

ADDRESSING THE GENDER GAP IN ADOLESCENTS' POLITICAL INTEREST & ENGAGEMENT IN INDIA

A STUDY BY KUVIRAA IN COLLABORATION WITH RESEARCHERS FROM UCLA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE

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NOTE FROM OUR FOUNDER

As we gear up for India's next general election in 2024, we will see a record number of first-time voters. This study highlights the state of political interest and engagement in adolescents and young adults, particularly girls in India. Growing up in Mumbai in the 1990s, politics was never discussed much at home or school, isolating me from our country's political discourse. My journey towards political awareness started late, in my early to mid 20s, which made me question how many girls across India were left out of such conversations and the impact it had on their political engagement and aspirations.

To understand this gap further, in 2020, we began researching what adolescent girls in India thought of politics and if they were interested in getting involved. Although there was some research done in the global context, we found no data on Indian adolescents. To improve political representation and engagement, we need to spark political interest and civic action early. To understand the scale of the problem, we decided to conduct this study ourselves.

We partnered with researchers from the Department of Social Welfare at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) to study this political interest and engagement in adolescents and young adults across India. For the last year, we have been working closely with the UCLA team to design the survey and collect and analyze the data. The incredible part about this study has been the involvement of girls and young women in the research process. A team of five researchers from the ages of 14 to 22 participated in analyzing survey responses and their analysis of the qualitative data was eye-opening for us as a team. This exercise gave us a deeper understanding of how adolescent girls and young women relate to gender and politics.

As anticipated, our study found that boys reported a higher political interest and engagement than girls across India. In addition, we found that girls' political ambitions stagnate with age, whereas for boys it increases. We also found an association between parent socialization and political interest among adolescents.

If we wish to see a representative democracy, there is an urgent need to start involving young people of all genders in political conversations. There is a need to break the cycle of the male-dominated political structure in our country. We need to make it more accessible and create a safe environment for adolescents to discuss politics without fear of being judged. Parents, schools and civil society have a big role to play.

SHEVIKA M

Founder, Kuviraa India

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INTRODUCTION

Kuviraa is a feminist non-profit that aims to strengthen our democracy by increasing political engagement and civic leadership among young girls across India. In collaboration with researchers from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Department of Social Welfare, we conducted a comprehensive study of the gender differences in youth political engagement in India. This collaborative research analyzes the evolving variables in political engagement during adolescence and examines how they differ between young boys and girls*. Although research has been conducted outside India on political participation among adolescents, concrete literature is inadequate for the Indian context, which inspired us to undertake this study.

Our findings highlighted a growing and consistently present disparity in political interest, engagement and career aspirations between Indian girls and boys as they transition from adolescence to adulthood. We learned that Indian boys report higher political interest and engagement than girls in their age group. Researchers also found that the disparity in political engagement between boys and girls is higher with age. Additionally, we found that adolescent girls are more aware of the difficulty women face in becoming elected officials than the boys in their age group and that boys' awareness gets lower as they get older.

***Note:** Although gender is not a binary, in this report we compare boys and girls due to a low sample size of gender diverse youth in our survey responses. We hope future research can incorporate the important perspective of gender diverse youth.



CURRENT STATUS OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN INDIA

Women's political representation is crucial for fostering inclusive governance and addressing the needs of women and girls. As of January 1st, 2023, India ranked 140 out of 186 countries on the representation of women in parliament according to data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (Women in Power in 2023: New Data Shows Progress but Wide Regional Gaps, n.d.). Women's representation in the Lok Sabha (the Lower House) has remained at approximately 15 percent (IPU, 2023). Although India sees a high voter turnout where men and women vote almost equally (Kumar, 2021) when it comes to women's political participation beyond voting, these numbers are limited. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, of the total 8,049 candidates who contested, less than nine percent were women (India Today, 2019).

When examining political representation at the state level, we find a substantial decrease in the number of women holding positions of power. According to 2022 government data, the average number of women legislators in state assemblies across the nation accounts for only eight percent, with 19 state assemblies having less than 10 percent of women legislators (Women Representation in Parliament, Most State Legislatures below 15%: Data, n.d.-b).

However, at the grassroots level of governance, namely the Panchayati Raj System and Municipal Bodies in cities and towns, India has made commendable progress in fostering the participation of women **with the support of the 73rd Amendment and 74th Amendment of the constitution, through the reservation of one-third of seats in these bodies for women.**

33%

After the 73rd amendment, women's representation in several panchayats has increased beyond the 33% mandated by the Indian constitution

46%

In 2022, more than 46% of the elected representatives at the panchayat were women



Apart from this, 21 states and two Union Territories have made a provision of 50 percent reservation for women in their respective state Panchayati Raj Acts (Pandit, 2023). This indicates a more balanced representation and highlights the potential for inclusive decision-making and empowerment of women within local governance. This highlights the positives of affirmative action when it comes to increasing women's participation in decision-making.

