A comparative study of voting behavior among youth in Latin catholic and Scheduled caste communities in Vypin

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A comparative study of voting behavior among youth in Latin Catholic and Scheduled caste communities in Vypin

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DECLARATION

I, Aiswarya Sreekutty, hereby declare that the thesis entitled **"A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF VOTING BEHAVIOUR AMONG YOUTH IN LATIN CATHOLIC AND SCHEDULED CASTE COMMUNITIES IN VYPIN"** is a bona fide record of independent research work carried out by me under the supervision and guidance of **Dr. Leela P.U. I further declare that this thesis has not been previously submitted for the award of any degree, diploma, associate, or similar title.**

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"The ballot is stronger than the bullet."

-Abraham Lincoln

Voting is one of the most basic ways people take part in a democracy. When someone votes, they are showing their choice, opinion, and the kind of country they want to live in. "Voting behavior" means not just whether people vote, but also how and why they choose certain candidates or parties. In many democracies, there has been debate over how well people feel represented. In a country like India, voting behavior is influenced by many factors such as caste, religion, social class, and community identity. Among all voters, young people have become an important group. As they are the future of the country, their views and voting habits are important for understanding how politics is changing in India.

India has the largest youth population in the world, with most people being under 35 years old. This group has the power to change how politics works, shape public policies, and bring in new ways to take part in democracy. However, how young people take part in elections depends on things like their social background, community, education, media influence, and family habits. Some young people are excited to be part of politics, while others feel left out or disconnected from the system. For those from marginalized communities, how they vote is influenced by both their traditional social position and their hopes for equality and progress.

In Kerala, especially in places like Vypin Panchayath in Ernakulam District, many young people are eager to vote, but their choices are often influenced by their community background. Vypin is an area of rich social and political activity and is diverse with communities such as the Latin Catholics and Scheduled Castes (SC).

Vypin Island – A Hidden Gem in Ernakulam

Just a short hop from the bustling city of Ernakulam lies Vypin Island (also spelled *Vypeen*), a beautiful stretch of land that blends natural charm with deep historical roots. Covering about 25 square kilometers and located just 5 km from the city, Vypin is more than just a fishing village—it's a fascinating mix of tradition, development, and coastal life.

Formed in 1341 after a major flood, Vypin is now easily accessible thanks to the Goshree Bridge, which connects it to mainland Kochi. Over the years, it has transformed into a rapidly growing suburb with all the conveniences of city life.

A Hub of Industry and Culture

Vypin plays a big role in Kochi's economy. It's home to the Munambam Fishing Harbour, the largest in the region, and the fast-developing Puthuvype area, now an industrial hotspot. Major projects like the LNG Terminal, IOC Bottling Plant, Kochi Refineries' offshore station, and a proposed Oceanarium have brought new energy to the island. Puthuvype Beach also boasts Kerala's tallest lighthouse—a must-visit for anyone exploring the area.

The nearby Vallarpadam Island, part of Vypin, houses India's first international container transshipment terminal (ICTT), launched in 2011. The Goshree Bridges, completed in 2004, link Vypin to Ernakulam and also connect neighboring islands like Mulavukad and

Vallarpadam. Regular boat services from Fort Kochi keep the island well-connected, and the Vypin–Munambam state highway provides easy access for travelers from northern Kerala.

A Rich Tapestry of History

Vypin's history stretches back centuries. It was originally inhabited by small fishing communities before the Portuguese arrived in the 1500s, leaving a strong Catholic influence that still remains. Interestingly, some Anglo-Indian families in the area still speak a unique Portuguese Creole—a blend of Portuguese vocabulary and Malayalam grammar.

The Portuguese introduced Catholicism to the region and built many significant structures, including the iconic Pallipuram Fort—one of the oldest European forts still standing in India. The island later fell into Dutch and British hands, and their influence can still be seen in the local culture, architecture, and religious sites.

Historical Highlights

Pallipuram Fort

Located at the northern tip of Vypin, Pallipuram Fort is a quiet yet powerful reminder of the island's colonial past. Built by the Portuguese in 1503, it was taken over by the Dutch in 1661 and eventually sold to the Travancore Kingdom in 1789. The fort has a distinctive hexagonal shape and is also known locally as *Ayikkotta* or *Alikotta*. It features raised floors, arched doors, a cellar that once stored gunpowder, and even a square well that once supplied fresh water.

The Church of Our Lady of Hope

This peaceful church, just across from Fort Kochi, stands as a testament to Vypin's religious and cultural heritage. The original structure is believed to have been built as early as 1503 by Franciscan monks, with the current version consecrated in 1605 by Bishop Dom Andrea de Santa Maria. Historical letters suggest that the church may have existed even earlier. Despite the Dutch siege in the 1660s, the church remained unharmed, and when the Dutch turned St. Francis Church in Fort Kochi into a Protestant place of worship, many Catholic relics were transferred here. These sacred items stayed in Vypin until 2000, when they were moved to the Indo-Portuguese Museum.

Today, Vypin is a unique blend of old and new. It offers visitors a chance to experience Kerala's natural beauty, explore its layered colonial history, and see how a small island can carry centuries of cultural richness within its shores.

Social Reforms Held at Vypin Island

Misra Bhojanam

Sahodaran Ayyappan, who was the most renowned social reformer, was born on August 21, 1889, in Cherai, Ernakulam district, into a traditional Ezhava family. His parents were Kumbalathuparambil Kochavu Vaidyar and Unnuli. He lost his father when he was young and was raised by his elder brother, Achuthan Vaidyar. He did most of his schooling in Cherai and North Paravoor.

On May 27, 1917, around 200 people gathered in Cherai, then part of Cochin State, to share a meal on a hot afternoon, an event known as '**Misra Bhojanam**', where people from all castes dined together. Organized after a meeting of the Sahodara Sangham, founded by K. Ayyappan,

the event challenged the rigid caste system that divided society. Ayyappan, inspired by Sree Narayana Guru, took it a step further by rejecting the need for caste, religion, and even the concept of God. Though the participants may not have realized it at the time, this act marked the beginning of significant cultural, social, and political change in Kerala.

The political background of Vypin Island

The Kingdom of Cochin, also known as Cochin State, was a historic kingdom in central Kerala with its capital in Kochi. It began in the early 12th century and lasted until it joined the Dominion of India in 1949. Originally called Perumpadappu Swarupam, it was under the Later Chera dynasty during the Middle Ages. After the fall of the Mahodayapuram Cheras, Perumpadappu became independent but gained political importance only after the Portuguese arrived on the Malabar Coast. The Perumpadappu rulers, who had family ties with the Nambudiri rulers of Edappally, took control of Kochi and Vypin, and from then on, they were known as the kings of Kochi.

Vypin is an assembly constituency located in the Ernakulam district of Kerala. In the 2021 Kerala Assembly elections, the constituency saw a voter turnout of 74.72%, showing active public participation. The election featured several prominent candidates along with many independents. K. N. Unnikrishnan, representing the Communist Party of India (Marxist), emerged as the winner. He defeated his main opponent, Deepak Joy from the Indian National Congress, by a margin of 8,201 votes. This victory contributed to the CPI(M)'s continued influence in the region. Vypin constituency was formed in 2011; before that, it was known as the Njarackal constituency from 1957 to 2011.

The main villages on Vypin Island are the following: Cherai, Edavanakkad, and Elamkunnapuzha. Fortvypin, kuzhupilly, malipuram, munambam, murikumapadam,

nayarambalam, nedungad, njarackal. Ochanthuruth, pallippuram, perumpilly, puthuvype. The major gram panchayats within the Vypin assembly constituency in Ernakulam district, Kerala, include Edavanakkad, Elamkunnappuzha, Kadamakkudy, Kuzhippilly, Mulavukad, Nayarambalam, Njarakkal, and Pallippuram. Under the Kochi taluk.

Voting participation

From 2011 to 2021, the Vypen constituency in Kerala was won by the CPI(M) party in three state elections, but the level of their support changed over time. In 2011, CPI(M)'s candidate S. Sarma won with a little over 50% of the votes, narrowly defeating the Congress (INC) candidate, Ajay Tharayil. The competition was mainly between CPI(M) and INC, and the margin of victory was not very large. In 2016, CPI(M) became even stronger. S. Sarma contested again and won with more votes and a bigger lead. The Congress party lost a lot of support that year, while smaller parties had little impact. However, in the 2021 election, CPI(M)'s popularity dropped. A new candidate, K. N. Unnikrishnan, still managed to win the seat, but the vote share fell by 11%, and the margin of victory became much smaller. The Congress party improved a bit, and new parties like the Twenty20 Party and the BJP gained a lot more support than before. This showed that voters were starting to look at more options besides the two main parties. Although CPI(M) has kept winning, the results suggest that voters are changing their minds, and the fight for Vypen is getting tougher. If this trend continues, future elections in Vypen could become much more competitive (State Election Commission Kerala, 2024)

Occupational specialties

Vypin Island is well known for its active fishing industry. Along its coastline, there are many fishing villages where local fishermen still follow traditional methods passed down through generations. The island's fishing life is lively and full of activity. Visitors to Vypin can explore

busy fish markets where freshly caught fish are bought and sold every day. It is also a great place to watch how the fishing community lives and works, right from preparing their boats and nets early in the morning to bringing in their catch and selling it in the market. This gives a unique glimpse into the daily life and culture of the people who depend on the sea for their livelihood. At the very north end of Vypin Island is Munambam Fishing Harbour, the biggest fishing harbor in Kochi. It is an important place for the local fishing industry, where many boats bring in fresh fish every day. The harbor is always busy with fishermen and people buying and selling seafood.

