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Research Article

A Study on Political Awareness and Approach of Youth Towards Voting in Kashmir

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Abstract. Worldwide youth spend a lot of time on social media which has become a powerful source of information that converts automatically into knowledge. In current study, we chose 400 youth at random on their consent using stratified random sampling procedure and with the help of self-developed validated questionnaire, we examine the political awareness and approach of youth Kashmir towards voting. The data collected was analysed using standard statistical tools. It was found that majority of respondents understudy were aware of politics and political scenario of the study area. Statistically, there was non-significant difference in general in the awareness and approach of youth towards voting between male and female youth in Kashmir. The study showed that 79.5% respondents

cast vote as they consider it their right, 67.5% respondents reported that people cast vote as they feel it is the agent of change, 81.5% respondents reported that people cast vote as every vote counts and 32.5% people reported that people cast just for fun without thinking on it seriously. Majority of respondents male as well as female were not satisfied with the performance of candidates irrespective of any political party. Further, group discussion with elders revealed that handful of corrupt people who had no sympathy with their mother land or people of Kashmir spoiled the image of Kashmiri people for their personal benefits. The people in power were enjoying life because of their dual policy. The current study was based on sample of 400 youth, it was suggested that future study on this topic may be conducted on large sample.

Keywords: Politics, Awareness, Attitude, Voting, Kashmir, Youth, Statistics

INTRODUCTION

Plato born in Athens known as father of political theory or philosophy is seen as influential philosophers in the western tradition who wrote the dialogues based on the ideology. He says, one of the penalties of refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being governed by your inferiors. Politics in daily life refers to the way that countries are governed, and to the ways that governments make rules and laws to manage the human society in good way. Political awareness among youth is often regarded as a crucial precursor to active participation in democratic processes. This is particularly significant in a diverse and complex political landscape like India, where the involvement of younger generations in voting, civic duties, and policy-making is essential for sustaining the vibrancy of democracy. As the largest democracy in the world, India boasts over 900 million eligible voters, with a substantial proportion under the age of 35 (Election Commission of India, 2019). Studies indicate that youth engagement in politics varies significantly based on socioeconomic and regional factors. Voting turnout among younger voters reflects their perception of the efficacy of democratic institutions. Youth represent a vital segment of India's demographic dividend. According to the United Nations Population Fund (2014), India has the largest youth population globally, making youth political participation a key area of research. Despite high literacy rates and increasing access to digital media, political participation among Indian youth remains complex. Factors such as political apathy, distrust in the political system, and inadequate political education influence engagement levels. Various studies have shown that while Indian youth actively consume political content, this does not always translate into voting behavior.

Voting is the primary mechanism through which citizens can influence governance and policy-making. However, the extent to which youth view voting as a civic responsibility varies widely. Youth voter turnout in India has fluctuated over time; for instance, the 2019 Indian general election saw an increase in youth voter participation, attributed partly to targeted voter awareness campaigns by the Election Commission of India (2019). Nevertheless, challenges persist, particularly in regions affected by conflict, where youth may feel disillusioned or disengaged from the political process. Across India, various voter awareness campaigns and initiatives have been organized to engage young voters in the democratic process. These efforts

aim to educate young voters about their rights, the electoral process, and the importance of making informed choices when selecting their representatives. In view of the importance and availability of vast literature (e.g., Collier Paul, 1999; Deutsch 2000; Akbar 2002; Nestle Family Monitor 2003; Bose 2003; Bamzai 2008; Schoefield 2010; Asima 2011; Thapliyal 2011; Sehgal 2011; Dar 2011; Sofiya 2012; Bhan 2013; Bhat 2015; Ahuja 2016; Rao 2017; Shafi 2018; Kaul & Zia 2018; Pereira 2019; Sharma 2019; Chandran 2019; Kumar & Singh 2020), we worked on current study.

Historical Context of Kashmir

Kashmir, historically known as "desiccated land," has a rich tapestry of monarchs and rulers. Once a beautiful country, a great seat of learning having written history around 5000 years back when many present powerful countries were not existing was known to ancient Greeks and Romans. In Kashmir the earliest known inhabitants around 2000 B.C. were Nagas and later Khasas, Dars, Bhuttas, Damars, Nishadas etc appeared. According to the Rajatarangini, a primary source of Kashmir's history, the region was once a vast lake. King Ashoka of the Mauryan dynasty is credited with founding Srinagar. The region saw various rulers over the centuries:

Kushan Dynasty (1st-3rd century CE): The Kushans played a significant role in Kashmir's early history, promoting trade and cultural exchange.