In 1996, the Women's Reservation Bill was first introduced in the Parliament under the United Front government led by former Prime Minister Deve Gowda. The bill attempted to have a 33 percent reservation of seats for women in the legislative bodies of the country and its states. Similar versions of the bill were introduced later in 1988, 1999, and 2008. The version of the bill introduced in 2008 proposed that one-third of the seats would be reserved for women from groups such as the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. **The Women's Reservation Bill was passed by the Rajya Sabha in 2008 and has been unresolved in the Lok Sabha for over a decade.** The bill most likely failed to become a law due to the lack of certain sub-reservations within the bill, as political parties are not able to reach a consensus on the same and other facets of the proposed bill as well. Interestingly, major national and regional political parties across spectrums support women's reservations in Parliament publicly. (Anuja, 2021).

These disparities in representation across different federal levels of political institutions in India reflect the need for continued efforts to address the systemic barriers and biases to women's equal participation in politics. **Low participation and therefore representation of women in politics may be caused due to various reasons including lack of economic independence, lack of knowledge or access to opportunities, gender stereotypes, societal constraints and political parties not fielding enough women candidates** (Getting More Women Into Politics: Evidence From Elections in India, 2019). For this report, our aim was to understand some of the root causes for this disparity and learn how society and gender socialization shape political interest and engagement from adolescence to adulthood.



GENDERED POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION IN ADOLESCENTS

There is little to no research on Indian adolescents' political interests or engagement. As we approach India's general election in 2024, we will see a sharp rise in the number of first-time voters. Therefore, it is important to know how they engage with politics and what we need to do to strengthen our democracy.

A striking observation that emerged through this research is parents' reluctance to discuss politics with their children. Since the topic of politics is often considered to be complex and sensitive, they are typically for "adult conversations". As a result, **children may receive limited opportunities to engage in political discussions or develop a comprehensive understanding of political processes and institutions.**



Gendered Political Socialization is an emerging concept which provides valuable insights into the complexities of gender disparities in political interest, knowledge and engagement. **This idea expands to earlier studies on gender socialization and political socialization, that examine how children and adolescents internalize societal gender norms and stereotypes in the context of politics.** Gendered Political Socialization is influenced by various factors such as family, social media and news, and impacts children's perceptions of gender and politics. (Bos et al., 2021b).

These perceptions and distinctions may contribute to the gender disparities observed in political engagement. **Girls may feel discouraged or unsupported by their families and encounter perceived limitations in their political aspirations due to gender stereotypes and societal expectations.** Conversely, boys may be encouraged or empowered to take risks, leadership roles and engage more actively in politics. Recognizing such influences and stereotypes is crucial for addressing gender disparities and fostering inclusive political participation from an early age.



GLOBAL STUDIES ON GENDERED YOUTH POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Research has been conducted in the United States (US) and Europe to explore gender disparities in political engagement among adolescents. Plan International's "Equal Power Now: Girls, Women and Political Participation 2022" report studied young girls aged 15-24 from 29 countries, in terms of their involvement and ideas around politics and found that even though girls are engaged in politics, they are often condescended to, and rarely listened to. **One in five of the study participants were discouraged from engaging in politics and fewer than one in three agreed that politicians/ political leaders understood the views of young girls and women** (Equal Power Now - Plan International, 2022).



A study done by researchers in the American Political Science Review of 1,604 children from across four US states showed that **children not only perceive politics as a male-dominated space but the older they grow, the more they see politics as a man's world.** For this study, the researchers developed a theoretical framework of gendered political socialization through a 'Draw a Political Leader' task and found that girls increasingly draw men as political leaders. At age six, the probability of a girl drawing a man as a political leader is 47 percent; by age 12 that probability increases to almost 75 percent because they are aware of the ground realities of political perceptions (Bos et al., 2021). Another study at the European University Institute in Italy found that the gender gap in political interest appears early in life. Using data from the British Household Panel Survey, which polled 10,300 people between 1991 and 2009, the authors found that the gender gap in the probability of respondents reporting being politically interested, between male and female 15-year-old Britons, is already about 20 percentage points. (Fraile & Sánchez-Vítores, 2019).

The 2023 Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI) report reveals an appalling fact: **nearly half the world's people believe that men make better political leaders than women do.** This index also states that 73.96 percent of Indian men and 61.95 percent of Indian women have a political bias against women (United Nations, 2023).

Relying solely on Western studies may not adequately capture the unique socio-cultural nuances present in India, which can significantly impact the understanding of gender roles and dynamics within the country and shape youth political development. As much as these Western studies help us understand how gendered socialization directly impacts young girls' political interest and engagement, the Indian context has its unique socio-cultural nuances, which need an independent study of how gendered ideas influence and impact children's and adolescents' perceptions of politics across India.



KEY FINDINGS

Gender disparities in youth political engagement have been recognized as a prevalent issue across the world. To examine these disparities in India, our study utilized a combination of quantitative and qualitative survey data. Our study yielded three key findings of significant importance. First, we observed notable differences in political interest and engagement between boys and girls. Second, we found that as they aged, boys had higher political interest and engagement, whereas girls followed the opposite trajectory. Lastly, we found that parents talking about, and encouraging their children to engage in political issues was associated with political interest and behaviors among adolescents.