Puthuvype has grown into a major industrial center in Kerala and is now one of the fastest-developing suburbs of the city. This growth is mainly due to several big projects like the SPM (Single Point Mooring) project by Kochi Refineries, an offshore pumping station of Kochi Port, the Puthuvype LNG Terminal, the IOC Bottling Plant, and the upcoming Oceanarium. These developments have made Puthuvype an important hub for industry and infrastructure.

Tourism and development

Vypin Island is a beautiful and peaceful destination that offers a perfect mix of natural beauty, cultural heritage, and fun activities. Visitors can enjoy swimming, sunbathing, water sports, and beachside dining, all while taking in the calm and scenic surroundings. The island's relaxing atmosphere, cool sea breeze, and lovely views make it an ideal place to unwind and connect with nature. Vypin also has a rich cultural side, with old churches, temples, and traditional fishing villages that give visitors a glimpse into local life. This combination of experiences makes Vypin Island a popular choice for travelers exploring Kochi and the backwaters of Kerala. There are lots of beaches like Cherai Beach, Munambam Beach, Puthuvypu Beach, Falcon Beach, Kuzhupilly Beach, etc., major tourist attractions.

Environmental issues

The coastal villages of Central Kerala, especially those on Vypin Island, are facing serious problems due to frequent high-tide flooding throughout the year. With a population density four times higher than the state average, Vypin is struggling with major environmental and health issues. The constant flooding is causing houses to collapse, damaging sanitation systems, and affecting the daily lives and jobs of the people living there.

For most people in Kerala, the word "flood" brings back memories of the big disasters in 2018 and 2019. But for the people of Vypin, flooding is a regular part of life. These days, even during the hottest summer, parts of Vypin are underwater. In the past, floods happened only once a year during the Scorpion Veli season in November and December, and people were prepared for it. But now, things have changed. As soon as the tidal flooding ends, the rainy season begins, bringing seawater from the west and water from rivers and lakes on the other side. As a result, the people of Vypin live with flooding for nearly three-quarters of the year. (Foundation, 21 March, 2024)

Vypin is at high risk for tidal flooding. Because of the deforestation of mangroves. The building of coastal roads and highways has caused serious harm to the mangrove ecosystems in the state. These developments have led to the destruction of large areas of mangroves, which are important for protecting the coast and supporting local wildlife.

Ernakulam district, which includes Kochi, has lost nearly 42% of its mangrove ecosystems, including major decreases in the southern Puthuvypin area in Vypin, according to a study released last year by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies.

According to the Kerala Forest Department, mangrove cover in the state has reduced from 700 square kilometers to just 24 square kilometers since 1975. (hindu, 2023).

Vypin Island in Kerala is a unique and important area with a rich mix of culture, nature, and challenges. It has a strong fishing industry and beautiful beaches, and it is growing as an industrial hub with projects like the LNG terminal and IOC plant. The island is also a popular tourist spot, offering activities like swimming, water sports, and beachside dining, along with a peaceful natural setting.

Historically, Vypin has deep roots, once part of the old Kingdom of Cochin. It also played a role in Kerala's social reform movements, like the Misra Bhojanam in 1917, where people of all castes dined together.

Politically, Vypin is an assembly constituency in Ernakulam district. In the 2021 elections, K. N. Unnikrishnan from CPI(M) won the seat. The area has both rich and poor communities, and although they share the same spaces, their life experiences can be very different.

However, Vypin faces serious environmental issues. Regular tidal flooding now affects the island most of the year, damaging homes, sanitation, and livelihoods. Coastal development projects, like roads and highways, have also destroyed many mangrove forests, which once helped protect the land. This mix of development and vulnerability makes Vypin a significant place to study social, environmental, and political changes.

Relevance of this study

Choosing Vypin Panchayath as the area of study gives a special chance to look at its social, cultural, historical, and political features. Even though Kerala is known for being socially progressive, there are still clear differences in the economic and social conditions of different communities in Vypin. Young people from Latin Catholic and Scheduled Caste (SC) backgrounds often go to the same schools, use the same public spaces, and take part in the same events, but their personal and political experiences can be quite different.

By focusing on just one Panchayath, the study can closely examine these differences without being affected by the larger regional context. This helps us better understand how local situations shape political behavior.

In states like Kerala, where people, especially young people, are very active in voting, but where community identity still plays a big role in shaping how they vote, studying youth voting behavior becomes very important. Vypin Panchayath in Ernakulam District is a great example of such a study. It is a busy and politically active area with people from many backgrounds, including large Latin Catholic and Scheduled Caste (SC) communities.

These two groups have unique cultural backgrounds and long histories of being involved in politics. The Latin Catholic community, which is mostly Christian and lives along the coast, used to rely mainly on fishing and other sea-related jobs. Over the years, they built strong religious and community institutions. These helped bring people together and encouraged political participation. Often, this sense of unity has led to group voting patterns, where people vote based on religious advice and the overall benefit of their community.

This study aims to look at the voting behavior of young people from the Latin Catholic and Scheduled Caste communities in Vypin. It compares how their community background, political understanding, and social situations influence their voting. The research wants to find out if their votes are mainly shaped by their caste or religion, or if issues like jobs, development, and education are more important to them.

The study also looks at how family, friends, culture, history, political campaigns, and media shape young people's political opinions. Since today's youth are more connected to social media and global news, it's important to understand how these things influence the way they choose to vote.

Gender adds another layer of complexity to this topic. While the main focus of the study is on youth voting behavior from a community point of view, it's also important to consider how gender plays a role within these communities. The study suggests that young women from Latin Catholic and SC backgrounds may face unique challenges because of differences in their political and economic status. These challenges could be even more important than cultural expectations, limits on their freedom to move around, or lack of access to political networks. Even though gender is not the main focus, it will still be considered as part of the overall understanding of the issue.

By deeply studying these factors in Vypin Panchayath, the research not only looks at how youth vote but also why they vote the way they do. It tries to understand their motivations, challenges, hopes, and the contradictions they face in politics. This helps add to the conversation about youth participation in democracy and offers useful insights for scholars, policymakers, and activists who want to make politics more inclusive and meaningful.

So, this study is not just about counting votes from young people in these two communities. It is also about understanding the reasons behind those votes – their identities, dreams, and their efforts to make a place for themselves in democracy. Through surveys, interviews, and field visits, the study will try to capture the real-life experiences that shape their political decisions. The goal is to give a fuller picture of young voters in India, from the numbers to the everyday lives they live.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The study of voting behavior has always been a critical component of both political science and sociology, exploring how citizens relate to and participate in democratic systems. Youth voting behaviour, in particular, has attracted scholarly interest as the potential of young people to change the political game is increasingly recognised. Research by Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) indicates that civic skills, socioeconomic status, and political socialization by families and communities can heavily influence youth political participation. The dynamics of caste, religion, and region in India make these constructs even more relevant as an analytic tool to study electoral behavior, that is, community-based electoral analyses.

Many studies have highlighted the importance of caste in determining political preferences in India. Caste is, rather, in Jaffrelot's (2003) view, a process: a mobilizing force and a context within which identities are structured (cf. Deshpande 2003; Kewalramani 2022). Scheduled Castes (SCs), who have been historically marginalized and were excluded from social and power structures, have increasingly identified in democratic participation as a tool for social assertion. The political agency of caste identity is evident in the rise of Dalit political movements and parties like the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). Youth from Scheduled Caste (SC) communities experience the local socio-political landscape in unique and often complex ways. While Kerala is known for its progressive stance on education and social justice—which has led to relatively high political participation among SC youth—challenges around representation and equitable access still persist (Devika & Thampi, 2007). These inequalities often go unnoticed in broader narratives but remain deeply felt at the grassroots level.

In contrast, the Latin Catholic community presents an interesting case for political analysis in Kerala. As a religious minority with a strong institutional network through the Church and its affiliated organizations, Latin Catholics have traditionally mobilized around issues like development, education, and cultural identity. According to Thomas (2012), the community enjoys a certain political leverage, often guided by Church recommendations, community leaders, and longstanding party affiliations. Historically, they've aligned with Left or Centrist parties, depending on local issues and regional dynamics.

However, these broader patterns often don't reflect what's happening at the individual level—especially among the youth. Young Latin Catholics, exposed to higher education and new media platforms, are beginning to think more independently, questioning traditional allegiances and focusing more on issue-based politics.

This shift isn't exclusive to Latin Catholics. Across India, youth political behavior is evolving. Surveys by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) (2014, 2019) show that young voters are increasingly drawn to developmental issues like employment, education, and infrastructure rather than being solely guided by identity-based politics. However, this transition is not uniform. Many young voters still carry the weight of traditional loyalties even as they explore new political possibilities.

In Kerala, youth participation in politics is notably high. The state's vibrant civic culture, active student movements, and longstanding political awareness have helped cultivate a politically engaged younger generation. Yet, as Jeffrey (2010) points out, this engagement is often tinged with frustration, particularly due to educated unemployment, which has led to a politically conscious but somewhat disillusioned youth population.

A key theme that runs through all this is political socialization—how young people develop their political beliefs. Studies show that family, peer groups, schools, and media play central

roles (Bhavnani, 2009). For both SC and Latin Catholic youth in Kerala, this process is deeply shaped by community institutions, local leadership, and cultural narratives, making their political journeys both collective and personal.

