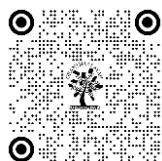


# PROBLEMS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE EDUCATION AT THE HIGHER SECONDARY LEVEL IN TRIPURA: A STUDY

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the challenges faced in political science education at the higher secondary level in schools in Tripura. Aimed at understanding the problems that hinder effective teaching and learning of political science, the research seeks to identify specific issues faced by educators and students within this context. The key research questions focus on: (1) What are the predominant problems in political science education at the higher secondary level in Tripura? and (2) How do these problems affect students' understanding of political concepts and their overall engagement with the subject? To address these questions, a mixed-method approach was employed, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. Surveys were distributed to students and teachers across selected schools in Tripura, complemented by in-depth interviews with educators and educational administrators. The findings reveal a range of challenges, including an outdated and irrelevant curriculum, inadequate teaching resources, a lack of training for teachers in modern pedagogical strategies, and generally low student engagement levels. These issues not only impact students' grasp of essential political concepts but also contribute to their overall disinterest in civic education. The implications of this study underscore the need for comprehensive reforms in political science education in Tripura to enhance curricular relevance, improve teaching methodologies, and ultimately foster greater student participation and interest in politics.

**Keywords:** Curriculum, TLM, Teaching Methods and Civic Engagement

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Political science education plays a pivotal role in shaping informed and active citizens, equipped with the knowledge to engage in democratic processes and understand the complexities of governance. In the context of India, where the youth constitute a significant portion of the population, the relevance of political science education at the higher secondary level is paramount. This educational phase lays the foundation for critical thinking, civic awareness, and active citizenship—skills essential for promoting effective participation in democratic society.

Tripura, a north-eastern state of India, is characterized by its unique political dynamics, diverse demographics, and socio-economic challenges. Despite the importance of political science as a discipline that fosters democratic values and responsible citizenship, students in Tripura face several obstacles that undermine

the effectiveness of their political science education. These challenges range from the inadequacies in teaching resources and pedagogical approaches to curriculum relevance and student engagement.

The present study seeks to critically examine the problems associated with political science education in higher secondary schools in Tripura. This examination is crucial not only for understanding the current educational landscape but also for identifying potential areas for improvement. The research aims to answer the following key questions:

- 1) What are the predominant problems in political science education at the higher secondary level in Tripura?
- 2) How do these problems affect students' understanding of political concepts and their overall engagement with the subject?

By addressing these questions, the study endeavours to illuminate the barriers that educators and students encounter, ultimately contributing to the discourse on enhancing the quality of political science education in the region. Through a mixed-method approach encompassing surveys and interviews, the research will gather insights from students, teachers, and educational administrators. The findings will provide a nuanced understanding of the systemic issues at play, thereby informing stakeholders about potential reforms needed to enrich the political science curriculum. In doing so, this study aspires to foster a more active and informed citizenry in Tripura, positioning political education as a critical pathway to democratic engagement.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on political science recognizes the discipline's crucial role in fostering civic competence and participation among students. It highlights various aspects of educational frameworks that can either enhance or hinder the effectiveness of political science curricula. This section reviews existing research concerning the challenges of political science education, particularly at the higher secondary level, with a focus on contexts similar to Tripura.

### 2.1. IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL SCIENCE EDUCATION

Political science education cultivates critical thinking, analytical skills, and civic awareness necessary for informed citizenship. According to O'Donnell (2010), a robust political science education not only imparts knowledge about governmental systems and political theory but also empowers students to engage with complex issues in their communities. More recently, Print (2018) emphasizes that exposure to political science at an early educational stage can enhance students' ability to participate meaningfully in democratic processes.

### 2.2. CHALLENGES IN POLITICAL SCIENCE EDUCATION

A body of literature identifies several systemic challenges that impede effective political science education:

- **Curriculum Relevance and Design:** Several scholars argue that curricula often fail to reflect contemporary political issues and cannot engage students in ways that resonate with their daily lives. For instance, Kumar (2017) notes that political science syllabi in Indian schools tend to focus disproportionately on historical events and

theoretical concepts, rather than practical applications and current affairs. This disconnect can lead to student disengagement.

- **Pedagogical Approaches:** Traditional lecture-based teaching methods dominate political science classrooms, which may not cater to varied learning styles. According to Sharma (2019), interactive teaching methods, such as debates and group discussions, significantly improve student engagement and understanding but are often underutilized in Tripura. This finding mirrors global trends where active learning is correlated with higher retention and interest in the subject matter (Freeman et al., 2014).
- **Resource Availability:** Access to learning materials is another significant barrier. Kumar and Das (2020) highlight that many schools in Tripura lack updated textbooks, teaching aids, and technological resources necessary for effective political science education. This scarcity impedes the ability to deliver a comprehensive educational experience and limits students' exposure to diverse perspectives.
- **Teacher Preparedness:** The level of training and preparedness among political science educators is crucial for effective instruction. As noted by Chaudhury (2021), many teachers in Tripura lack specialized training in political education methodologies, leading to inconsistent teaching quality and student confusion regarding complex political concepts.