Karkota Dynasty (7th-9th century CE): Known for its contributions to art and culture, the Karkotas were instrumental in establishing Srinagar as a prominent city.

Utpala Dynasty (9th-11th century CE): This period marked the zenith of Kashmir's cultural and intellectual development.

Shah Mir Dynasty (14th century CE): This dynasty introduced Islam to Kashmir. Sultan Shams-ud-Din Shah Mir, the founder of this dynasty, set the stage for Islamic culture in the region.

The region came under the control of the Mughals in 1586 after the defeat of the Chak rulers. Emperor Akbar's annexation brought Kashmir into the Mughal Empire, leading to a period of prosperity and cultural flourishing under rulers like Jahangir and Shah Jahan.

Afghan Rule (1752-1820): The Afghans, under Ahmad Shah Durrani, ruled Kashmir after the decline of the Mughal Empire. Their rule was marked by heavy taxation and administrative inefficiency.

Sikh Rule (1820-1846): The Sikhs, led by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, annexed Kashmir from the Afghans. Their administration brought some stability but also exploitation.

The Dogra Dynasty emerged victorious after the Treaty of Amritsar in 1846, which ceded Kashmir to Maharaja Gulab Singh. The Dogra rulers, under British oversight, managed the region until the partition of British India.

Kashmir Post-Independence

The 1947 partition of British India left Kashmir as a disputed territory between India and Pakistan. Maharaja Hari Singh, the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, initially sought independence but acceded to India amid an invasion by tribal forces from Pakistan. This decision led to the first India-Pakistan war (1947-1948), resulting in the

division of Kashmir into Indian-administered Kashmir (IAK) and Pakistan-administered Kashmir (PAK), with a ceasefire line monitored by the United Nations.

Political Leaders and Governance in Kashmir

Throughout its history, Kashmir has seen a range of political leaders and ministers influencing its governance:

Mehr Chand Mahajan: He served as the first President of Kashmir from 15 October 1947 – 5 March 1948 (142 days).

Sheikh Abdullah (1947-1953): Sheikh Abdullah was the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir and played a significant role in the region's accession to India. His tenure was marked by efforts to address socio-economic issues and promote autonomy within the state. He served as Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir from 5 March 1948 – 9 August 1953 (5 years, 157 days)

Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad: Bakshi (1907–1972) well known figure in Kashmir served as the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir from August 1953 – 12 October 1963 (10 years, 64 days).

Khwaja Shamsuddin: Shamsuddin served Kashmir as president for a short time, 12 October 1963 – 29 February 1964 (140 days).

Ghulam Mohammed Sadiq (1963-1964): Sadiq served as the President of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly and was instrumental in managing political transitions during a period of instability. He continued as Chief Minister till his death in 1971 when the position was renamed to Chief Minister.

Sayyid Mir Qasim (1971-76). Mir Qasim served as the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir after the death of Ghulam Mohammed Sadiq from 12 December 1971 – 25 February 1975 (3 years, 75 days). He resigned from the office in 1975 in order to pave the way for the return of Sheikh Abdullah after the Indian Government reached an accord with Sheikh Abdullah. In his autobiography, *My Life and Times*, (Autobiography of Mir Qasim, 1992) published in September 1992, provides interesting historical detail on the struggle of Kashmiris to throw off the yoke of monarchy in the princely state through the Quit Kashmir movement, as well as background on the issue of accession to India rather than choosing to join Pakistan. He died in Delhi on 12th December, 2004 and as per his wishes he was buried in the village of his birth, Dooru Shahabad, district Anantnag of Kashmir valley.

Sheikh Abdullah: Sheikh Abdullah once Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir served as Chief Minister of same state from 25 February 1975 – 26 March 1977 (2 years, 29 days). Sheikh Abdullah resigned as Chief Minister after the withdrawal of support of Indian National Congress (INC) for the Government on March 16, 1977. Jammu and Kashmir came under presidential rule on March 17, 1977. On June 30, 1977, elections were held and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah again formed government served as Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir on July 9, 1977 till his death on September 8, 1982.

Farooq Abdullah (1982-2002, 2008-2018): A prominent leader of the National Conference party, Farooq Abdullah served multiple terms as the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir. He served Chief Minister of J&K first time from 8 September 1982 – 2 July 1984 (1 year, 298 days). His leadership spanned a turbulent period marked by insurgency and political unrest.

Ghulam Mohammad Shah: He served as Chief Minister of J&K from 2 July 1984 – 6 March 1986 (1 year, 247 days).