Note: All findings reported below are statistically significant at $p \leq .05$

(I) Across age groups, male respondents reported a higher interest and engagement in politics than female respondents:

Our study found a significant disparity between boys and girls specific to political interest. Out of the surveyed participants, **39.2 percent of boys** were very interested in political issues; in contrast, only **21 percent of girls** reported a similar level of interest.

Adolescents and youth that consider themselves very interested in political issues



Political interest was measured by one question:
“How interested are you in political issues?”
with response options on a Likert scale ranging from 1 = Not at all interested to 5 = Very interested.

“It has been ingrained into us that women are not meant for such things, they must limit themselves to the house only. It takes a lot of strength to fight the whole system and go beyond it to gain what is yours.” – 19, Girl

“Due to the misconception that only males can be politicians, a lot of women don't put a thought into becoming a politician.” – 16, Girl



Furthermore, the data revealed a notable difference in overall political engagement between the both genders. **Over half of the boys surveyed (50.7 percent) considered themselves politically engaged, compared to less than one-third of the girls surveyed (28.8 percent).**

Adolescents or youth that consider themselves politically engaged or politically active



Measured by one question:
“Do you consider yourself to be politically engaged or politically active?” with response options 1 = No and 2 = Yes.

To further understand this difference in political engagement we asked participants what prevents them from participating in politics. We saw a significant difference between how young boys and girls reported having access to opportunities with **34.2 percent of girls reporting that they have no opportunities to get involved in politics, compared to 22.9 percent of boys.**

Agreed to "There are no opportunities for me to be involved in politics"



Multiple choice question: “Which of the following prevents you from participating in politics? (select all that apply).” The above graph illustrates the participants that selected the response “There are no opportunities for me to get involved.”



To complement this quantitative finding, in open-ended responses to the survey question on why India does not have higher female representation in politics, **we saw broad agreement from participants that from an early age, girls struggled to find opportunities to engage in politics.** Some participants spoke about family and domestic responsibilities of women hindering their participation in politics.

“Women have a history of being subdued and confined to domestic tasks instead of being encouraged to take part in things like politics. Also, because men usually have an advantage in gaining the connections and contacts needed to move forward and rise to positions of power in politics. Women usually are more focused on having a stable life and are not encouraged to. Men on the other side are encouraged by society and have more practical knowledge in this area.”

– 17, Girl

It is possible that as adolescents engage in politics, girls have negative experiences such as sexism that alter their perceptions of their ability to engage in politics. Even if girls do not engage in politics, as they age, they are more likely to be exposed to stereotypical societal norms through entertainment, news, school and other contexts that reinforce harmful prejudices and norms about women in politics.

“Misogyny is still continuing as men are given more opportunities and are always preferred over women.”

– 17, Girl

These insights highlight the role of our society in shaping the perceptions of young people and the importance of promoting inclusivity in political engagement. **There is a need to address this gender gap in political interest and participation by promoting equal opportunities for girls to engage in political discourse that can contribute to a more balanced and representative political landscape.**



(II) Gender disparities in politics were higher with age

To study political engagement, we looked at five questions including how often respondents discussed politics with friends and family, shared political posts online, participated in government or political organizations, contacted government officials and attended political rallies or demonstrations.

We found that both **younger boys and girls (ages 14 - 17) had relatively low political engagement** (on average, they reported politically engaging once every six months or so). However, for **older youth (ages 18-22), the disparities in their political engagement were higher**. Older boys' political engagement was higher (they reported participating once every three months or so) whereas older girls' political engagement was the same as younger girls.

Overall adolescent and youth political engagement scale



Overall, the composite mean for the five political engagement items how often respondents

1. discussed politics with friends and family,
2. shared political posts online
3. participated in government or political organizations
4. contacted government officials
5. attended political rallies or demonstrations)

Responses were based on a Likert scale:
1 = Never, 2 = Once a year, 3 = Once in 6 months, 4 = Once in 3 months, 5 = Once a month, 6 = Once a week, 7 = Daily.

In the open-ended responses, participants agreed that **due to societal stigma and patriarchal norms, women are not taken seriously or considered as equals to men, making it harder for them to engage in politics**. Other participants pointed to the family as perpetuating harmful expectations and norms.