The Church is another arguably weak example of how not always being a moulder of decisions but a mould of moral and ethical discourses that can and/or not politically influence the decision-making within the Latin community. With the SC youth, being exposed to social justice narratives and themes either through education or community organizations may instill in students a critical consciousness of systemic inequalities that motivate political engagement.

Local governance, in particular PRIs, has also emerged as an important area of study in understanding the dynamics of grassroots political behavior. At a time of rising populism, Kerala's decentralized governance model is considered a success, with marginalized groups participating more in local decision-making. Participatory planning and decentralization process (e.g, Isaac and Franke 2000). In Kerala, participatory planning and decentralization have enabled greater community empowerment and shifted the political landscape, fostering increased political engagement at the local level. Instead, the risks of elite capture, tokenism, and the neglect of engendering sustained youth engagement in favour of temporary successes should be highlighted (Pillai, 2011). In areas such as Vypin, the reach and effectiveness of local governance, to a good measure, shape political perception and participation among the youth.

Voting behavior in an era of migration and globalization, especially in coastal and urbanising locations such as Vypin, has gained new valences. Where people move abroad for work, as is often the case for families with members employed in Gulf countries, or in the case of families with members abroad, and other forms of governance that families are not used to after the change. It can also influence political expectations for young people who either migrate or

belong to transnational households. Cross-national exposure to notions of democracy, governance, and rights has earlier been suggested to incite youth to press for accountability and efficiency from their political representatives (Rajan & Zachariah, 2007).

Besides educational studies, government data and electoral patterns also play a significant role in understanding voters in Kerala. According to reports from the Election Commission of India, youth turnout has been uneven, and districts and communities have displayed stark differences. While campaigns such as Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) increase awareness, interest does not always translate into participation. This enthusiasm can often not be converted, especially in poorer, marginalized localities in which civic education is not common.

This study found only limited but emerging literature comparing the political behavior of both L and SC youth in the Kerala context. Most existing studies keep these communities separate or focus on broader identities like Dalits or Christians. This lack of focused comparative research leaves a gap that this study seeks to fill. Focusing on youth specifically from these two communities in the context of a particular panchayath, this study seeks to provide a more nuanced and grounded understanding of how intersecting factors such as caste, religion, education, family, and local governance affect electoral choices.

In general, the literature indicates that despite the persistence of structural factors, in particular caste and community, there is a growing pluralism in the ways that young people interact with politics. The youth cannot be called a single category; the forces of tradition, modernity, and local context are at work and complexly interwoven to shape their experiences, aspirations, and political decisions. Thus, the voting behaviour of Latin, SC youth in Vypin Panchayath is a useful subject to understand the continuities and changes in the democratic landscape of India.

The analysis of voting behaviour has long been a hallmark of political sociology and political science, especially in democratic societies where voting is the most visible indicator of political engagement. As an exercise in political expression, voting arises from multiple variables: social background, community identity, family influence, education, exposure to political institutions, and acting on the exercise of that exposure. In a diverse country like India, voting usually takes shape based on socio-cultural diversity - caste, religion, regional census, socio-economic conditions, etc. In this complex, of-representation landscape, youth voters are a rapidly mobilizing and under-studied voting bloc, whose electoral decisions are understood as increasingly consequential for the health of democratic participation. In states such as Kerala, which are characterised by high literacy, political awareness, and a feisty civil society, drawing insights from youth voting behaviour can be fruitful for a forward-looking understanding of the future of electoral politics.

The extent to which voting behavior is induced by rational choice as opposed to social identity has been a long-standing debate among scholars. One of the classical models of voting behavior, the Michigan School perspective, emphasizes the influence of party identification and long-term sociological factors like family, locality, and community ties (Campbell et al., 1960). This framework is especially relevant in the Indian context, where voting patterns are often shaped by family traditions and caste affiliations. Among these, caste remains a powerful factor in determining political choices.

As Jaffrelot (2003) explains, caste in India functions both as a social structure and a tool for political mobilization. For Scheduled Caste (SC) communities, who have historically faced systemic exclusion, electoral politics has become a platform for asserting identity and demanding inclusion. The emergence of Dalit parties and prominent Dalit leaders in recent decades highlights this shift. However, despite these advancements, many SC youth across the

country continue to face limited access to political power, along with ongoing socio-economic barriers, which shape a more cautious and complex view of the political system.

In Kerala, the story takes a somewhat different turn. SC political participation in the state is distinct from patterns seen elsewhere in India, largely due to Kerala's unique socio-political history. Reform movements led by visionaries like Ayyankali and Sree Narayana Guru played a transformative role in uplifting marginalized communities and promoting social justice. These movements laid the foundation for broader educational access and social mobility among SC communities in the state.

Yet, despite this legacy of reform, representation of Scheduled Castes in formal political structures, especially at the higher levels of governance, remains uneven. While grassroots engagement and local political activism are relatively strong, SC individuals are still underrepresented in key decision-making positions. This gap reflects the ongoing need for more inclusive political structures that go beyond token representation and address the deeper challenges faced by SC communities.

Devika and Thampi (2007) noted that while the Kerala model had enabled access to education and social mobility for SCs, political empowerment had not matched up. The youth of these areas are often faced with the combination of being both victims of systematic discrimination and promises that don't come to fruition, which can lead to a disengaged or apathetic political outlook.

The Latin Catholic community in Kerala, in contrast, is a different dynamic. The Latin community, as a Christian denomination with strong organizational structures, most especially the Church, has traditionally had a much tighter engagement with political institutions. According to Thomas (2012), the Church serves as a guide in both moral and political senses,

especially in coastal Kerala, where there is a relatively high proportion of Latin Catholics. Historically, the community has voted for moderate or slightly left-wing parties depending on the political climate and development needs. Religious institutions, community events, and education centers serve as venues for the verbalization of political messages that affect the political socialization of the youth in these areas. Many Latin youth, however, are beginning to reject traditional norms and establish more independent political identities that are influenced more by education, peer networks, and social media.

The link between education levels and political awareness and behavior is well-established in global as well as Indian research. Verba et al. (1995) articulate the viewpoint that "higher education creates civic skills, political efficacy, and high levels of participation". Kerala, with one of the highest literacy rates in India, informed youth results in a more educated, proactive approach towards politics and democracy. Do take note, though, that education does not always have the same impact on communities. Markers of educational access, such as economic level, social networks, and regional availability, play a large role in determining what type of institutions SC and Latin youth can access. To take one example: Latin students perhaps have choices at Church-run colleges that emphasize discipline and civic responsibility; SC students may be limited to government institutions that are underfunded. Such educational experiences influence young people's understanding of politics, how much they trust political institutions, and whether they participate in elections.

The rise of digital literacy and social media has also made a notable impact on the youth political landscape in Kerala. Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube are also platforms for political debate, campaign mobilization, and issue-based activism. An argument can be made when referring to the data collected by scholars like Pal and Banerjee (2016), which suggests that social media has opened the platform for new generation politics by enabling of voices of the marginalized community to come into the public debate. For SC and Latin youth in Vypin,

social media serves as a platform to voice grievances, rally behind candidates, or criticize policies. However, online engagement does not always translate to voter participation. This performative online activism can create an illusion of participating, without engaging in the act of voting itself. And the digital divide is less wide in Kerala than in some other places, but still present, especially among youth in low-income homes.

In India family continues to be a vital agent of political socialization. Bhavnani (2009) highlights that family talk, the tendency to observe political activity among elders, and intergenerational sharing of values matter for youth partisan preferences. In Latin Catholic families, conversation about political priorities tends to revolve around community-level issues such as fishing rights, coastal development, and education policies, and they are framed through religious and cultural narratives. Among SC families, the themes are likely to be more social justice, caste discrimination, and access to welfare schemes. But generational differences are clearer than ever. Whereas older family members might vote based on party loyalty or community solidarity, youth might evaluate candidates on perceived integrity, pledges of development, or commitment to global values such as equality and human rights.

Kerala has a rich history of student politics and peer influence contributing to the greater political consciousness of young people within the state. Other major political parties have student organizations with chapters on college campuses. They are training grounds for future politicians, and they also create a culture of debate and activism. According to Jeffrey (2010), Kerala's youth are known to be highly politicised but also suffer from economic uncertainties, given the absence of adequate job opportunities for those with high education levels. This paradox of educated unemployment produces a politically conscious yet frustrated youth population. That now SC students and Latin students take part in student unions, cultural festivals, protests, and the like, that is, things that give them direct experience of political

processes. Their understanding of power, negotiation, and representation is thus shaped by such experiences, and in turn, this elicits their requisite voting behavior.

Although there are several themes in this study that can be found relating to youth political behavior, community identity, regional voting, majority vs. minority, etc., these things are most often not studied in a comparative manner, especially regarding Latin and SC youth in a local setting such as Vypin. Most of the research tends to treat SCs and Christians as monolithic categories or broader state or national trends. The current study seeks to address this gap by conducting a comparison at the micro-level, which is capable of demonstrating how caste and religious identities interrelate with youth aspirations, political socialization, and exposure to governance structures. Ultimately, the study provides insight into how democracy gets played out in around Vypin Panchayath in ways that are shaped by the socio-cultural locations of young people across caste and, in turn, impact young people's experiences of democracy in this locality.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to the systematic approach used to investigate specific research questions. It is the structured process of the researcher to design a study that ensures the results are both valid and reliable, and would indicate the research aim and objectives. This research methodology involves systematically studying the various steps taken by a researcher when investigating a research problem, as well as understanding the rationale behind these steps. (Creswell, 2014)

Statement of the problem

The topic "A comparative study of voting behavior among youth in Latin and SC communities in Vypin Panchayath" seeks to investigate the comparative voting behavior of youth within these two communities, aiming to identify the primary factors influencing their political choices. By understanding these dynamics, the research can provide insights into the role of cultural and social contexts in shaping electoral participation among young voters. Voting behavior is a critical indicator of democratic participation and reflects the socio-political awareness and preferences of individuals. Among youth, this behavior is shaped by various factors such as cultural identity, socioeconomic background, education, and community influences. Vypin panchayath is a region in Ernakulam district characterized by diverse social structures. The Latin Catholic and scheduled caste (SC) communities represent distinct socio-cultural groups. However, the differences in their voting patterns, motivations, and political engagements remain underexplored.