Farooq Abdullah: Farooq Abdullah served as Chief Minister of J&K from 7 November 1986 – 19 January 1990 (3 years, 73 days)

Farooq Abdullah: Farooq Abdullah served as Chief Minister of J&K from 9 October 1996 – 18 October 2002 (6 years, 9 days)

Mufti Mohammad Sayeed: He served as Chief Minister of J&K from 2 November 2002– 2 November 2005 (3 years, 0 days).

Ghulam Nabi Azad: He served as Chief Minister of J&K from 2 November 2005 – 11 July 2008 (2 years, 252 days).

Omar Abdullah (2002-2008, 2018-2020): The son of Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah continued the family's political legacy. His tenure was characterized by efforts to promote economic development and address the challenges posed by ongoing conflict. He served as Chief Minister of J&K from 5 January 2009 – 8 January 2015 (6 years, 3 days).

Mufti Mohammad Sayeed: He served as Chief Minister of J&K second time from 1 March 2015 – 7 January 2016 (312 days).

Mehbooba Mufti (2016-2018): As the first woman to serve as Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Mehbooba Mufti focused on development and reconciliation. Her tenure faced significant challenges, including political unrest and security issues. She served as chief Minister of J&K from 4 April 2016 – 20 June 2018 (2 years, 77 days). The abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019 led to the reorganization of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories—Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh—under direct central government administration. This move significantly altered the political landscape, impacting local governance and the role of previous political leaders.

Youth Political Engagement in Kashmir

In Jammu and Kashmir specifically, youth have historically been disillusioned by political instability and separatist sentiments, leading to low voter turnout. However, recent developments have sparked growing interest among Kashmiri youth in understanding and participating in the democratic process. Political instability and conflict in Kashmir have significantly impacted youth engagement in the electoral process. Historical disillusionment with politics has contributed to lower voter turnout, particularly in elections held amidst unrest. For example, only 13% of eligible voters participated in the last Lok Sabha elections in Srinagar. Despite these challenges, recent political developments initiatives have sparked growing interest among Kashmiri youth in democratic processes. Unique socio-political conditions in Kashmir, including frequent unrest and restrictions on political freedoms, complicate youth engagement. Unlike other regions in India, where voting is promoted through campaigns, Kashmiri youth must navigate both regional instability and broader political tensions that often diminish their enthusiasm for voting. This has led to boycotts and skepticism towards the political system. Efforts to enhance political awareness are gaining traction. Programs like "My Vote, My Pride" and "River of Democracy" aim to educate first-time voters on the importance of their vote, helping shift attitudes among Kashmiri youth. While many remain skeptical of the political

system, there is growing recognition that voting offers a means to influence governance and advocate for their interests.

The Role of Educational Institutions and Political Socialization

Educational institutions in Kashmir play a key role in political socialization. Universities often serve as hubs for political debate and activism, where students engage in discussions about governance, autonomy, and conflict resolution. However, crackdowns on political activism due to ongoing unrest have limited formal political engagement. Despite this, Kashmiri youth continue to engage with politics informally through online platforms, social media, and peer networks. The Government of India has introduced several programs aimed at increasing youth participation in politics, such as voter registration drives and political education campaigns. However, these initiatives face challenges due to the region's unique political and security conditions (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, 2021). The gradual shift in youth perspectives offers hope for a more engaged electorate in the future. The political awareness and attitude of Kashmiri youth towards voting are shaped by a complex history of territorial disputes, political alienation, and socio-political unrest. While efforts to increase political participation have made progress, significant challenges remain. Understanding the motivations and challenges faced by Kashmiri youth is crucial for creating policies that encourage their participation and help strengthen democratic governance in the region.

Objective(s) of the study

- (i) To compare the level of political awareness among male and female University students of Kashmir

Material and Methods

In this survey a well designed pre tested questionnaire was utilized to collect the information from the sample of 400 (161 male & 239 female) youth selected randomly via online/offline mode from Kashmir valley using stratified random sampling technique. The respondents under study belonging to North, South and South Kashmir were explained, the main purpose of this study to get their consent. The questionnaire was designed to access the political awareness among youth of Kashmir. The 3-point likert scale was used to assess the level of awareness among respondents under study. Further, mean value less than 2 was considered poor legal awareness and mean value >2 was considered as satisfactory legal awareness of respondents. The sample size for present study was computed using (Cochran, 1977)

$$n = \frac{Z_{\alpha}^2 P(1 - P)}{d^2}$$

Here, we chose $p=0.5$, $Z_{\alpha}=1.96$ and $d=0.05$. That gives for our study the sample size $n \sim 384$ and we decided to take $n = 400$. The data collected was tabulated, analyzed and interpreted statistically. The statistical software SPSS (version 20) was used for analysis of collected data.