### 2.3. IMPACT ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

The aforementioned factors collectively contribute to low levels of student engagement in political science classes. Research indicates that students who find political science irrelevant or poorly taught are less likely to invest time and effort into the subject (Zaff et al., 2016). Additionally, a lack of engagement can perpetuate a cycle of apathy towards political participation, undermining the goal of cultivating informed citizens (Levine, 2018).

### 2.4. GAPS IN THE LITERATURE

While significant research exists on the challenges facing political science education globally, there is a notable lack of localized studies focusing specifically on the educational landscape of Tripura. This local context, complete with its unique socio-political dynamics, necessitates focused research to fully understand the specific challenges inherent to political science education in the region. This study aims to fill this gap by providing a thorough analysis of the current state of political science education at the higher secondary level in Tripura and its associated challenges.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the research design, population and sample, data collection methods, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations for the study focused on the problems of political science education in higher secondary schools in Tripura.

### 3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employs a mixed-method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. This design allows for a comprehensive understanding of the various challenges in political science education. The quantitative component involves a structured survey to gather data on students' and teachers' perceptions, while the qualitative component includes in-depth interviews and focus groups to explore the complexities behind these perceptions.

### 3.2. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The target population for this study includes students and teachers from higher secondary schools in Tripura. A stratified random sampling technique is employed to select participants from various schools to ensure a diverse representation of the student and teacher demographics. The sample includes approximately 120 students of class twelve from different backgrounds and 30 political science teachers (Post Graduate Teachers) across 10 higher secondary schools. Efforts are made to include schools from both urban and rural settings to provide a holistic view of the educational landscape.

### 3.3. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

- **Surveys:** A structured questionnaire is developed to collect quantitative data from students and teachers. The survey consists of closed-ended questions aimed at assessing perceptions of the curriculum relevance, teaching methods, resource availability, and overall student engagement in political science education. The questionnaire is pre-tested with a small group to refine questions and ensure clarity.
- **Interviews:** In-depth semi-structured interviews are conducted with selected teachers and educational administrators. These interviews provide qualitative insights into the challenges faced in delivering political science education, as well as the perceptions of educators regarding the curriculum and student engagement.
- **Focus Groups:** Additionally, focus group discussions with students are facilitated to explore their experiences and attitudes toward political science education in a collaborative setting. These discussions aim to uncover nuanced perspectives and stimulate rich dialogue among participants.

### 3.4. DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

Quantitative data from the surveys are analyzed using statistical techniques. Qualitative data from interviews and focus groups is transcribed and analyzed thematically. This analysis involves coding the transcripts to identify common themes and categories, drawing insights into the systemic issues affecting political science education. The triangulation of data sources (surveys, interviews, and focus groups) enhances the reliability and validity of the findings.

### 3.5. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study adheres to ethical research practices, ensuring that participants' rights and confidentiality are prioritized. Informed consent is obtained from all participants prior to data collection, with assurances that their responses are kept confidential and used for research purposes only. Participants are also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without consequence. Ethical approval is sought from the relevant educational authorities and institutions involved.

## 4. FINDINGS

This section presents the results of the study, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative data collected through surveys, interviews, and focus groups. The findings highlight the key problems in political science education at the higher secondary level in Tripura, integrating perspectives from both students and teachers.

### 4.1. QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

#### 1) Student Surveys

A total of 120 students participated in the survey, with 70% expressing a lack of interest in political science. The survey responses revealed several notable trends:

- **Curriculum Relevance:** Approximately 65% of students indicated that the political science curriculum feels outdated and does not relate to current political issues or their lived experiences. Only 25% felt that the content was engaging enough to stimulate interest.
- **Teaching Methodology:** Over 60% of respondents reported that they primarily experienced lecture-based instruction, with minimal interactive or experiential learning opportunities. Students who had exposure to participative activities (like debates or discussions) reported a 40% higher interest in the subject.
- **Resource Availability:** Data shows that 55% of students believed that school resources, such as textbooks and digital learning materials, were inadequate to support their learning in political science. Many reported difficulties in accessing current news and materials relevant to their studies.

#### 2) Teacher Surveys

Surveys distributed to 30 teachers revealed the following issues:

- **Professional Development:** Only 40% of teachers indicated that they had received adequate training in modern pedagogical strategies for teaching political science. Many expressed a desire for professional development opportunities focused on interactive teaching methods.
- **Curricular Constraints:** A majority, 60%, reported that the prescribed syllabus restricts their ability to introduce contemporary political issues into the classroom, which contributes to the disconnection students feel toward the material.

## 4.2. QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

### 1) Interviews with Teachers

Interviews with 12 teachers illuminated further complexities regarding political science education:

- **Pedagogical Challenges:** Teachers expressed frustration with the existing pedagogical methods that favor rote memorization over critical analysis. One teacher noted, "Students can recite definitions but cannot engage in debates about those concepts, which is troubling for their civic understanding."
- **Contextual Relevance:** Many educators lamented the lack of local content in the curriculum that resonates with students' realities in Tripura. Without relevant examples and case studies, they found it challenging to make the subject matter engaging.