OBJECTIVES

General objectives

To understand the factors that influence voting behavior among youth in Latin catholic and Scheduled Caste communities in Vypin Panchayath.

Specific objectives

o To analyze the voting behavior and political awareness of youth in Latin catholic and Scheduled Caste communities in Vypin Panchayath.

o To identify the political and pressure groups that influence youth in Latin catholic and Scheduled Caste communities in Vypin Panchayath.

o To analyze whether religious identity or political ideology influences the voting behavior of youth in Latin catholic and Scheduled Caste communities in Vypin Panchayath.

o To analyze the influence of caste affiliations on youth in Latin catholic and Scheduled Caste communities in Vypin Panchayath.

Clarifications of concepts

Theoretical definitions

Communities: a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common

Youth: a period of transition from childhood to adulthood, marked by the development of independence and social roles

Voting behavior: Voting behavior is the study of how individuals make electoral decisions, influenced by psychological, social, economic, and contextual factors.

operational definitions

Communities: In this study, communities refer to the Sc and Latin community identities in Vipin Panchayath

youth: In this study, youth refer to individuals between   25 to 40 years old

voting behavior: in this study, how youth decide their right to vote

Variables

Independent variables

- age

- gender

- education level

- caste

- geographic specialties

- religion

dependent variables

- voting behaviour

- political awareness

- Perception of political parties

- voting pattern

- political ideology

- religious identity

Research design

The researcher used a Mixed-Methods Approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the voting behavior of youth in the Latin and Scheduled Caste (SC) communities in Vipin. The Comparative Case Study approach was chosen as it allows for an in-depth exploration of real-life voting patterns and the factors influencing them.

Universe

The universe to which the study is conducted is the people of sc and Latin communities living in Vypin Panchayath. It refers to everyone irrespective of age, gender, socioeconomic status, and other demographic characteristics living within the official borders of Vypin Panchayath.

Sample

This study was designed by the researcher and guided by specific research objectives. Quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire survey administered to 90 youth respondents (45 from the Latin community and 45 from the SC community). The questionnaire focused on demographic details, political participation, voting preferences, and social influences.

To complement this, qualitative data were gathered using semi-structured interviews with 10 respondents (5 from each community). These interviews provided deeper insights into the personal experiences, social influences, and political awareness that shape voting behavior.

Sampling method

The study employed a stratified random sampling technique for the quantitative survey and a purposive sampling method for the qualitative interviews to ensure proper representation of both the Latin and SC communities in Vypin.

1. Quantitative Sampling (Questionnaire Survey)

   o Sampling Method: Stratified Random Sampling

   o Total Sample Size: 90 respondents

   o Stratification Criteria: Community-based stratification (Latin and SC youth)

   o Strata:

      ▪ 45 respondents from the Latin community

      ▪ 45 respondents from the SC community

   o Selection Process: Within each community, respondents were randomly selected from eligible youth (aged 18-40) to ensure unbiased representation.

2. Qualitative Sampling (Interviews)

   o Sampling Method: Purposive Sampling

   o Total Sample Size: 10 respondents

   o Selection Criteria: 5 youths from the Latin community and 5 youths from the SC community were chosen based on their willingness to participate and their ability to provide in-depth insights into voting behavior.

   o Rationale: Purposive sampling was used to select participants who could offer rich, detailed perspectives on the sociopolitical influences affecting their voting decisions.

Pilot Study

To ensure the reliability and feasibility of the main study, a pilot study was conducted among a small sample of youth from both the Latin Catholic and Scheduled Caste communities in Vypin Panchayath. The primary aim of the pilot was to assess the effectiveness and clarity of the research instruments and to make necessary refinements in the research design before full-scale data collection.

Tools for data collection

The study utilized quantitative and qualitative data collection tools to ensure a comprehensive understanding of youth voting behavior in the Latin Catholic and Scheduled Caste communities in Vypin. The researcher used both an interview guide and a questionnaire.

Limitations of the study

One limitation of this research is the time constraint, which affected both the data collection process and the overall depth of analysis. Due to the short-term nature of the study, it was not possible to observe long-term effects or patterns. A longer duration could have provided more comprehensive insights and allowed for a more detailed exploration of the research topic.

CHAPTER-4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The process of data analysis and interpretation entails the meaningful and systematic operation to gather the information and to analyze the data, with the outcome of the data. It is also useful for the comprehensive implication of data in the conclusion, which gives the whole picture of the study and the data from the research process. The original data analysis contains various steps for codifying the data and the process of data gathering to retrieve the information within it. A major intention of data analysis and interpretation is to systematically account for the information gathered from the consulting respondent or clients, therefore provide a clear focus for further analysis.

The data analysis provided an intensity level of insights from the data we collected, and that data became way more detailed study. From the data analysis, outcomes provided an explanation about the minor aspects of features and infused factors; thus, it will maximize the quality of the data for the educational academia. The examination and reflection on when we are doing the data analysis would improve the features and Academic insights of the data, which is the implementation of the data from the respondents. Plus, the data analysis improved the aspects of arrangement of the data from the steps of order, and categorizing scheme inside the framework of the themes as found in the proposal objectives.

Ultimately, the data was synthesized into a summary form that brings forth an overall picture of the data, and it creates the interpretation. The overall course of the research defines the data and the approach taken towards a logical and theoretical phase of work. The very first stage of the interpretation of the product of the analysis of the data is what gives the willful type of

information to give a clear-cut view. In this way, the different kinds of research data methods and methods of the analysis of data and interpretation give an overall understanding to societies which makes up new things.

This research involves a mixed methods approach, which is qualitative and quantitative research, together forming a complete picture of the political participation of Latin catholic and Scheduled Caste (SC) participants in political participation in Vypin. The mixed methods approach, brought a better understanding because it enables the researcher to greater understand voting behaviour, barriers to taking part in participation, and how the community would affect an outcome, through the structured survey data within personal interview conversations.

The quantitative component consisted of structured surveys given to 10 participants (5 in each group) to enable trends to be statistically analysed in political engagement, voting frequency, political behaviour, and civic participation behaviours. The surveys provided me quantitatively measurable account of the societal impact of socio/economic conditions on education, engagement in political awareness, and their contribution to voter participation.

The quantitative component is designed to comprise structured surveys administered to 10 participants (5 from each group), which allows for statistical analysis in identifying trends in political participation, voting behaviors and civil society engagement. These surveys allowed for an objective measure of the impact of socio-economic status, level of education, and political awareness on voter turnout. The qualitative component comprised semi-structured interviews and provided deeper insights into personal experiences, motivations, and barriers to voter participation. The interviews also allowed for further exploration of historical oppression, caste-based barriers, and disillusionment with the socio-political context of electoral decisions. By using a mixed-methods approach, this research is robust and provides a systemic analysis

that connects quantitative data to personal accounts. The research methodology enhances reliability, provides actionable recommendations to guide policy, community stakeholders, and advocates towards political inclusion and democratic participation in Vypin.

Interview Analysis

To understand voting behavior and political awareness in Vypin, a series of interviews were conducted with 10 individuals—5 from the Latin Catholic community and 5 from the Scheduled Caste (SC) group. These conversations offered a deeper look into how political choices are shaped by a mix of social, cultural, economic, and historical factors.

Voting Behavior and Political Awareness

Latin Catholic individuals demonstrated a moderate level of political skepticism, preferring to evaluate candidates based on economic policies, job creation, and education reforms rather than party loyalty. They relied on mainstream media, social media, and family discussions to stay informed about political affairs. Many Latin Catholics hesitated to trust political leaders, often voting based on specific policy proposals rather than party ideology. SC individuals, on the other hand, exhibited a stronger sense of political identity, shaped by their historical struggle for rights and representation. Their primary concerns included caste-based reservations, access to education and employment, and social justice policies. Unlike Latin Catholics, who often made individual decisions, SC voters engaged in community-based discussions and relied on grassroots movements and political organizations for political awareness

Political Parties and Pressure Groups

 Both Latin Catholic and SC individuals acknowledged the influence of political parties and pressure groups, but the nature of this influence varied. On Latin Catholic Individuals, Political parties were seen as unreliable, with many respondents describing their voting choices as issue-

based rather than party-based. They were influenced by trade unions, business organizations, and church-related social movements, especially when it came to policies on education, employment, and minority rights. Some Latin Catholic voters felt that political favoritism toward dominant caste groups marginalized their community, leading to political disillusionment, and compared to the SC community, political parties had a stronger influence, particularly those that historically supported Dalit rights and caste-based affirmative action. Many SC individuals aligned with parties advocating for lower-caste rights and social welfare. Pressure groups such as Dalit organizations, human rights movements, and caste-based unions played a crucial role in shaping SC political decisions.SC individuals often voted collectively to maximize their political representation, unlike Latin Catholics, who displayed greater individual voter independence. Thus, while Latin Catholics resisted direct political party influence, SC individuals relied more on caste-based parties and social movements to guide their electoral decisions.