Research Hypothesis

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the political awareness and attitude between male and female youth under study. In order to test these research hypothesis, we use Chi-square test (with usual notations) given below:

$$X^2 = \sum_{i=1}^2 \frac{(o_i - e_i)^2}{e_i}$$

where $X^2 \sim \chi_1^2$, o_i and e_i are observed and expected frequencies. We reject H_0 if p-value is less than specified level of significance.

We can also use Mann-Whitney U test, a non parametric test for comparison purpose. It is given (with usual notations) as

$$W = N_1 N_2 + \frac{N_x (N_x + 1)}{2} - T_x$$

Where, N_1 is the number of subjects in group 1; N_2 is the number of subjects in group 2. T_x is the larger of the two rank totals and N_x is the number of subjects in this group.

Data Analysis:

Table representation was used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the participants under study. To assess the level of political awareness among respondents Descriptive statistics was used. Further, for comparison purpose Mann-Whitney U test was used using statistical software SPSS (version 20).

Data Interpretation:

The results obtained were interpreted in the context of the research objective, and conclusions were drawn regarding the level of political awareness among male and female youth of Kashmir valley.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from 400 youth (male=161 and female=239) from different districts of Kashmir valley is presented below in Tabular form. The researcher had considered youth and young generation to know the level of legal awareness and attitude among youth of Kashmir towards politics and voting. The primary data of the study is collected with the help of a survey using structured questionnaire adopting stratified random sampling technique. The data collected was analyzed and evaluated using standard statistical procedure get the results. The data presented in Table 1, shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents under study. It was found that from 400 respondents (40.25 male and 59.75% female) majority of the male respondents (36.65%) were graduated where as among female respondents majority (38.49%) were upto 12th class. Further, majority of the respondents were from urban areas (57.76% male and 55.64% female), majority of respondents were from medium class families (94.41% male and 89.96% female), majority of male respondents (60.90%) were in the age group of 21-25 where as majority of female respondents (42.68%) were in the age group of 26-29. The majority of heads of family

of respondents were involved in business (71.43% male and 66.11% female) and majority of the respondents were from Srinagar constituency (58.39% male and 76.57% female).

Table 1: General information of the youth of Kashmir understudy

S.No	Variable	Type	Gender	
			Male (%)	Female (%)
1	Education Status	Up to 10 th Class	19 (11.80)	37 (15.48)
		Up to 12 th Class	53 (32.91)	92 (38.49)
		Graduate	59 (36.65)	73 (30.55)
		Post Graduate	24 (14.91)	33 (13.81)
		Ph.D.	06 (3.73)	04 (1.67)
2.	Residence	Rural	68 (42.24)	106 (44.35)
		Urban	93 (57.76)	133 (55.64)
3.	Family Status	Low	07 (4.35)	19 (7.95)
		Medium	152 (94.41)	215 (89.96)
		High	02 (1.24)	05 (2.09)
4.	Age (years)	15-20	42 (26.10)	58 (24.27)
		21-25	98 (60.90)	79 (33.05)
		26-29	21 (13.0)	102 (42.68)
5.	Profession of Head of Family	Business	115 (71.43)	158 (66.11)
		Government Employee	46 (28.57)	81 (33.89)
6.	Assembly Constituency	Srinagar	94 (58.39)	183 (76.57)
		Anantnag	25 (15.53)	21 (8.79)
		Baramulla	42 (26.08)	35 (14.64)

The data shown in Table 2, revealed that in response to statement 1, i.e., Do you believe in democracy? majority of respondents said yes (male=73.91%, female=79.92%), in response to statement 2, i.e., Do you have idea about the freedom struggle movements in India? Majority of respondents said yes (male=86.96%, female=85.36%), in response to statement 3, i.e., Do you understand the succession of governance in Kashmir? majority of respondents said yes (male=56.52%, female=53.98%), in response to statement 4, i.e., Do you know about the fundamental rights and duties of a citizen? majority of respondents said yes (male=52.18%, female=52.72%), in response to statement 5, i.e., Do you Understand the ideology of different political parties? majority of respondents said yes (male=79.50%, female=50.21%), in response to statement 6, i.e., Do you feel that union elections in College should be politicized ? majority of respondents (male=73.91%, female=72.80%), in response to statement 7, i.e., Do you feel that Politicians are corrupt in J&K? majority of respondents of male (male=56.52%) said yes, whereas majority of female respondents (female=41.00%) said no, in response to statement 8, i.e., Do you feel that there is gender equality in J&K? majority of respondents (male=78.26%, female= 62.34%) majority of respondents said yes. Jammu and Kashmir is a Muslim majority region so they strongly believe in equality as male and

