

Influence of Culture and Political Systems on Civic Awareness among Secondary School Students: A Comparative Study between the United States and India

Nandini Devgan
nandiniuniadm@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study showcases a comparative analysis of how culture and political systems influence education and shape civic awareness among students in India and the United States. Education is not only meant for academic growth, but also plays a significant role in establishing political understanding, social values and individual identity. By assessing the political, structural and cultural basis of both education systems, this research aims to search how differing social environments impact student perspectives with social issues. This study embraces a comparative approach and is formulated on information from sources such as reports, research articles and existing studies. This research studies how cultural values and political frameworks impact civic awareness among secondary school students in the United States and India. Utilizing a comparative qualitative approach and thematic analysis of secondary sources, the research examines how civic education, classroom engagement and educational management shape students' interaction with political and social issues. The outcomes state that interactive educational environments in the United States give greater opportunities for civic participation, whereas India's assessment oriented framework often restricts classroom based civic engagement.

Keywords : Civic awareness, Cultural values, Political systems, Education systems, India, United States, Secondary education

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a significant role in shaping individuals and societies. Not only is it a way of gaining knowledge, but it also serves as a powerful instrument that influences attitudes, values, and awareness of social and political issues. Structure and purpose of education systems differ across countries, frequently displaying their cultural beliefs and political skeleton. In conclusion, students in different parts of the world evolve different perspectives and opinions and levels of awareness. Existing research suggests that the Indian education framework is often related with structured learning and academic accomplishment.

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Meanwhile the American education framework is commonly associated with classroom engagement, self-expression and critical thinking.

These variations may impact the ways in which students participate with social and political issues and establish civic awareness. This research evaluates whether education systems demonstrate the cultural and political contexts in which they function and how these influences may add to the evolution of civic awareness among students.

For this study, civic awareness means students' understanding of political and social issues, participating in public discussions and their awareness of their duties and roles as citizens. It contains exposure to civic learning, engaging in discussions on contemporary issues and participation with public affairs.

(CIPMO, 2026; RISE Programme, 2022; Zantua)

Research Question

How do political frameworks and cultural values impact civic awareness among secondary school students in the United States and India.

Research Gap

Present literature examines education frameworks, civic awareness and political culture individually. Nevertheless, limited study evaluates how political systems and cultural values collectively impact civic awareness among students in India and the United States. This research tackles that gap through a comparative analysis of the two educational frameworks.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Political and Cultural influences on Education

Existing research showcases that education systems are moulded by both political contexts and cultural values. Political culture, stipulated as the shared beliefs and attitudes toward political systems, plays a crucial role in determining how education is executed. It affects what and how it is taught.

(CIPMO)

Studies spotlight that political systems often shape educational policies and priorities. Governments use education as an instrument to encourage national identity, ideological values or economic goals. For example, research specifies that changes in political leadership and policy priorities can notably adjust the goals of education, such as centering workforce development, social development or national unity.

(RISE Programme, 2022)

Moreover, scholars state that education and politics are strongly linked, with political systems affecting teaching methods and curriculum design. In various cases, education systems exhibit the interests and ideologies of those in power, forming what knowledge is highlighted and how students are socialized.

(CIPMO, 2026; RISE Programme, 2022)

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Cultural factors also play a huge role in developing education. Shared societal values affect classroom conduct, teacher-student bonds and expectations from education. Therefore, education systems vary across countries according to their cultural and political conditions.

(CIPMO, 2026)

1.2 Civic awareness among students in India and the United States

Current literature also inspects how education systems affect students' civic awareness and engagement with societal issues. Research indicates that education plays a vital role in sculpting students' attitude, values and understanding of society. It contributes to the growth of awareness concerning political, social and cultural issues, as well as the capacity to think critically about them.

(Zantua, n.d.)

Studies state that when education systems incorporate discussions on political and social topics, they assist students in developing a sense of civic participation. Having experience and exposure to such discussions strengthens students' understanding of real world issues and uplifts engagement with society. However, research also indicates the level of social awareness among students can differ based on how education systems are structured. In relation to education where it is more organised and focused on academic outcomes, social awareness may be progressed indirectly or by external sources. On the other hand, structures that support debate, civic and discussion education tend to advocate higher levels of student awareness and engagement.

(Zantua n.d.)

Generally, existing studies say education plays an important role in forming social awareness, but its influence depends on cultural values, political systems and the methods used within the education system.

(Zantua n.d.; CIPMO, 2026)

Although existing research has examined the bond between education, civic participation and political culture, limited research directly compares political frameworks and cultural values jointly impact civic awareness among secondary school students in India and the United States. Mainly, studies shed light on individual countries or investigate educational structures without analysing their influence on civic awareness results.

METHODOLOGY

This research takes on a qualitative study approach to assess the impact of political and cultural systems on civic awareness among students in the United States and India. It permitted profound interpretation of how societal structures affect education systems and student awareness.