Religious Identity and Political Ideology on Voting Behavior

For Latin Catholic Individuals, Religious identity played a significant role in shaping their voting behavior. Many respondents stated that Christian values influenced their stance on education policies, social justice, and moral issues. The Catholic Church and community leaders played a role in encouraging voter participation but did not dictate political choices. Politically, Latin Catholics were divided between those favoring conservative policies aligned with religious principles and those supporting progressive policies for economic reform. On SC, Individuals' Caste identity was a stronger factor than religious identity in shaping political decisions. Many SC respondents identified with secular parties that supported caste-based reservations and affirmative action policies.

While some SC respondents were influenced by Hindu religious leaders, most rejected caste-based religious authority, aligning instead with political movements that advocated for equality.

Unlike Latin Catholics, whose religious beliefs sometimes influenced their views on governance, SC individuals viewed politics as a means to fight systemic discrimination rather than a moral or faith-based decision.

Caste Affiliations on Voting Behavior

Caste played a significant role in shaping the voting behavior of SC individuals, while it had little to no influence on Latin Catholic voters.

Latin Catholic voters often show less caste-based voting patterns, as their identity is more closely tied to religious and community values rather than caste lines.

 On SC, Individual Caste affiliation was central to voting decisions, with many respondents supporting candidates from their caste background.SC voters preferred leaders who had a history of advocating for affirmative action, educational reservations, and land reforms. Some SC individuals expressed frustration with mainstream political parties, arguing that despite repeated promises, caste-based discrimination persisted. The reservation system in education and employment was a major political concern, with SC voters prioritizing candidates who promised to protect or expand these policies.

Questionnaire analysis

Age distribution

Count of what is ur age group
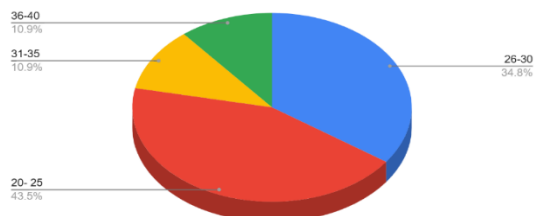
Count of What is your age group

Scheduled caste figure.4.1(a)   **latin catholic** figure.4.1(b)
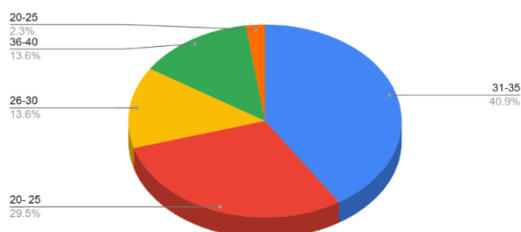
The pie chart for the Scheduled Caste community shows that most respondents (43.5%) are between 20-25 years old, followed by 34.8% in the 26-30 age group. Smaller portions fall into the 31-35 and 36-40 age ranges, each with 10.9%. On the other hand, the Latin Catholic community's chart shows that the largest group (41.8%) is aged 31-50. The 20-25 age group makes up 26.3%, while 17.6% are 26-30 years old, and 11.8% are in the 36-40 age group. The 30-35 age group is the smallest at just 2.5%. Overall, younger individuals dominate the Scheduled Caste group, while middle-aged adults are more common in the Latin Catholic group.

Gender

Count of What is your gender?
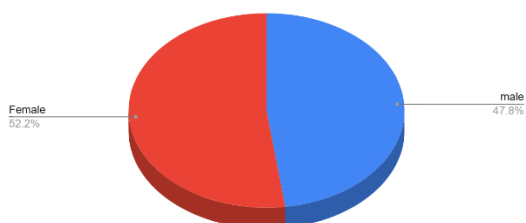
Count of What is your gender?

Scheduled caste figure.4.2(a)   **Latin catholic** figure.4.2(b)
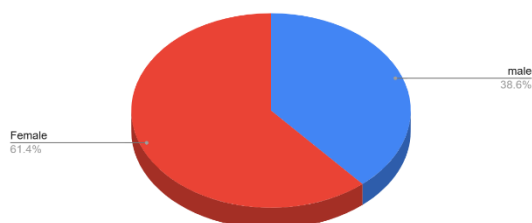
The pie chart for the Scheduled Caste group shows that 52.2% of respondents are female and 47.8% are male, indicating a slightly higher number of females. Similarly, the pie chart for the Latin Catholic community reveals that 51.7% are female and 48.3% are male. In both communities, the gender distribution is nearly equal, with a small majority of female respondents.

Educational qualification
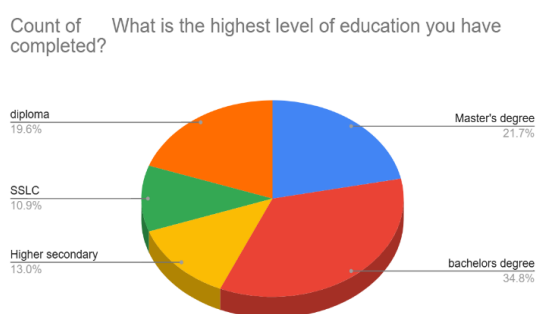
Scheduled caste figure.4.3(a)   **Latin catholic** figure.4.3(b)
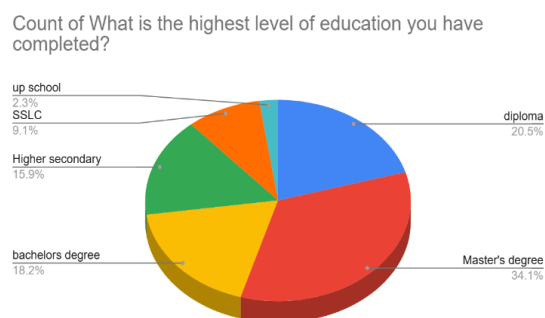
The pie chart for the Scheduled Caste group shows the highest education level completed by its members. Most of them, 34.8%, have a bachelor's degree. The next largest group, 21.7%, has a master's degree. Around 19.6% have a diploma, 13% have completed higher secondary, and 10.9% have finished only SSLC. This shows that many have studied up to a bachelor's degree or higher.

The pie chart for the Latin Catholic group shows a different pattern. The largest group, 34.1%, has a master's degree. This is followed by 20.5% with a diploma and 18.2% with a bachelor's degree. About 15.9% completed higher secondary, 9.1% completed SSLC, and the smallest group, 2.3%, finished only up to school. Overall, most people in this group have studied beyond the secondary level, with many holding postgraduate degrees.

An argument can be made when we refer to the data collected by scholars like Pal and Banerjee.

Employment status

Count of What is your current employment status?

Self employed
9.3%

Unemployed
32.6%

Empolyed
58.1%
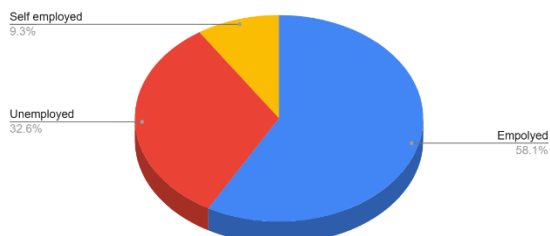
Count of what is ur employment status

Empolyed
52.2%

Unemployed
37.0%

Self employed
10.9%
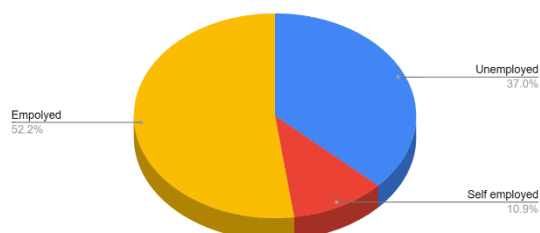
Scheduled caste figure.4.4(a)   **Latin catholic** figure.4.4(b)

The pie chart for the Scheduled Caste group shows their employment status. The largest group, 52.2%, is employed. About 37% are unemployed, while only 10.9% are self-employed. This shows that more than half have jobs, but a large number are still without work. The Latin Catholic group's employment chart also shows a similar pattern. The largest portion, 56%, is employed. Around 32% are unemployed, and 12% are self-employed. This means most people in this group have jobs, though some are unemployed and a few are working for themselves.