female are equal as humans. Islam is the first religion which has given equal voting rights to women in the world. In response to statement 9, i.e., Do you feel that ethics and morality of politics are declining nowadays? majority of respondents (male=73.91%, female=79.92%) said yes, in response to statement 10, i.e., Do you feel Politicians always favours rich? majority of respondents (male=69.57%, female=77.41%) said yes, in response to statement 11, i.e., Do you feel that Politicians in J&K have narrow outlook? majority of respondents (male=75.61%, female=73.64%) said yes, in response to statement 12, i.e., Do you feel, we lack in political awareness? majority of respondents (male=65.22%, female=46.86%) said yes, in response to statement 13, i.e., Do you feel due to corrupt politicians Kashmir suffered more than any other state of India ? majority of respondents (male=60.25%, female=73.64%) said yes, in response to statement 14, i.e., Do you feel we all must vote? majority of respondents (male=65.22%, female=61.93%) said yes, in response to statement 15, i.e., Do you believe that one should vote as per his/her own thinking after receiving advice from other? majority of male respondents (39.13%) responded that they have idea where as female respondents (67.78%) said yes. Statistically, there was significant difference observed in male and female responses ($P < 0.01$). Male respondents remain more cautious while casting their vote as compared to female so they feel confused to whom vote. in response to statement 16, i.e., Do you feel voters get motivated by social media more than personal contacts? majority of respondents male (39.13%) said they are not sure where as female (47.28%) said yes. in response to statement 17, i.e., Do you feel that it is the support of Central govt that decide fate of a candidate than voter? majority of respondents (male=40.90%, female= 47.28%) said yes, in response to statement 18, i.e., Do you believe that elections in Kashmir are held fairly? majority of respondents (male=72.0%, female= 38.08%) said no. The respondents understudy revealed that few politicians were granted special bail to take part in election process to favour some party. In response to statement 19, i.e., Do you feel that election process in Kashmir is not upto mark? majority of respondents (male=61.49%, female=61.93%) said yes, in response to statement 20, i.e., Do you take part in election rally? majority of respondents (male=42.8%, female=66.5%) said no, in response to statement 21, i.e., Do you know details about your parliamentary constituency? majority of respondents (male=40.9%, female= 33.80%) said no. The group discussion revealed that although politics is the backbone of democracy but in educational institutions of Kashmir politics is banned though educational institutions play a crucial role in reshaping future leaders and nation building as reported by educated youth. It has been observed that statistically, there is a non-significant differences in the response of male and female respondents ($P > 0.05$) in all statements except the statement(s) 4,5,7,8,12,13,15,16,18,20. The discussion with respondents revealed that youth are taking keen interest in politics and are aware of political activities in the country.

Table 2: Political Awareness and approach of youth towards voting in Kashmir valley, J&K

S.No	Statement	Gender	Response			Chisquare	P-value
.							

			Yes (%)	No (%)	No Idea (%)		
1.	Do you believe in democracy?	Male	119 (73.91)	23 (14.29)	19 (11.80)	5.502	>0.05
		Female	191 (79.92)	17 (7.11)	31 (12.97)		
2.	Do you have idea about the freedom struggle movements in India?	Male	140 (86.96)	0 (0.0)	21 (13.04)	0.205	>0.05
		Female	204 (85.36)	0 (0.0)	35 (14.64)		
3.	Do you understand the succession of governance in Kashmir?	Male	91 (56.52)	25 (15.53)	45 (27.95)	1.353	>0.05
		Female	129 (53.98)	48 (20.08)	62 (25.94)		
4.	Do you know about the fundamental rights and duties of a citizen?	Male	84 (52.18)	56 (34.78)	21 (13.04)	20.586	<0.01
		Female	71 (52.72)	126 (29.71)	42 (17.57)		
5.	Do you Understand the ideology of different political parties?	Male	128 (79.50)	17 (10.56)	16 (9.94)	36.385	<0.01
		Female	120 (50.21)	77 (32.22)	42 (17.57)		
6.	Do you feel that union elections in College should be politicized?	Male	119 (73.91)	13 (8.08)	29 (18.01)	0.082	>0.05
		Female	174 (72.80)	21 (8.79)	44 (18.41)		
7.	Do you feel that Politicians are corrupt in J&K?	Male	91 (56.52)	49 (30.43)	21 (13.05)	12.816	<0.01
		Female	92 (38.49)	98 (41.00)	49 (20.51)		
8.	Do you feel that there is gender equality in J&K?	Male	126 (78.26)	14 (8.70)	21 (13.04)	15.579	<0.01
		Female	149 (62.34)	56 (23.43)	34 (14.23)		
9.	Do you feel that ethics and morality of politics are declining nowadays?	Male	119 (73.91)	15 (9.32)	27 (16.77)	2.794	>0.05
		Female	191 (79.92)	13 (5.44)	35 (14.64)		
10.	Do you feel Politicians always favours rich?	Male	112 (69.57)	14 (8.70)	35 (21.73)	3.375	>0.05
		Female	185 (77.41)	18 (7.53)	36 (15.06)		
11.	Do you feel that Politicians in	Male	121 (75.16)	12 (7.45)	28 (17.39)	0.239	>0.05

