

Young people's participation in civil society and political life: findings from the *Youth in India- Situation Needs Study*, Maharashtra

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Context

- **Youth participation in civic and political processes is increasingly recognised as an important development objective.**
- **Opportunities for civic and political participation may influence young people's development and the types of transition they make to adulthood.**
- **In India, the National Youth Policy 2003 argued for greater representation of youth in appropriate bodies and more extensive youth participation in the design and implementation of programmes.**
- **Information on the extent to which young people participate in civic, social and political processes, and the factors that facilitate it is limited.**



Objectives

Drawing on quantitative data obtained from the *Youth in India: Situation and Needs Study* in Maharashtra, provide insights on:

- Extent of youth participation in civic, social and political processes
- Youth perceptions about political processes
- Extent to which youth uphold pro-social values
- Factors associated with youth participation in civic, social and political processes



Study Design

- Face-to-face interview with 7,570 young married and unmarried females and males residing in rural and urban areas.
- Focused on ages 15-24 for unmarried youth and married females and ages 15-29 for married males.
- 300 PSUs, 150 each in rural and urban areas selected using multistage systematic random sampling; young women interviewed in one half of selected PSUs and young men in other half.



Agency indexes created
(all scores obtained from factor analysis)

- **Decision-making (3)**: friends, purchasing clothes, spending money
- **Mobility, familiar places (3)**: friend/relative inside and outside area, shop
- **Gender role attitudes (7)**: educating girls as important as educating boys, husbands need not be main decision-makers on money matters, girls should participate in marriage decisions, woman need not take husband's permission for any activity, girls school performance equal to boys, boys should do domestic work, girls who dress provocatively do not deserve to be teased



Indexes created: peer and parent level

Gendered socialisation experience (dichotomous): female reported less freedom and more housework expectations than brothers; males reported the reverse compared to sisters

Index of parental control (8): parents disapprove if R: brought same sex friends home, brought opposite-sex friends home, talked to opposite-sex person from outside the home, went to film etc with same-sex friends, went to film etc with opposite-sex friends, joined club/group, had a love marriage, found a job (score obtained from factor analysis)

Parental communication on general topics (2): Discussed with a parent: school performance, friendship (score obtained from factor analysis)

Peer connectedness (dichotomous): Would confide in a peer on at least one of the following: taking a job, problems with friends, worries about nocturnal emission/ menstrual problem, boy-girl relationship



