can also be used to politically

engage the youth for their mobilization in political activities. There is also a provision to establish online forums and mobile phone applications to facilitate political dialogue and participation among the youth. Economic support policies for young candidates through campaign financing and subsidies can reduce financial burdens in seeking a political office.

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