“Women are not taken seriously in this country.” – 16, Girl

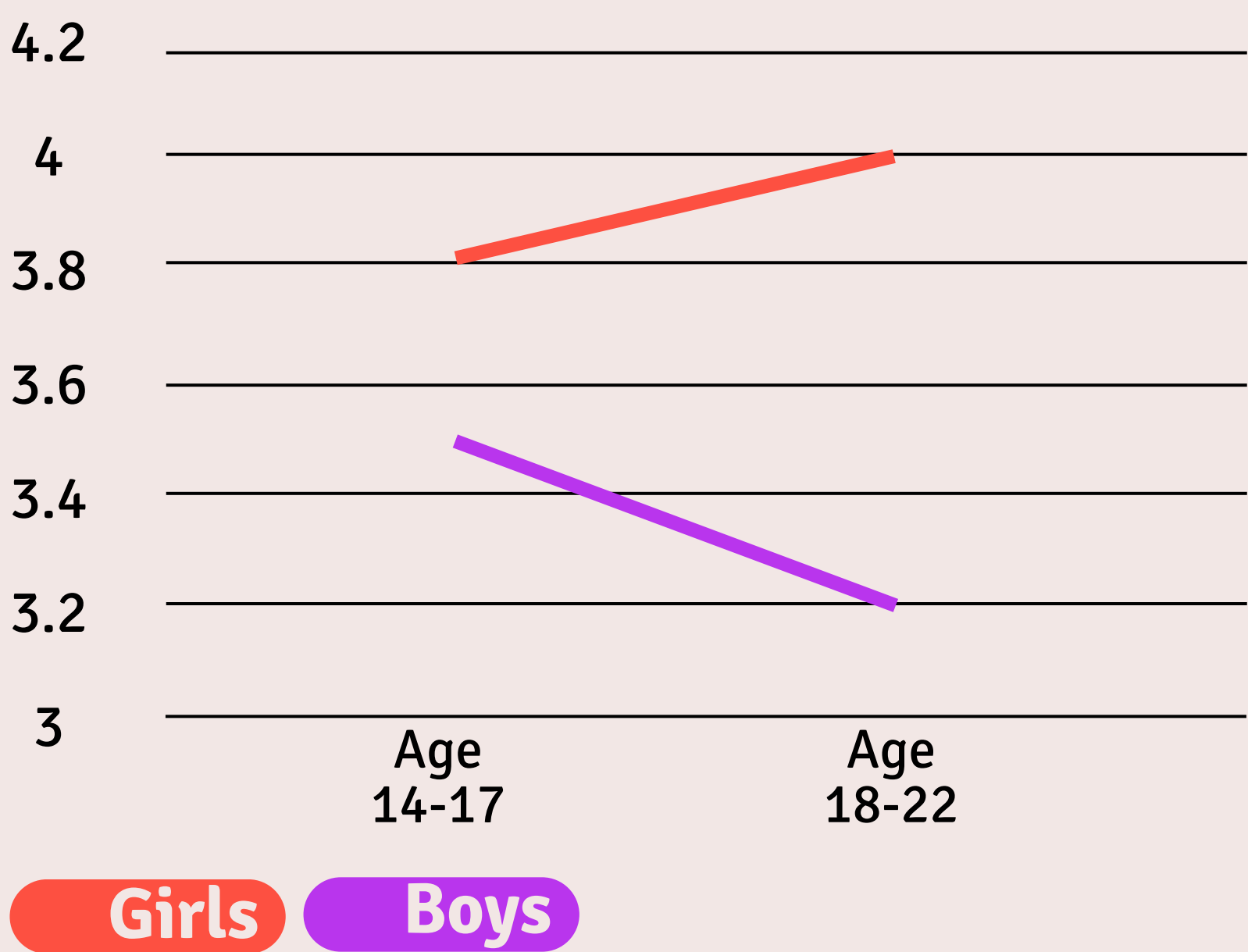
“India is still a fairly patriarchal society, and some “politicians” don’t even try to hide how they think women are beneath men.” – 17, Girl

“It is a common mindset that women should work at home even today, it’s clearly seen even in my family despite their modern mindset.” – 17, Girl

In essence, participants in the open-ended responses agreed that girls were socialized from an early age to not engage in politics, due in large part to harmful societal stigma and patriarchal norms encouraging women to stay at home or to focus on their family first.

(II.a) Boys' awareness of the root causes of gender disparities in Indian politics was lower with age: In the survey and the open-ended responses, we saw evidence that boys' awareness of the structural causes of gender disparities in politics starts lower than girls' and gets even lower as they get older. On the other hand, girls' awareness either stays the same or gets higher. For example, in this chart, you can see that girls' agreement with the question "It's more difficult in our society for women to become elected officials" is higher for older girls, while boys' agreement starts lower and then is even lower for older boys aged 18-22.

Agreed to "It is more difficult in our society for women to become elected officials"



Question: “It’s more difficult in our society for women to become elected officials.”
Response options were on a Likert scale: 1= Strongly disagree to 5= Strongly agree.



In the open-ended responses, boys tended to attribute a lack of female representation in politics to individual women's choices rather than to societal oppression.