Furthermore, this study follows a comparative method, sanctioning an organized comparison between two evident national contexts. This approach aids in recognizing differences and similarities in how political systems and cultural values mould education and influence student opinions. The study is structured as a

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comparative case focusing on two countries, India and the United States. These countries have been purposefully chosen for their differing political structures and cultural orientations. The research design is structured around the following:

- Societal norms and cultural values
- Political systems and governance structures
- Civic education and classroom engagement
- Social and political awareness among students

The research follows a two-step analytical process- Separate analysis of each country and Comparative analysis to recognise similarities and differences. The research compares the two countries using four critical dimensions:

- Political System
- Cultural Values
- Civic awareness results
- Educational practices

The source of data used is the secondary data. Secondary data shapes the foundation of this research and has been accumulated from a vast range of verified and credible sources. These incorporate educational reports and research papers. Such data supply contextual insights, theoretical frameworks and findings on education systems and their socio-political influences. For secondary data, thematic analysis is utilized to recognise recurring concepts, patterns and arguments across various sources. This requires arranging information into pivotal themes like political context, cultural influence and educational practices.

RESULTS

The comparative analysis showcased that cultural values and political systems impact civic awareness mainly through their emphasis on educational practices and learning environments. Rather than establishing students' understanding of political and social issues, these societal components mold the ways in which students engage with authority, public discourse and knowledge within educational establishments. The results indicate that differences in educational backgrounds between the United States and India are not the product of institutional frameworks but are also rooted to the cultural expectations and political priorities embedded within each society. As a result, the evolution of civic awareness among students is impacted by how educational frameworks support critical thinking, discussion, participation and involvement with contemporary issues. The analysis displays that educational establishments work as vital social spaces where political influences and cultural values are reflected, eventually impacting students' perspectives on social responsibility, citizenship and public engagement.

(EducationUSA n.d.; Ministry of Education, 2020)

The findings of this research further uncover specific differences in educational systems that contribute to explain variations in civic awareness among students in the United States and India. By the evaluation of existing studies and educational research, it was noted that the Indian education system is structured,

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focused on academic achievement and examination oriented. Academic performance and uniform testing play a huge role in deciding scholastic performance and substantial significance is placed on discipline, memorization and course completion. Students are frequently expected to prioritize marks and competitive examinations, which produces an intellectual and achievement-focused environment. The research discovered that family expectations and collective pressure firmly influence educational choices in India, as academic excellence is often affiliated with social status, future opportunities and career stability.

(IJHSSI, 2019)

Whereas, the education system in the United States was discovered to be relatively more student-centered and flexible. Study indicates that students are commonly offered with greater freedom in classroom participation, subject choosing and extracurricular participation. Teaching methods in the United States repeatedly underline critical thinking, collaborative learning, creativity and practical application rather than mainly focusing on examinations. Collaborative tasks such as presentations, project-based learning and discussions are highly promoted, which in return provides a more interactive classroom environment. Students are encouraged to ask questions, express opinions and participate actively in classroom discussions, developing a learning space that boosts individual expression and independent thinking.

(Education USA n.d.)

The research additionally discovered that political systems mainly affect educational systems and priorities. India's proportionately centralized education structure encourages standardization in course examinations, educational policies and design across institutions. This adds to a more uniform educational experience but may lessen flexibility and institutional independence. The United States has a decentralized educational structure that allows states greater freedom in making courses and teaching methods.

(Futureense n.d.; RISE Programme, 2022)

An important finding of this research is that the processes through which students establish civic awareness vary greatly between two countries. The analysis states that students in the United States are given more opportunities for civic learning through structured classroom debate based activities and educational programs that support participation with present political and social issues. Such experiences offer students with chances to establish communication skills, examine multiple perspectives and engage actively in discussions regarding public affairs. On the other hand, while awareness of political and social issues among Indian students has expanded substantially in recent years, the findings showcase that much of this awareness evolves outside formal classroom surroundings. Students now rely on digital media, social networks and independent participation with current affairs to understand public issues. This states that although students in both countries are becoming progressively aware of political and social matters, the routes through which civic awareness evolves, vary significantly.

(Zantua n.d.; EducationUSA n.d.)

CONCLUSION

This study emphasizes that the variations between the education structures of the United States and India are heavily affected by the expanded cultural values, societal priorities and political systems of each country. The comparison showcases that education structures are not physically remote establishments, instead they indicate the beliefs and expectations of the societies in which they function. This research further indicates that the impact of culture and political frameworks expands beyond curriculum planning and educational policies. These determinants also form how students participate with social issues, engage in discussions and build awareness of their roles as citizens. The findings display that civic awareness is impacted not only by what students learn in educational establishments but also by the broader political and social surroundings in which those institutions operate.

(Education USA n.d.; Ministry of Education, 2020; Zantua n.d.)

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