Voted In Any Elections Before

Count of Have you voted in any elections before?
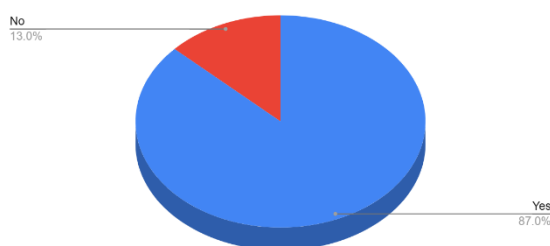
No
13.0%

Yes
87.0%

Count of Have you voted in any elections before?

yes
4.5%
YES
2.3%
No
11.4%

Yes
81.8%
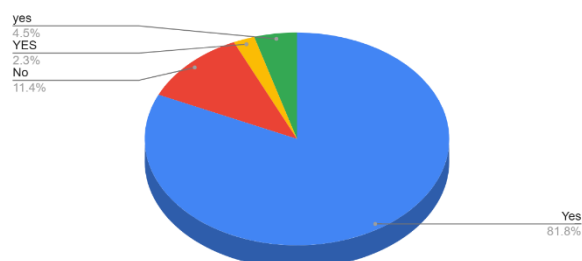
Scheduled caste figure.4.5(a)   **Latin catholic** figure.4.5(b)

The pie chart for the Scheduled Caste group shows responses to the question, "Have you voted in any elections before?" A large majority, 87%, said "Yes," while 13% said "No." Similarly,

in the other chart, 86.6% of people answered "Yes," and 11.4% said "No." Overall, both charts show that most people surveyed have voted in an election before.
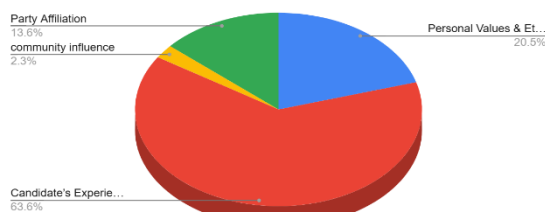
Factors Influencing Voting Decisions
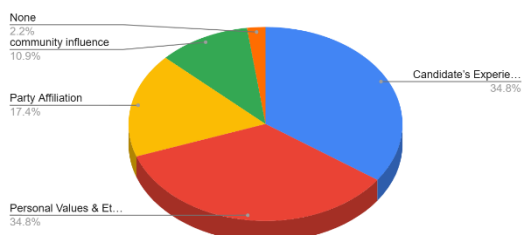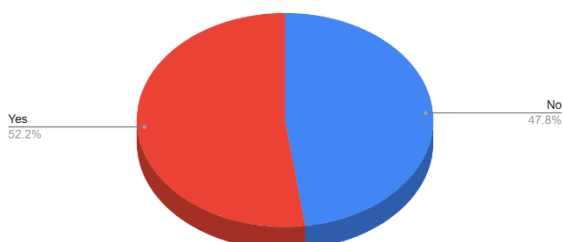

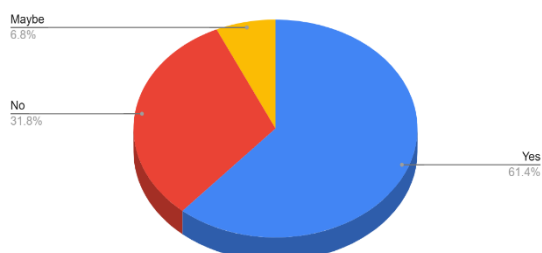**Scheduled caste** figure.4.6(a)

Latin catholic figure.4.6(a)

The pie chart for the Scheduled Caste group shows that the main factors influencing voting decisions are the candidate's experience and personal values, each chosen by 34.8% of respondents. Party affiliation was important for 17.4%, while community influence affected 10.9%. Only 2.2% said none of these factors influenced their vote. For the Latin Catholic community, candidate experience was the top factor for 53.8% of voters, followed by personal values at 20.5%, party affiliation at 13%, and community influence at just 2.3%. Overall, both groups prioritize a candidate's experience and ethics over party ties or community influence when deciding whom to vote for.

## Members Of A Political Party

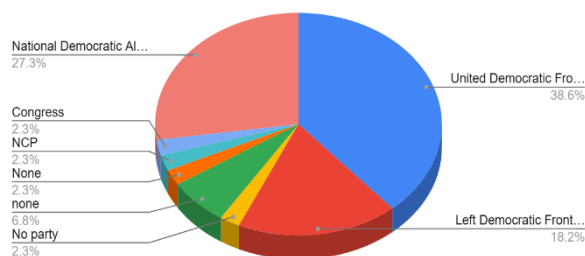**Scheduled caste** figure.4.7(a)   **Latin catholic** figure.4.7(b)

The pie chart for the Latin Catholic community shows that 61.4% of respondents are members of a political party, 31.8% are not, and 6.8% are unsure or undecided. This indicates that the majority are politically active, while a significant portion remains unaffiliated. In comparison, the Scheduled Caste chart reveals a closer split, with 52.2% saying "Yes" to party membership and 47.8% saying "No." Overall, both communities show a strong level of political involvement, with the Latin Catholic group showing a slightly higher rate of party membership.

party organization member

Count of If yes, which party or organization are you a member of?
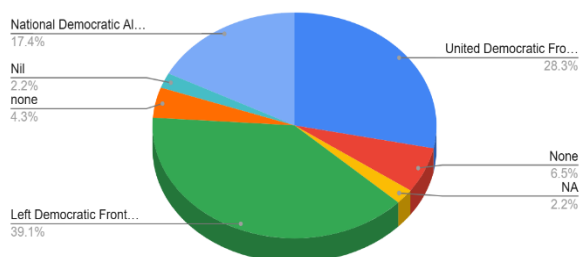
Count of If yes, which party or organization are you a member of?

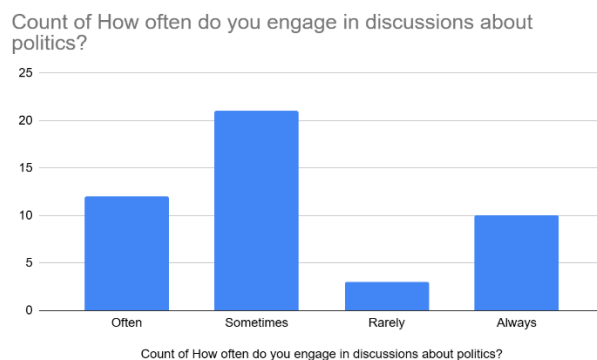**Scheduled caste** figure.4.8(a)   **Latin catholic** figure.4.8(b)

The pie chart for the Scheduled Caste community shows that the largest political affiliation is with the Left Democratic Front (38.1%), followed by the United Democratic Front (28.3%) and the National Democratic Alliance (17.4%). Smaller portions reported no affiliation (6.3%), "NA" (2.2%), or selected "None" (2.2%).
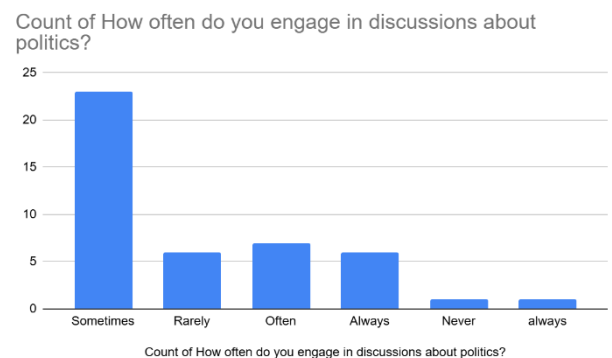
In contrast, the Latin Catholic community's chart shows the United Democratic Front leading with 34.6%, followed by the National Democratic Alliance at 27.3%, and the Left Democratic Front at 16.2%. Other smaller affiliations include Congress and NCP (both at 2.3%), with 7.8% identifying as "None" and 2.2% stating "No party."

Overall, both communities show varied political affiliations, with the Scheduled Caste group favoring the Left Democratic Front, while the Latin Catholic group leans more toward the United Democratic Front.

Discussion about politics

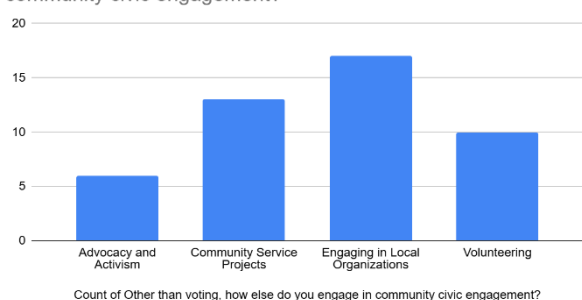**Scheduled caste** figure.4.9(a)   **Latin catholic** figure.4.9(b)

The bar graph for the Scheduled Caste community shows that most people discuss politics "sometimes" (about 21 individuals), followed by "often" (12 people) and "always" (around 10). Only a few (about 3) "rarely" discuss politics, indicating that political conversations are fairly common, though not constant.

Similarly, the bar graph for the Latin Catholic community shows "sometimes" as the most frequent response, with around 23 individuals. The categories "rarely," "often," and "always" are nearly equal, each with about 6 responses, while very few said they "never" or "always" talk about politics (around 1 each). Overall, both groups tend to engage in political discussions occasionally, with fewer people at the extremes of complete disinterest or constant involvement.
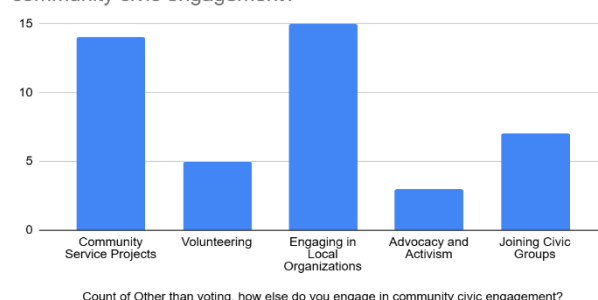
Other civic activities

Count of Other than voting, how else do you engage in community civic engagement?

Count of Other than voting, how else do you engage in community civic engagement?