“ Women don't take the initiative to stand as a candidate. ” – 18, Boy

“ Because women in India don't see politics much as a great carrier [sic, career] & want to stay away from it. ” – 19, Boy

“ Whether it's a man or a woman the difficulty level is the same for them. You definitely need some kind of connection in order to succeed in Indian politics. ” – 16, Boy

“ People think women lack courage and boldness and cannot be good leaders. ” – 18, Boy

Although we were expecting to see that girls had a higher awareness of structural gender inequities, **we were surprised to see that awareness is lower for boys as they grow older.** This finding runs counter to other research where young people's awareness of structural inequities (such as economic inequality) increases with age (e.g., Dickinson et al., 2023). Although we don't know why this is happening based on our research study, it could possibly be because as boys get older, they become more socialized into the widely accepted idea that it is the fault of women themselves, rather than society, for gender disparities in politics. (We acknowledge that our sample size of boys may also not be representative of all Indian boys in this age group which may have impacted this finding)

Nevertheless, this is a troubling trend that future research should explore more in-depth. It is important that boys and young men understand the structural causes of gender inequities in politics so we can enlist them as allies in overcoming obstacles to girls' and women's political engagement.



(III) Parents play a key role in political socialization

Studies from across the world have consistently demonstrated that parents play a crucial role as socializing agents, imparting their own political values, beliefs and behaviors to their children. The intergenerational transmission of political interest and engagement within families has been a key focus, aiming to understand the mechanisms through which parents shape their children's political socialization.

“The change needs to happen with the way girls are raised. Young Indian girls should be raised with more ambition and opportunity.”

– 16, Girl

In 2022 (prior to the study with UCLA researchers), Kuviraa's founder conducted interviews with several parents across India to understand how they approach the topic of politics with their children. Our sample included 17 parents (one parent of 17 adolescents) consisting of urban, upper-middle-class households who believed that their children were not that interested in Indian politics or local governance and were more interested in global movements such as 'Black Lives Matter.'



As a father of a 17-year-old boy from Bangalore said,

“Urban kids are completely isolated (from Indian politics) because of their peer groups [they have] a natural affinity to stay away from it [politics]” – 19, Boy

There also seemed to be a perception in the interviews that parents should “shield” their children from politics. A mother of a 14-year-old girl from New Delhi said,

“We sometimes do not want to discuss it [politics] because of how badly it is covered in the news. We talk about it from a social justice point of view. My parents never addressed these social injustices in society”

However, parents may be unaware (or in denial) of the extent to which their children can access political information and news through social media. **Parents also shared their concerns about not knowing where to go to get accurate, unbiased information on politics.**

When we performed a regression analysis using the survey data, **we found youth had higher political engagement if their parents encouraged them to participate in politics.** The effect was smaller for girls, but still positive, indicating that something else (perhaps societal norms) was playing a larger role in their political interest and engagement. Parents may not realize that simply encouraging their children to engage in politics has an impact on their political engagement; this is a relatively easy way for parents to help increase girls’ political engagement.

INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

GENDER DISPARITIES IN KEY QUESTIONS ABOUT POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT ARE SIMILAR ACROSS INDIAN AND US YOUTH

The Institute of Politics at the Harvard Kennedy School releases a study every year conducted by the students at Harvard University that measures domestic politics, education, health and mental health for 18- to 29-year-olds across the US. To compare how Indian youth fare on political engagement with their American counterparts, we incorporated several of their questions in our survey and compared the results with the Spring 2022 Harvard Youth Poll (n=2024):