	J&K have narrow outlook?	Female	176 (73.64)	21 (8.79)	42 (17.57)		
12.	Do you feel, we lack in political awareness ?	Male	105 (65.22)	21 (13.05)	35 (21.73)	20.831	<0.01
		Female	112 (46.86)	22 (9.21)	105 (43.93)		
13.	Do you feel due to corrupt politicians Kashmir suffered more than any other state of India ?	Male	97 (60.25)	23 (14.28)	41 (25.47)	13.08	<0.01
		Female	176 (73.64)	35 (14.64)	28 (11.72)		
14.	Do you feel we all must vote?	Male	105 (65.22)	35 (21.74)	21 (13.04)	4.090	>0.05
		Female	148 (61.93)	42 (17.57)	49 (20.50)		
15.	Do you believe that one should vote as per his/her own thinking after receiving advice from other?	Male	56 (34.78)	42 (26.09)	63 (39.13)	42.497	<0.01
		Female	162 (67.78)	28 (11.72)	49 (20.50)		
16.	Do you feel voters get motivated by social media more than personal contacts?	Male	42 (26.09)	56 (34.78)	63 (39.13)	23.263	<0.01
		Female	113 (47.28)	77 (32.22)	49 (20.50)		
17.	Do you feel that it is the support of Central govt that decide fate of a candidate than voter?	Male	66 (40.99)	49 (30.44)	46 (28.57)	3.584	>0.05
		Female	113 (47.28)	77 (32.22)	49 (20.50)		
		Female	113	77	49		
18.	Do you believe that elections in Kashmir are held fairly?	Male	17 (10.56)	116 (72.05)	28 (17.39)	45.281	<0.01
		Female	69 (28.87)	91 (38.08)	79 (33.05)		
19.	Do you feel that election process in Kashmir is not upto mark?	Male	99 (61.49)	35 (21.74)	27 (16.77)	4.247	>0.05
		Female	148 (61.93)	36 (15.06)	55 (23.01)		
20.		Male	63 (39.13)	69 (42.86)	29 (18.01)	26.05	<0.01

	Do you take part in election rally?	Female	43 (17.99)	159 (66.53)	37 (15.48)		
21.	Do you know details about your parliamentary constituency?	Male	66 (40.99)	42 (26.09)	53 (32.92)	2.095	>0.05
		Female	81 (33.89)	69 (28.87)	89 (37.24)		