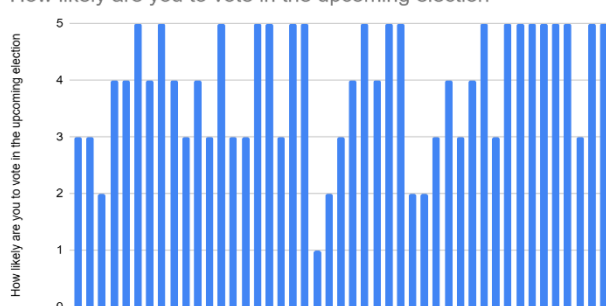**Scheduled caste** figure.4.10(a)   **Latin catholic** figure.4.10(b)

The bar graphs show how people from the Scheduled Caste and Latin Catholic communities take part in civic activities other than voting. In both groups, the most common way of getting involved is by engaging in local organizations. Community service projects are also popular in both communities. For the Scheduled Caste group, volunteering comes next, while advocacy and activism are the least common. Similarly, in the Latin Catholic group, joining civic groups has moderate participation, but volunteering and especially advocacy and activism are less common. Overall, both graphs show that people prefer hands-on community involvement over activism. Overall, both graphs show that people prefer hands-on community involvement over activism.
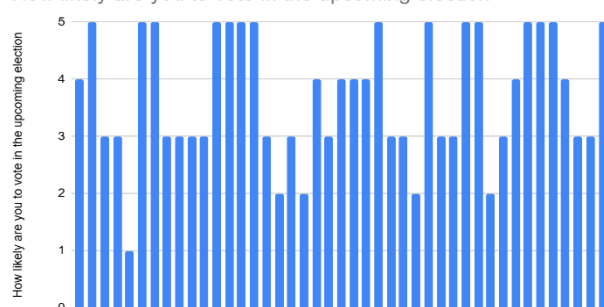
participation in the upcoming election

How likely are you to vote in the upcoming election

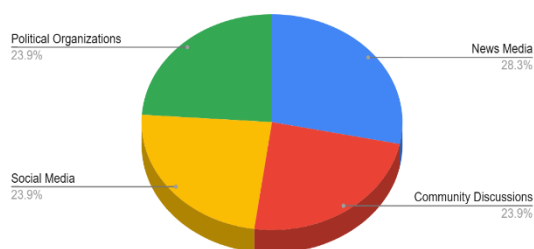**Scheduled caste** figure.4.11(a)   **Latin catholic** figure.4.11(b)

The bar graphs for both the Scheduled Caste and Latin Catholic communities show how likely people are to vote in the upcoming election, using a scale from 1 (not likely) to 5 (very likely). In both groups, most people selected 4 or 5, showing a strong interest in voting. Very few people chose 1 or 2, meaning only a small number are not planning to vote. Some selected 3, which suggests they are unsure. Overall, the data indicates that a majority of people in both communities are likely to vote, suggesting a good voter turnout in the upcoming election.
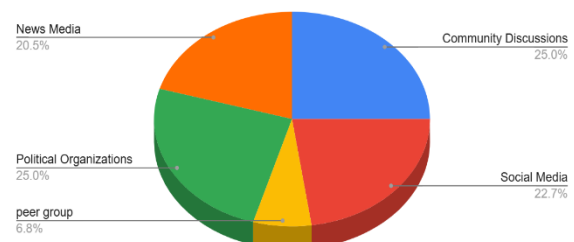
Resources used for political information

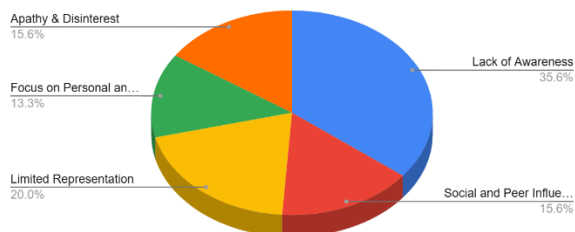**Scheduled caste** figure.4.12(a) **Latin catholic** figure.4.12(b)

The pie chart for the Scheduled Caste group shows that people get political information from various sources. The most common is news media (28.3%), followed closely by political organizations, social media, and community discussions, each at 23.9%. This means people rely on a mix of sources, with news media being slightly more popular.

In the Latin Catholic group, the most common source of political information is community transparency (33.3%). Social media also plays a big role (27.7%), followed by news media (22.2%). Fewer people rely on political organizations (11.1%) and interest groups (5.6%). This shows that for this group, community-based and online sources are more trusted than traditional political bodies.

Overall, both groups use a variety of sources, but the Latin Catholic community leans more towards community and social media, while the Scheduled Caste group shows a more even mix.
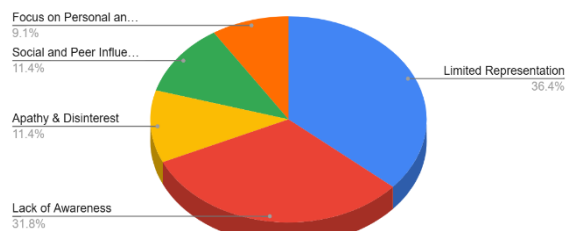
Barriers preventing participation in elections

Count of What are the main barriers preventing youth from participating in elections?

Apathy & Disinterest
15.6%

Focus on Personal an…
13.3%

Limited Representation
20.0%

Lack of Awareness
35.6%

Social and Peer Influe…
15.6%

Count of What are the main barriers preventing youth from participating in elections?

Focus on Personal an…
9.1%

Social and Peer Influe…
11.4%

Apathy & Disinterest
11.4%

Lack of Awareness
31.8%

Limited Representation
36.4%

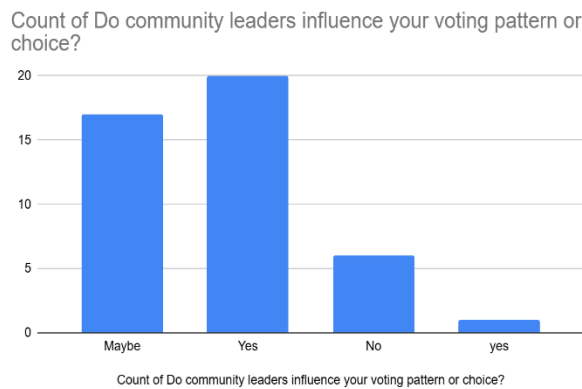**Scheduled caste** figure.4.13(a)   **Latin catholic** figure.4.13(b)

The pie charts show the main reasons why youth from the Scheduled Caste and Latin Catholic communities may not take part in elections. For the Scheduled Caste group, the biggest reason is a lack of awareness (35.5%), followed by limited representation (20.8%) and social or peer influence (19.9%). Apathy and disinterest (13.4%) and focus on personal life (10.3%) are less common barriers.

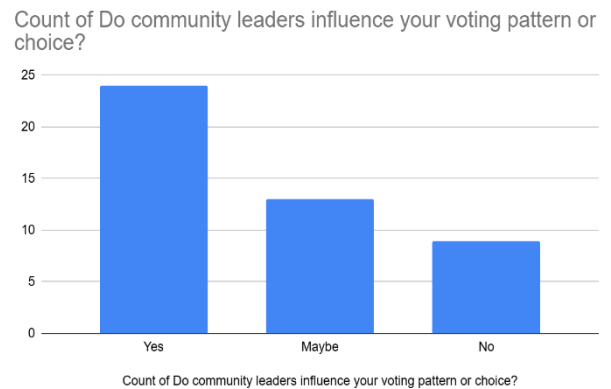For the Latin Catholic group, the top reason is limited representation (36.4%), with lack of awareness (27.3%) as the second major factor. Apathy and disinterest (15.9%) and social influence (11.4%) follow, while the least common reason is previous bad personal experiences (9.1%).

Overall, both groups highlight that limited political representation and a lack of awareness are the biggest reasons why many young people don't vote.

Community leaders' influence on voting choices

Count of Do community leaders influence your voting pattern or choice?

Count of Do community leaders influence your voting pattern or choice?

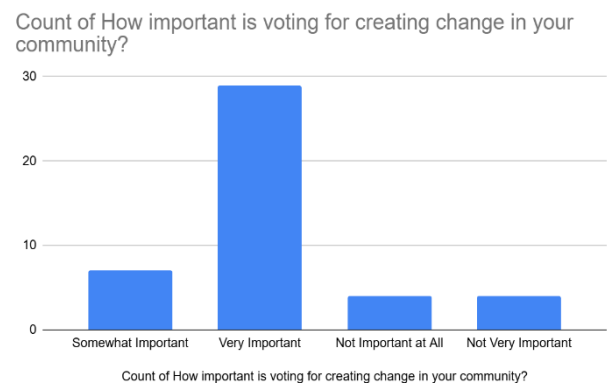**Scheduled caste** figure.4.14(a)   **Latin catholic** figure.4.14(b)

The bar graphs show how much community leaders influence voting choices among the Scheduled Caste and Latin Catholic communities. In the Scheduled Caste group, most people either said Yes or Maybe, meaning many feel some level of influence or are unsure about it. Only a few said "No," and there seems to be a repeat entry for "Yes" with just 1 response.

In the Latin Catholic group, people said "Yes," showing strong influence from community leaders. Another said "Maybe," and said "No."

Overall, both groups show that community leaders play a noticeable role in shaping how people vote, though some individuals remain unaffected or unsure.

Importance of voting in bringing change to their communities

Count of How important is voting for creating change in your community?