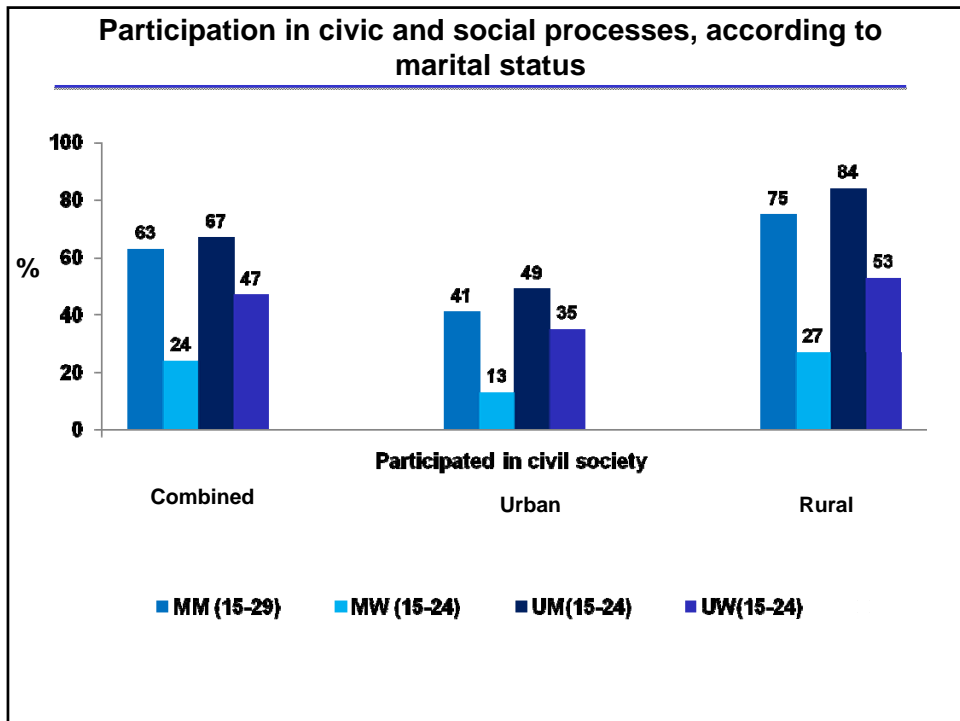
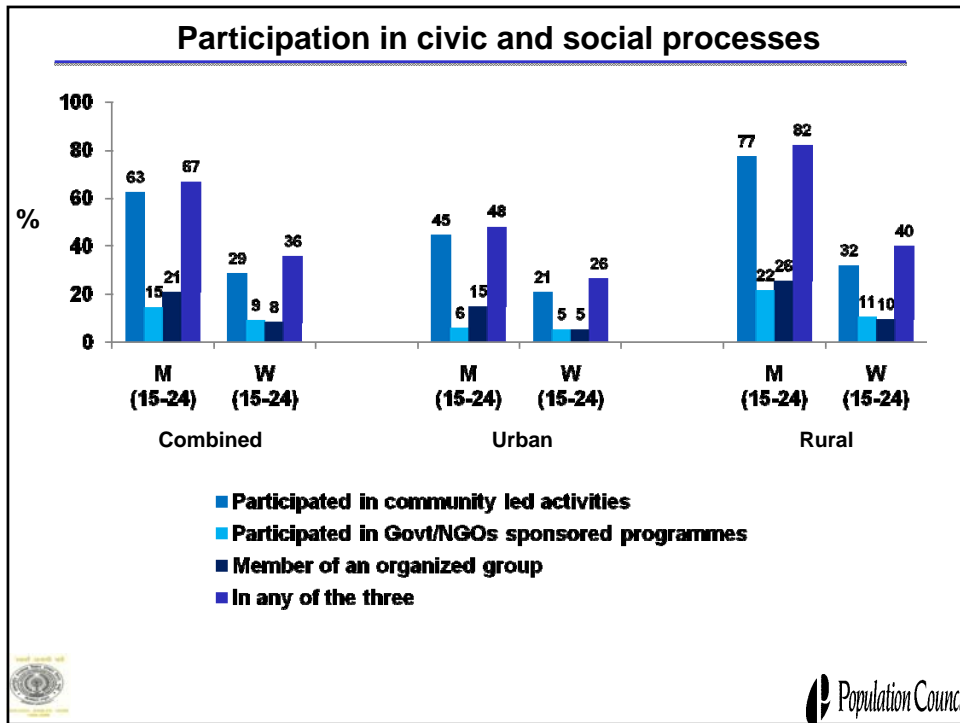
Background characteristics of surveyed youth

	Men (N= 2,336)	Women (N=4,488)
Mean age	19.5	19.3
Median years of schooling completed	9.0	9.0
% worked in the last 12 months	66.1	34.4
% residing in a nuclear family	53.5	43.3
% exposed to TV/ newspaper/books	97.2	88.7
Mean score, decision-making index	0.87	0.70
Mean size of peer networks	5.5	3.0
Mean score, index of parental control	0.40	0.52
Mean score, index of parental communication	0.44	0.53