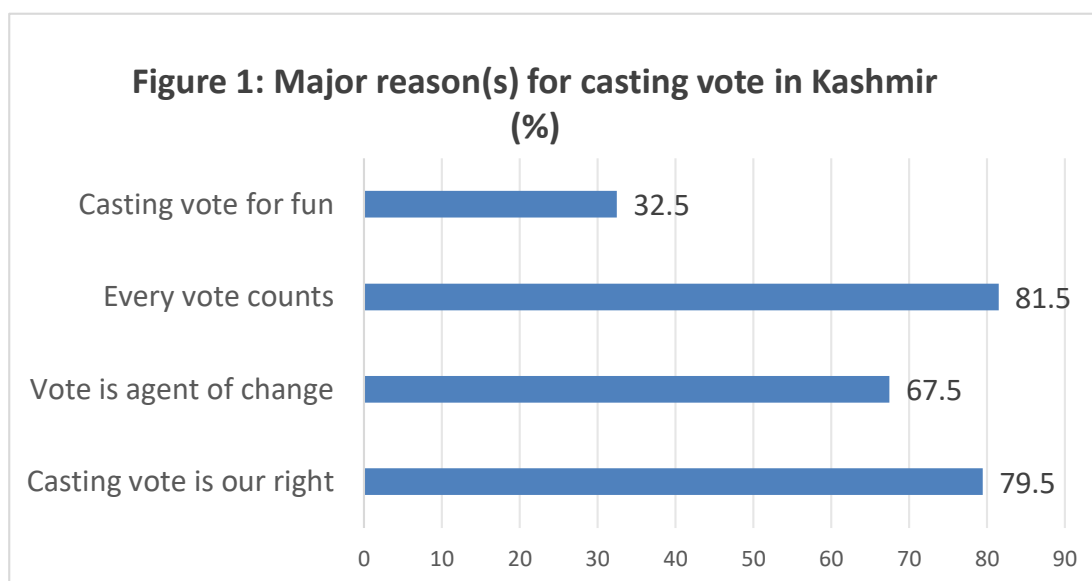


The data presented in Table 3, shows the satisfaction level of respondents towards candidates who win in election. The general discussion with youth understudy and performance of winning candidates in previous elections , on the basis of rating of 5, we present Mean \pm S.E. for male and female respondents. It has been observed that Mean \pm S.E. for male respondents was 2.422 \pm 0.040 whereas Mean \pm S.E. for female respondents was 2.384 \pm 0.035. Statistically, non-significant difference was observed between male and female respondents in opinion towards the fulfilling promises by winning candidates ($P>0.05$). The discussion with respondents revealed that hardly we see any honest leader in Jammu & Kashmir.

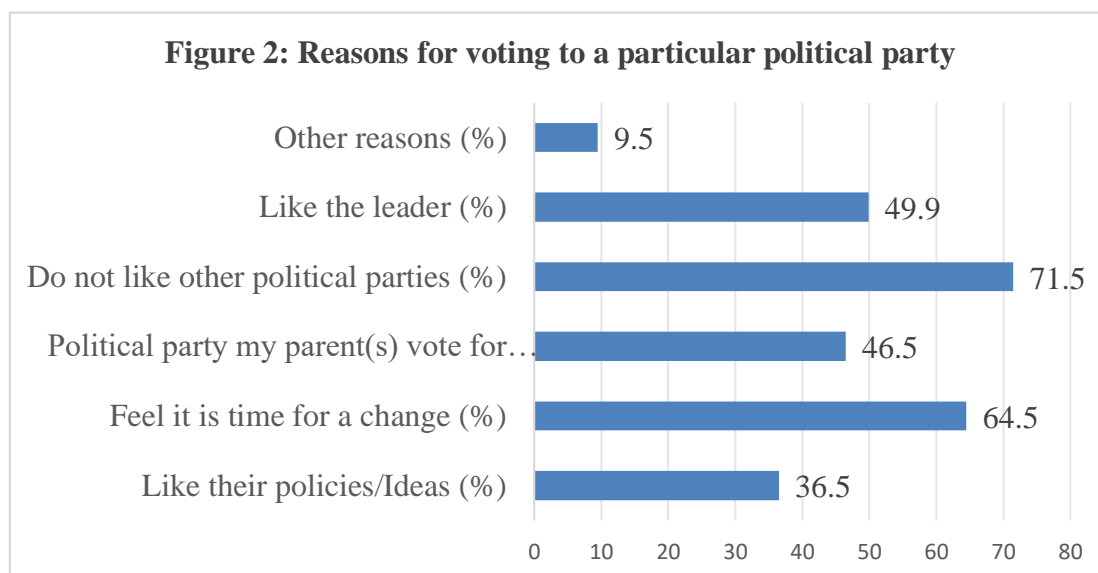
Table 3: Comparison genderwise in satisfaction on performance of winning candidates

Subject	Mean \pm S.E.	Mann-Whitney U	P-value
Male	2.422 \pm 0.040	18712	>0.05
Female	2.3841 \pm 0.035		

The data shown in Figure 1, using 5-point likert scale revealed that 79.5% respondents cast vote as they consider it their right, 67.5% respondents reported that people cast vote as they feel it is the agent of change, 81.5% respondents reported that people cast vote as every vote counts and 32.5% people reported that people cast just for fun without thinking on it seriously.