Count of How important is voting for creating change in your community?
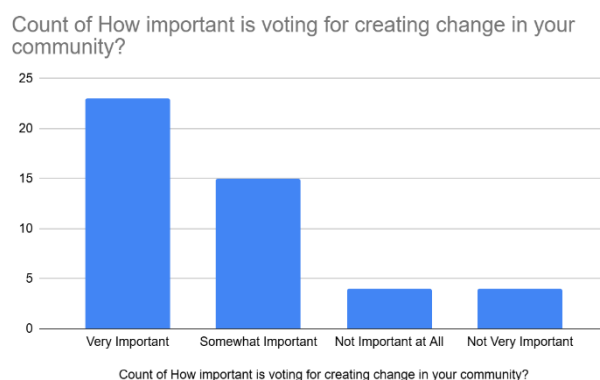
Scheduled caste figure.4.15(a)   **Latin catholic** figure.4.15(b)

The bar graphs for both the Scheduled Caste and Latin Catholic communities show how people feel about the importance of voting in bringing change to their communities. In both groups, the majority—around 29 respondents—believe voting is "Very Important." A smaller number, about 7 people, think it is "Somewhat Important." Only a few respondents—roughly 3 in each group—feel that voting is "Not Important at All" or "Not Very Important." Overall, the data from both communities reflects a strong agreement that voting is an essential tool for creating positive change in society.

Chapter 5

Finding and conclusion

This chapter of findings and conclusions was the key findings and the whole summary of this research study. In this research study goals and the implications of the topic give the readers closure. The research is a mixed-methodological Study on the topic of "a comparative study of voting behavior among youth in Latin and scheduled caste communities in Vypin". This chapter discusses the conclusion and findings. This is accomplished by the explanation of the whole chapter, where the findings regarding all objectives and these findings enriched the study.

In this study, the general objective is to understand the factors that influence caste-based voting behavior among youth in the Latin and SC communities in Vypin Panchayath. It's a comparative study to analysis there is any community influence on their voting pattern. Vypin Island is considered a fast-developing suburb of Kochi City and is a part of the Kochi metropolitan area, making it an urban area.

This study compares the Scheduled Caste and Latin Catholic communities by looking at their age groups, education levels, job status, political activities, and opinions about voting. In the Scheduled Caste group, most people are young adults between 20 to 25 years old, followed by those aged 26 to 30. In contrast, the Latin Catholic group has more middle-aged adults, mainly between 31 to 50 years old. This shows that the Scheduled Caste group has a younger population, while the Latin Catholic group is slightly older. In both groups, there are a few more female respondents than male, but the gender difference is small.

In terms of education, the majority of the Scheduled Caste respondents have a bachelor's degree. The second-largest group has a master's degree, and some have diplomas, higher secondary, or just SSLC qualifications. On the other hand, the Latin Catholic group has a higher number of people with a master's degree, followed by those with diplomas and bachelor's

degrees. This shows that the Latin Catholic community has more people with postgraduate education, while the Scheduled Caste group mostly stops at the undergraduate level.

When it comes to employment, over half of the people in both communities are employed. However, a large number are still unemployed, and only a small portion are self-employed. This suggests that while many have jobs, unemployment is still a challenge in both groups. In political participation, most people from both communities have voted before. The large percentage of "Yes" responses shows that they take part in elections and consider voting important. Very few said they had never voted.

Most people in both communities think voting is a very important way to bring change in society. This shows that they believe in the democratic process and want to make a difference through their votes. Many of them said they are likely or very likely to vote in the upcoming election, which is a good sign for voter turnout.

When asked what influences their voting decisions, people from both groups mainly chose the candidate's experience and personal values. Party loyalty and community pressure were less important. This means that voters are thinking carefully about who is best suited for the job, not just voting based on party names or outside influence.

Political party membership is higher among the Latin Catholic group, where more than half of the people said they belong to a political party. In the Scheduled Caste group, just over half said "Yes," while a significant number said they are not part of any political party. This means that both groups are politically active, but Latin Catholics are slightly more involved.

In terms of political support, the Scheduled Caste community mostly supports the Left Democratic Front (LDF), followed by the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). In contrast, the Latin Catholic community gives the most support

to the UDF, followed by the NDA and then the LDF. Some respondents in both groups said they don't support any party.

The study also looked at how often people talk about politics. Most people in both groups said they talk about politics "sometimes," while fewer people said "often," "rarely," or "always." This shows that political discussions are common but not constant. When it comes to civic activities, people in both communities are more likely to take part in local groups or community service. Volunteering is also common, but fewer people are involved in activism or advocacy.

For political information, people use many sources. In the Scheduled Caste group, the most common source is news media, followed closely by social media, political organizations, and discussions in the community. In the Latin Catholic group, community transparency (local discussions and openness) is the most common source, followed by social media and news. This shows that people from both groups trust a variety of sources to learn about politics.

The study also explored why some young people don't vote. For the Scheduled Caste group, the main reason was a lack of awareness, while in the Latin Catholic group, it was limited political representation, meaning they don't feel that any party or leader truly represents their needs. Other reasons include apathy, peer pressure, or being focused on personal life. A small number in the Latin Catholic group also mentioned past negative experiences with politics.

Lastly, the study asked how much community leaders influence voting decisions. In both groups, many people said "Yes" or "Maybe," showing that local leaders still have a strong influence. Only a few said they are not influenced at all.

In conclusion, both the Scheduled Caste and Latin Catholic communities show high interest in politics and voting. They believe that voting is a powerful way to bring change and make their voices heard. Although there are some differences in age, education, and political party support, both groups show strong participation in democratic activities. With better awareness,

education, and representation, even more young people from these communities can be encouraged to engage in voting and political decision-making.

Voting is a key component of democracy since it allows citizens to have a say in how their nation is run. It guarantees that people have a voice in choosing representatives who reflect their views, and it is both a right and a duty. Voting is a potent weapon for influencing the future since it allows people to have an impact on issues about social justice, healthcare, education, and the economy. Fair representation results from high voter turnout, guaranteeing that outcomes represent the preferences of the majority rather than a small minority. Because they have to act in the public interest to keep their jobs, it also keeps elected politicians responsible. Voting also strengthens democracy and encourages openness in government by preventing corruption and the misuse of authority. Each vote advances the cause by giving people the ability to effect change that will benefit coming generations. In the end, voting is about creating a better society for everyone, not simply about personal preference.

Different patterns in voting behavior, political knowledge, and external influences among Latin Catholic and SC people in Vypin are revealed by the interview analysis based on the stated objectives.

Both groups recognized the significance of elections in terms of voting behavior and political awareness, but their reasons for doing so were different. Economic measures, job development, and educational changes were top priorities for Latin Catholics, who frequently based their autonomous vote selections on peer discussions and media sources. They relied more on their own opinions than party loyalty and were often dubious of political parties and leaders. SC people, on the other hand, saw voting as a way to advance social justice, obtain reservations in employment and education, and fight historical prejudice. They participated in regular

conversations and followed political narratives that were driven by the community, demonstrating a greater level of political awareness. SC respondents were more closely associated with political parties that have traditionally supported their rights than Latin Catholics.

In terms of political and pressure group influence, caste-based organizations, grassroots movements, and social justice organizations that organized collective action for their rights had a major impact on SC members. When choosing their candidates, many people heeded the advice of local community leaders. However, despite their more independent posture, Latin Catholics were impacted by economic interest groups, trade unions, and religious institutions. SC members showed a higher feeling of collective voting, while Latin Catholics tended toward individual decision-making, even though both groups were subject to political influence.

Given that church-affiliated groups and clergy frequently promoted participation in elections and political discourse, religious views were a significant factor for Latin Catholics when examining the impact of religious identity and political ideology on voting behavior. However, economic problems and governance difficulties influenced their voting decisions more than religious dogma exclusively. Conversely, SC members gave more weight to political ideologies, especially those that favored social justice and affirmative action. Although religion had a role in their cultural identity, their caste-based political ties had a greater influence on their voting choices.

Lastly, caste associations significantly influenced voting behavior, especially for SC respondents. Many pledged allegiance to political groups and leaders who supported social justice, economic advancement, and caste-based rights. In order to guarantee representation and the advantages of policies, community leaders frequently influenced political decisions through collective voting. However, there were no notable caste-based voting preferences among Latin Catholics. Caste associations had less of an impact on their choices than economic

standing, educational attainment, and personal viewpoints. Overall, the study shows that although SC people and Latin Catholics are committed to political engagement, their influences and reasons are very different. By addressing these issues through engagement tactics, inclusive political representation, and focused voter education, both groups' democratic participation can be strengthened.

Lastly, this study emphasizes how important civic engagement, community influence, and voter turnout are to preserving a robust democracy. Even while the results show that citizens are politically aware and engaged, problems with youth disengagement, underrepresentation, and political indifference still need to be addressed. Votes are also heavily influenced by the community, which highlights the need for grassroots political education and awareness campaigns. People-oriented movements, representational political engagement, and targeted awareness campaigns are required to boost voter turnout and strengthen democracy. Deeper political engagement and even higher attendance in future elections can be achieved by encouraging an informed and engaged citizenry.

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APPENDIX

A comparative study of voting behavior among youth in Latin and SC communities In Vypin panchayath

Interview Questionnaire

1. What is your age group?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
4. What is your current employment status?
5. Have you voted in any elections before?
6. If yes, what factors influenced your decision to vote?
7. How often do you engage in discussions about politics?
8. Are you a member of any political party
9. If yes, which party or organization are you a member of?
10. How do you usually access information about political candidates and issues?
11. How important is voting for creating change in your community?
12. What are the main barriers preventing youth from participating in elections?
13. In your opinion, what could be done to increase youth participation in elections?
14. How likely are you to vote in the upcoming election?
15. Other than voting, how else do you engage in community civic engagement?
16. Do community leaders influence your voting pattern or choice?