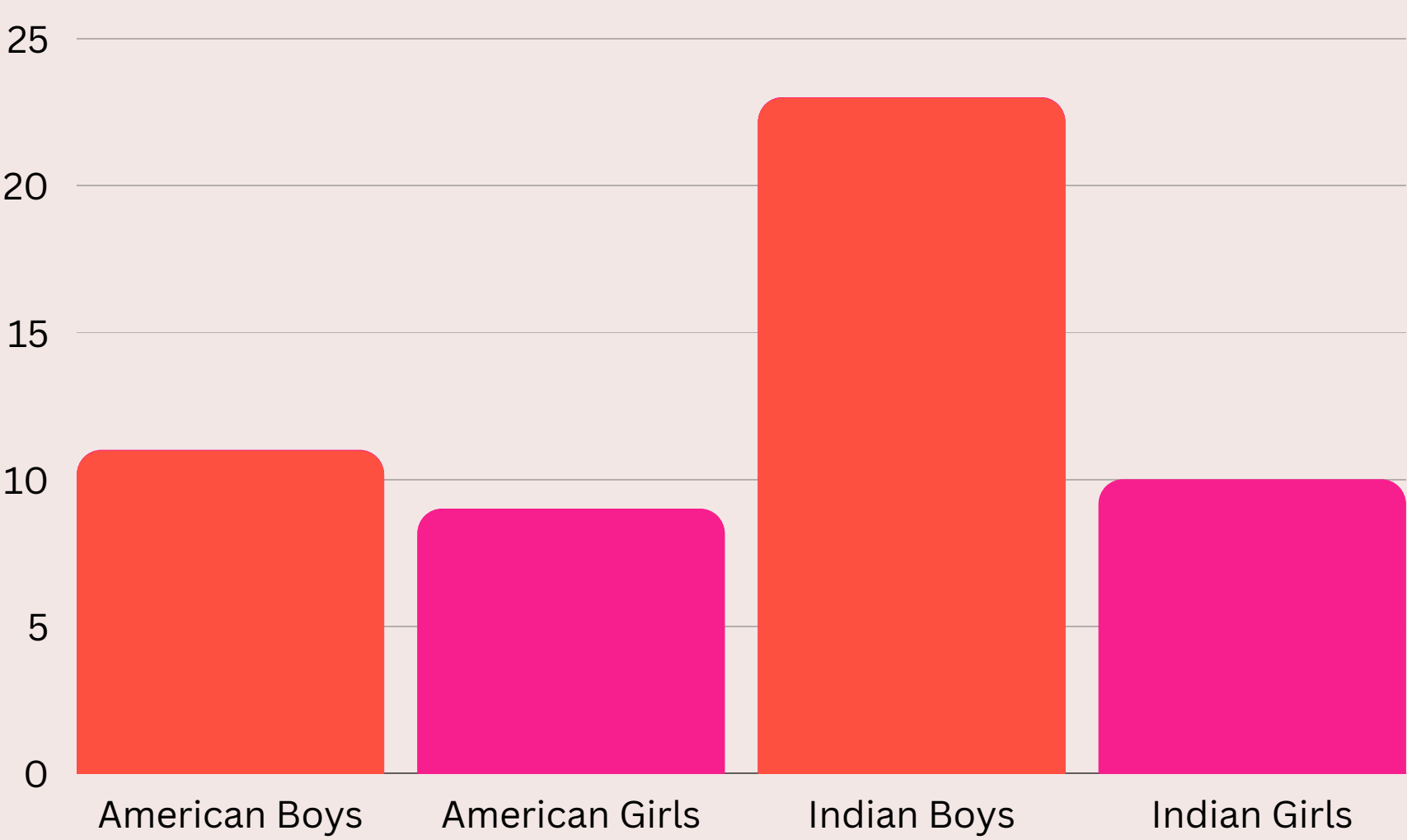
We found that across several key questions, gender differences were similar for Indian and US youth. For instance, boys in both India and the US had higher rates of following national news and finding a career in public service appealing than the girls in their country. Notably, in response to a question asking whether youth felt more hopeful or fearful about the future of their country, girls in both India and the US reported higher rates of being fearful than boys in their respective countries. **These results support some prior research that across countries, boys tend to be more politically engaged and more optimistic about their country's future than girls. (Wray-Lake et al., 2020).**



Gender disparities in politics were higher with age

Although boys reported a higher agreement (that working in public service was appealing) than girls in both countries, respondents in our survey showed that the gender disparities in India were much larger than in the US context. For example, in the chart below about a question regarding working in public service, we show that whereas the difference between US girls and boys is just two percentage points, the difference between Indian girls and boys is 13 percentage points.

Youth that strongly agree that working in public service is appealing



Question from the Kuviraa and 2022 Harvard Youth Poll surveys:
“The idea of working in some form of politics is appealing to me.”
Responses were on a Likert scale: 1= Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree

These findings suggest that although there are gender disparities in both the US and in India, there may be greater gender disparities in Indian girls’ and boys’ political engagement compared to the US.



HOW DO WE GET MORE GIRLS ENGAGED IN POLITICS?

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARENTS AND EDUCATORS

(I) Parents need to start speaking to their daughters about politics

To increase political interest, parents should initiate conversations about politics. These conversations should not be 'adult' only but should be a part of routine household activities. Libyan peace and human rights activist Hajer Sharief introduces a simple yet transformative idea: parents can teach their children about political functioning by giving them a say in how their households are run, in the form of regular family meetings where everyone has an equal say and learns to negotiate their demands and put across their feelings. This way young people, both girls and boys, learn similar skills and have the same space to discuss and deliberate (Sharief, n.d.).



Young men are more likely than young women to be socialized by their parents to think about politics as a career path. From their school experiences to their peer associations to their media habits, young women tend to be exposed to less political information and discussions than young men. Young men are more likely than young women to have played organized sports and care about winning, which is one instance which explains how young boys are socialised more towards skills and attitudes needed to later engage in political leadership (She Should Run, 2020).

Similarly in the Indian context, we found through our study the more parents encourage girls to be politically engaged, the less they believe that it's difficult in society for women to become elected officials. The same is true for parents encouraging girls to be engaged in the community, but not as dramatic an effect.

(II) Opportunities should be created for girls to be involved in civic action and local governance

Our study found that girls lacked opportunities to engage in politics, which is a critical part of their political development. **Schools can support girl's political development by creating structured opportunities for them to engage and lead.** For instance, teachers can incorporate positive examples of women politicians in lessons on civics and government. "Action civics," where students learn important civic skills and then lead their own initiatives, has been shown to increase a student's sense of civic competence and agency (LeCompte et al., 2020). Organising field visits to local governmental centres, state assemblies or the national parliament for students is a great way to ignite political curiosity and will lead to meaningful dialogue among students alike. Further, local governments can play a large role in building girls' engagement in politics by offering opportunities for leadership. **When local governments give youth roles with decision making power, such as youth advisory councils, there are benefits for communities and young people's skill, psychosocial and political development** (Santo et al., 2010). Local governments can begin young leadership programmes and volunteering mechanisms focused on girls to have direct participation in the political process.