Extent of youth participation in civic and social processes

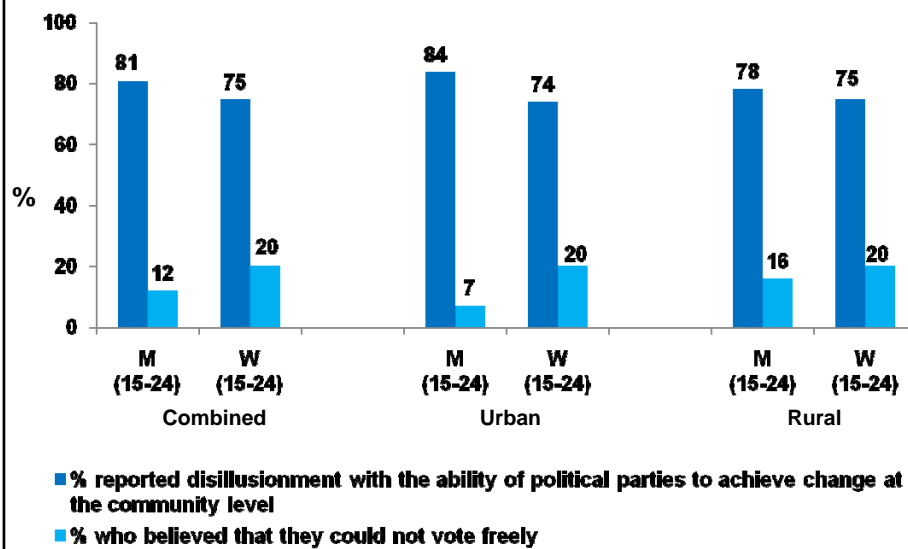




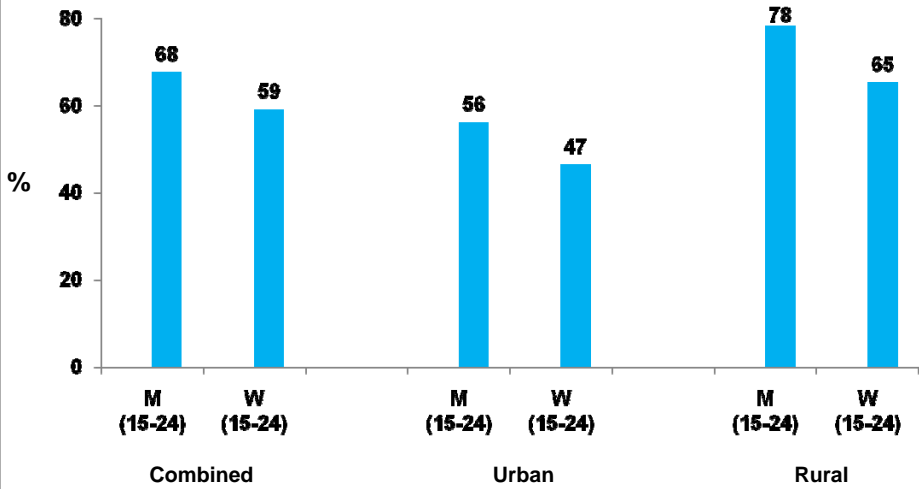
Youth perceptions about and participation in political processes



Perceptions about political processes



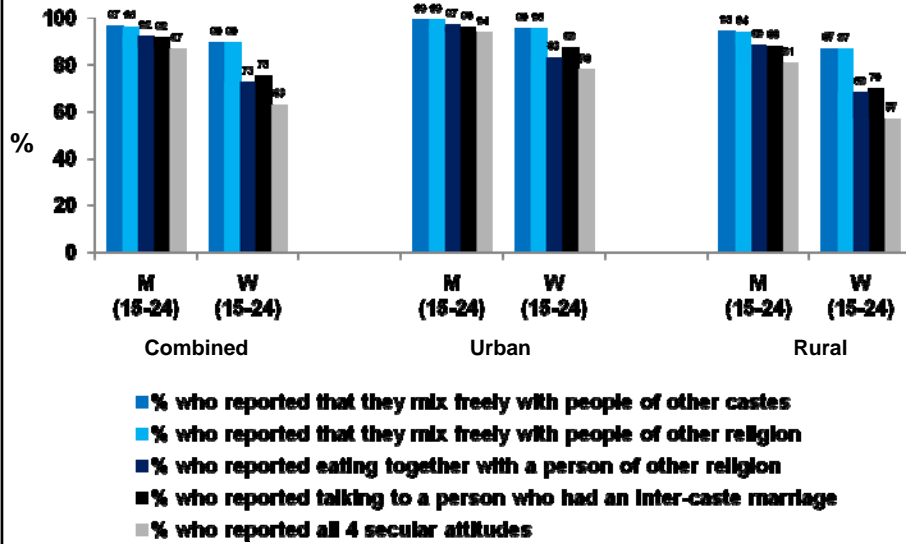
Of those aged 20 years and above, % who voted in the last election