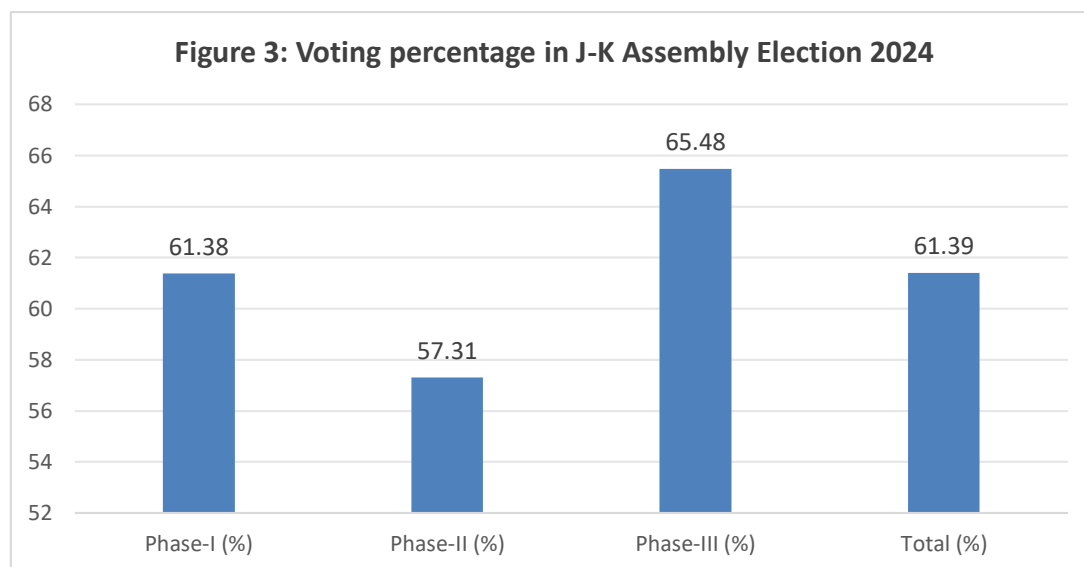


The data shown in Figure 23, revealed that majority of respondents reported that they vote to a particular candidate as they do not like other political parties (71.5%), followed by 64.5% respondents who reported that their reason for vote was that they feel it is time for a change (64.5%). followed by 49.5% who reported that they vote to a particular party as they like the leader of that party, followed by respondents who told they vote to a particular party as my parents voted it also, further 9.5% respondents gave other reasons for casting their vote. The results of our study in general are in agreement with earlier studies conducted worldwide on this topic (Nestle family Monitor, 2003).



The data presented in Figure 3, shows that percentage of voting in different phases in recently J-K Assembly election 2024. The overall voting percentage was observed 61.39%. A change has come in the perception of voters of Kashmir, particularly young voters in Kashmir due to voter awareness campaigns by the

Election Commission of India (ECI), NGOs, print and social media. The overall high percentage of voting in this election as compared to previous election 2014 shows that people believe that Government of India will solve all issues peacefully.



The CVoter exit poll reveals that the Congress National Conference alliance is projected to win 40-48 Assembly seats, BJP 27-32 seats, PDP 6-12 seats and independent candidates may take 6-11 seats. The respondents of our study revealed that BJP'S "Naya Kashmir" narrative was eyeing a surprise in Jammu and Kashmir but it may went wrong. It failed to convince people that Article 370 was a bane, not a matter of dignity. On 5 August, 2019 Jammu and Kashmir was made a Union Territory, BJP promised a wave of developmental projects but lack of significant progress on critical issue like unemployment of youth gave chance to regional parties like NC and PDP to call BJP as anti-Kashmiri. This has limited the BJP's ability to achieve its mission in Kashmir.

CONCLUSION

Kashmir is worldwide famous for its beauty and hospitality of people. Its history is very interesting and every educated person love to read it. In this study, in brief we presented the history of Kashmir in introduction to have idea about the status of beautiful peace of land on earth. In the present study, the youth understudy showed keen interest in politics. The study revealed that majority of respondents were aware of politics and political scenario of the study area. Youth of Kashmir are well aware of the on going world conflicts such as Israel-Palestine, Russia-Ukraine etc which causes death of thousands of people. Since 1947 thousands of people in Jammu and Kashmir lost their lives due to political conflict. Statistically, there was non-significant difference in the awareness and attitude of students towards voting between male and female youth in Kashmir. It has been observed male as well as female respondents were not satisfied with the performance of candidates chosen in previous election. Statistically, non-significant difference was observed between male

and female respondents in opinion towards the fulfilling promises by winning candidates ($P > 0.05$). In the present Assembly election 2024, the percentage of votes casted was 61.39% which was higher than the past seven elections. The voters in majority cast their votes to restore region's special status against India's main governing party BJP as per Aljazeera news etc. Congress, the main India's opposition party allied with prominent regional group who promised to fight for the restoration of autonomy. The 15 member team from USA, Mexico, Guyana, South Korea, Somalia, Panama, Singapore, Nigeria, Spain, South Africa, Norway, Tanzania, Rwanda, Algeria and Philippines of foreign diplomats make surprise landing in Kashmir amid polls to witness the voting. The discussion with respondents revealed that hardly we see any honest leader in Jammu & Kashmir. This is the main reasons for voters to vote or not to vote. Further, group discussion with elders revealed that handful of corrupt people who had no sympathy with their mother land or people of Kashmir spoiled the image of Kashmiri people for their personal benefits. The people in power were enjoying life because of their dual policy. The current study was based on sample of 400 youth, it was suggested that future study may be conducted on large sample.

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