(III) Boys should be taught about structural sexism

Analysis of open-ended responses in the survey demonstrated that boys were more likely to attribute a lack of representation in politics to women's skills or motivation rather than to structural dynamics. Our survey findings show that boys' awareness of structural gender disparities in politics gets lower as they age. These findings have important implications for parents and educators who work with adolescents and young men. The internet is a budding ground for picking up misogynistic attitudes and young boys with impressionable minds do learn about enforcing traditional gender stereotypes through online platforms. Dr Emily Setty, who has conducted research on misogyny influencers on social media, **suggests that adults need to offer young men the opportunity to play a positive role in identifying problems with misogynist beliefs, as well as developing other ways to view their place in society** (The Conversation, 2023).

(IV) Media must increase positive coverage of women in politics

Dozens of respondents in the open-ended responses shared how society did not hold up positive stories of women leading in politics, and that they lacked inspiring examples of women politicians. Yet we know from research that for girls, representation (e.g. seeing someone who looks like you in a position) is a powerful way to increase motivation and self-confidence (Leary, 2019). Yasmin Kidwai, the municipal councillor from Daryaganj, Delhi believes **when women finally have the opportunity and means to participate in politics, the media still chooses to ignore their stories**. She discussed the importance of media coverage for women politicians more than their male counterparts because **women are often first-time politicians who are lesser known and deserve to have their efforts highlighted** (Aggarwal, 2021). While research across the world shows that media can play a large role in both perpetuating sexist norms, it can also guide changing societal perceptions on gender (Ward & Grower, 2020). Therefore, we call on the media to highlight and amplify women politicians in India, both to inspire and bolster young girls' confidence and to counter negative stereotypes and prejudices.



India's lack of women politicians and legislators is a systemic issue which needs to be addressed holistically, addressing root causes. As our study illustrates, multiple factors – ranging from safety concerns for female politicians to societal sexism, lack of access to opportunities to engage in politics, and others, prevent young girls from engaging in politics. This study and Kuviraa's work on the ground demonstrate that stereotypes about girls engaging in politics start at a young age with the socialization of children. India, as the world's largest democracy, must work towards being representative of her diverse population. To achieve that goal, we have a long way to go. We should start with normalizing conversations on politics with young girls and creating opportunities for them to participate in politics. Over the next five years, Kuviraa aims to work with over a thousand young girls across India to increase their political knowledge and engagement.

If you are interested to learn more about our study or support our work at Kuviraa please reach out to us team@kuviraa.org

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 @kuviraa_ind

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APPENDIX (I): RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample:

The study included a final sample of 615 participants, with an average age of 17.01 years. The majority of the participants were girls (68.9 percent), followed by boys (22.8 percent), with a small percentage identifying as other gender identities (3.7 percent) or choosing not to disclose their gender (4.6 percent). Due to the small sample size, youth holding non-cisgender identities and those who declined to share their gender were not included in the analysis. The youth lived in over 27 different cities across India. The most frequent city was Mumbai, with 16.3 percent of responses, followed by Bengaluru, with 9.9 percent, and New Delhi, with 9.3 percent. As the survey was conducted online, the sample size consists mainly of English-speaking, urban youth. Due to this limitation, participants of all religions, castes and socio-economic classes may not be represented in this study.

Data Collection:

The researchers recruited participants through direct outreach and advertisements on Instagram, targeting young individuals within the specified age range of 14 to 22. Data collection took place between December 2022 and February 2023, utilizing an anonymous online survey hosted on Qualtrics. The survey was offered in English and Hindi. Questions in the survey asked about the participants' political interest, political efficacy, political engagement, obstacles to political engagement, future political engagement, parent socialization, political aspirations, and gendered political socialization. The survey included two open-ended questions (described further in the Analysis section below). In addition, through a preliminary exploration prior to the survey, Kuviraa's founder informally held interviews with 17 parents about their children's political interests and engagement. Parents were contacted and recruited via Kuviraa's network. Interviews discussed parents' political engagement and their beliefs about their children's political interests and engagement. Although these interviews were not part of the research study with UCLA, anecdotes are included in this report's findings to supplement the results.

Quantitative Analysis:

To analyse the survey data, the researchers considered responses that completed at least 24 percent of the survey (which included the demographics and political engagement sections). Participants who completed less than 24 percent of the survey, or who did not consent to take the survey after reading the online information sheet about the study, were removed from the analysis. Due to the limited representation of non-cisgender youth in the sample, the researchers categorized gender into two groups: women/girls and men/boys. Similarly, age was divided into two groups: 14-17 years old and 18-22 years old, corresponding to secondary school and college years. Our research aims were to explore gender and age differences in participants' responses to the survey questions. The researchers used analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests to examine differences by gender and age on different aspects of political interest and engagement. Next, multiple linear regression analyses were run with parent socialization items (included in the Appendix) as the predictor variables, based on extant research, to explore associations with dependent variables including political interest, engagement, and future political aspirations.