Extent to which youth uphold pro-social values



Percentage of youth expressing secular attitudes



Factors associated with youth participation in civic and social processes



Youth participation in civic and social processes: Correlates (odds ratio)

	MM (N=1,065)	MW (N=1,947)	UM (N=2,017)	UW (N=2,541)
Age	NS	+ **	NS	- ***
Years of schooling	+ ***	NS	+ *	NS
Work (ref. not working)	NS	+ ***	NS	+ *
Place of residence (ref. urban)	+ ***	+ ***	+ ***	+ ***
Index of gender role attitude	+ ***	+ **	+ ***	+ ***
Mass media exposure (ref. not exposed to TV or newspapers/books)				
Exposed to TV or newspaper/books	+ ***	+ **	+ *	+ ***
Exposed to both	+ **	+ ***	+ ***	+ ***
Size of peer networks	NA	NA	NS	+ ***
Peer connectedness (ref. no connectedness)	NA	NA	NS	NS
Parental control	+ *	- *	- ***	- ***
Parental communication	+ **	+ *	+ ***	NS
Gendered socialisation experience	NS	NS	NS	NS



~ p≤.10; *p≤.05; ** p≤.01; *** p≤.001

Factors associated with pro-social attitudes among young people



Pro-social attitudes : Correlates (regression coefficients)

	Men (N= 2,336)	Women (N=4,480)
Age	NS	NS
Years of schooling	NS	+ *
Work (ref. not working)	NS	-*
Place of residence (ref. urban)	- ***	- ***
Index of decision-making	NS	NS
Index of mobility within familiar places	NA	+ ***
Index of gender role attitude	NS	+ **
Civic and social participation	NS	+ *
Size of peer network	+ ***	+ *
Peer connectedness (ref. no connectedness)	NS	NS
Parental control	NS	- **
Parental communication	NS	NS
Mass media exposure (ref. not exposed to any)		
Exposed to either TV/newspaper/books	NS	NS
Exposed to both the above	NS	NS



Summary of findings

- Youth participation in civil society was limited, particularly among young women.
- Disillusionment with the commitment of political parties to work for change at the community level was pervasive but perception that elections are free and fair common.
- Voting in the last election was not universal, particularly for urban youth and young women.
- By and large, youth in rural settings, holding gender egalitarian attitude, reporting parental communication and mass media exposure were more likely to report civic and social participation.



Summary of findings

- **Young women who were more educated, residing in urban areas, having freedom of mobility, holding gender egalitarian attitude, participated in civic activities, and having more friends were more likely to hold pro-social attitudes.**
- **Among young men, those residing in urban areas, having more friends, and experienced gendered socialisation experience were more likely to hold pro-social attitudes.**



Research and programmatic implications

- **Programmes are needed that encourage civic participation, incorporate value building components and reinforce secular attitudes and values that espouse responsible citizenship.**
- **These programmes may be delivered at the school, college and community levels, and through national service programmes, sports and other non-formal mechanisms.**
- **Research recommendations: Little understanding of civic roles of youth -- more needs to be known about the practice of citizenship, community participation and expressions of secularity among youth.**