Qualitative Analysis:

We analyzed two open-ended questions from the survey: (1) Only around 14 percent of Parliament members in India are women. Why do you think there aren't more female politicians in India? and (2) Do you think it's more difficult for a female politician to be successful in India? Why or why not? The first question had 213 responses and the second question had 225 responses. Four Kuviraa volunteers in high school and college supported the qualitative analysis. First, through group discussions, the team inductively coded the first question to develop a codebook. Codes included "women not envisioned as leaders" and "women aren't taken seriously/ are disrespected in politics." Next, each team member coded an equal number of responses, resolving differences and questions that came up in the coding process through group discussion. Third, the team used the same codebook from the first question to code the second question, again dividing the responses equally. Finally, through group discussions, we agreed on final themes based on the codebook and reviewed responses associated with the most frequent codes. In addition to the survey, data from the interviews conducted with parents was analyzed for broad themes by the Kuviraa team.

Research Ethics:

This study was approved by the UCLA Institutional Review Board (IRB). All survey responses were anonymous. Prior to participating in the survey, participants were given a virtual information sheet and then asked to confirm their consent to participate in the study. Participants were not paid for participating in the study.

APPENDIX (II): SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES

1. How interested are you in political issues?

Table 1a: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results

Source	dF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1	9.76	11.413	0.001
Intercept	1	3482.951	4072.861	0.00
Gender	1	9.76	11.413	0.001
Error	562	0.855		
Total	564			
Corrected Total	563			

Table 1b: Means by Gender

Gender	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval
Boy	3.029	0.078	2.875 to 3.182
Girl	2.724	0.045	2.636 to 2.812

2. Do you consider yourself to be politically engaged or politically active?

Table 2a: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	dF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	5.067	1	5.067	23.361	0.00
Intercept	822.13	1	822.13	3790.637	0.00
Gender	5.067	1	5.067	23.361	0.00
Error	121.889	562	0.217		
Total	1143	564			
Corrected Total	126.956	563			

Table 2b: Means by Gender

Gender	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Boy	1.507	0.039	1.430 to 1.584	1.43	1.584
Girl	1.288	0.023	1.243 to 1.332	1.243	1.332

3. Which of the following prevents you from participating in politics? - There are no opportunities for me to get involved.

Table 3a: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	dF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1.354	1	1.354	6.335	0.012
Intercept	34.261	1	34.261	160.326	0.00
Gender	1.354	1	1.354	6.335	0.012
Error	120.098	562	0.214		
Total	177	564			
Corrected Total	121.452	563			

Table 3b: Means by Gender

Gender	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Boy	0.229	0.039	0.152 to 0.305	0.152	0.305
Girl	0.342	0.022	0.298 to 0.386	0.298	0.386

4. Composite score of political engagement

Table 4a: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	dF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	33.893	3	11.298	8.602	0
Intercept	1503.274	1	1503.274	1144.611	0
Gender	15.9	1	15.9	12.106	0.001
Age	18.639	1	18.639	14.192	0
Gender*Age	11.579	1	11.579	8.816	0.003
Error	405.825	309	1.313		
Total	2461	313			
Corrected Total	439.718	312			

Table 4b: Means by Gender

Gender	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Boy	3.031	0.135	2.765 to 3.297	2.765	3.297
Girl	0.342	0.022	2.289 to 2.643	2.289	2.643

5. It’s more difficult in our society for women to become elected officials.

Table 5a: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	dF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	21.687	3	7.229	6.093	0
Intercept	3405.917	1	3405.917	2870.647	0
Gender	21.56	1	21.56	18.172	0
Age	0.209	1	0.209	0.176	0.675
Gender*Age	4.848	1	4.848	4.086	0.044
Error	503.06	424	1.186		
Total	6536	428			
Corrected Total	524.748	427			

Table 5b: Means by Gender

Gender	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Boy	3.342	0.114	3.118 to 3.566	3.118	3.566
Girl	3.920	0.073	3.776 to 4.063	3.776	4.063



6. Regression analysis for parent socialization items and political engagement

Table 6a: Predictors of composite political engagement

Predictor	Coefficient (B)	SE	F	p-value
(Constant)	1.028	.590		.083
PS1: How often do your parents encourage you to engage in political activities?	.951	.179	.746	<.001
PS2: How often do your parents encourage you to engage in activities to help your community (like volunteering for underserved sections of society)?	.097	.151	.084	.522
PS3: Overall, how closely do your parents follow news about national politics?	-.127	.181	-.079	.482
PS4: How often do your parents start conversations with you about politics?	-.062	.170	-.049	.717
PS5: My parents have suggested that I pursue a career in politics.	.295	.246	.142	.232
Gender	.896	.688	.327	.194
Gender*PS1	-.706	.202	-.730	<.001
Gender*PS2	.260	.192	.293	.177
Gender*PS3	.133	.168	.165	.427
Gender*PS4	-.196	.208	-.265	.347
Gender*PS5	-.313	.276	-.198	.257

Note: Significant predictors are bolded above.

APPENDIX (II):

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