### 2) Focus Groups with Students

Focus group discussions with 45 students provided rich qualitative data regarding their experiences with political science:

- **Perceptions of Engagement:** Students articulated a desire for more relevant and practical engagement with the subject, such as simulations of legislative processes or community-based projects. One participant stated, "Learning about politics is boring until we can actually feel part of it."
- **Information Access:** The discussions revealed that students relied heavily on supplementary materials and the internet to find relevant political content, as school-provided materials often felt insufficient for their learning needs.

## 4.3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Overall, the analysis reveals significant challenges in political science education at the higher secondary level in Tripura, characterized by curricular irrelevance, insufficient teaching methodologies, and a lack of resources. Both quantitative and qualitative data emphasize the need for more engaging, modernized content that connects with students' lives, alongside teacher training and resource allocation to enhance the effectiveness of political science education.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study illuminate several critical challenges facing political science education at the higher secondary level in Tripura. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative data, this discussion interprets the implications of these challenges and suggests potential pathways for reform.

### 5.1. CURRICULUM RELEVANCE

The study revealed that a significant majority of students perceive the political science curriculum as outdated, which hampers their engagement with the subject. This finding aligns with existing literature that emphasizes the need for curricula to reflect contemporary issues and actively engage students (Kumar, 2017; Print, 2018). Without a curriculum that resonates with students' lives, educators struggle



to foster the critical thinking and civic understanding that political science aims to develop. Thus, revising the curriculum to incorporate current political dynamics—such as local governance issues, global politics, and civic responsibilities—is essential for revitalizing student interest.

## **5.2. TEACHING METHODS**

The reliance on traditional lecture-based teaching methods, as highlighted in the findings, further constrains the learning experience. The lack of interactive pedagogical approaches contributes to student disengagement, as evidenced by the 60% of students who reported minimal opportunities for participatory learning. Innovative and active teaching strategies—such as debates, role-playing, and collaborative projects—should be integrated into the curriculum to enhance student engagement and understanding. Teacher training programs could be instrumental in equipping educators with these strategies, fostering a more dynamic classroom environment where students can analyze and discuss political issues actively.

## **5.3. RESOURCE AVAILABILITY**

Inadequate access to learning resources emerged as a significant barrier to effective political science education. The findings indicate that many students rely on external materials to supplement their learning. This situation underscores a critical need for improved resource allocation within schools, ensuring that teachers and students have access to up-to-date textbooks, digital resources, and current events information. By investing in these resources, educational authorities can enrich the instructional quality and relevance of political science education.

## **5.4. TEACHER PREPAREDNESS**

The perceptions of teacher preparedness revealed by this study shed light on another layer of the problem. A considerable portion of teachers reported insufficient training in modern pedagogical practices, limiting their ability to engage students effectively. Teacher training programs should prioritize training educators in contemporary teaching methodologies, assessment strategies, and integration of technology in the classroom. Furthermore, ongoing professional development opportunities could empower teachers to stay updated with current political developments and teaching techniques.

## **5.5. IMPLICATIONS FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

The study's findings reveal a concerning trend of disengagement among students from political processes, which could have long-term implications for civic participation in Tripura. If students do not develop a meaningful connection to political science during their formative years, they may become disinterested in civic engagement as adults. As Levine (2018) points out, it is critical to foster civic knowledge and engagement early on to cultivate a generation of informed citizens. Reforms in political science education must be designed not only to enhance academic performance but also to develop active and responsible members of society.

## 5.6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REFORMS

Based on the findings and discussions presented, several recommendations for reform in political science education in Tripura emerge:

- 1) **Curriculum Revision:** Implement a curriculum that integrates contemporary political issues, local governance examples, and interactive content.
- 2) **Active Learning Strategies:** Encourage the adoption of diverse pedagogical methods that prioritize student engagement, including discussions, simulations, and community involvement.
- 3) **Resource Enhancement:** Allocate resources for updated textbooks, digital materials, and access to current events to broaden the learning experience.
- 4) **Teacher Training Programs:** Provide comprehensive training for teachers in modern teaching methods and civic education practices to improve instructional quality.
- 5) **Community Involvement:** Foster partnerships with community organizations to facilitate real-world learning experiences that connect students with civic engagement opportunities.

Addressing the identified challenges in political science education in Tripura is crucial for fostering a politically literate and engaged generation. By making systematic changes to the curriculum, teaching methodologies, and resources, educational stakeholders can enhance the quality of political science education and empower students to become informed and active participants in their democracy.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study has comprehensively explored the challenges of political science education at the higher secondary level in Tripura, highlighting significant issues related to curriculum relevance, teaching methodologies, resource availability, and teacher preparedness. The findings demonstrate that students' disconnection from the subject arises from outdated curricula that fail to engage with current political realities, pedagogical approaches that lack interactivity, and insufficient resources that limit educational quality.

The implications of these challenges extend beyond academic performance; they pose a risk to the development of informed and active citizens who are crucial for the functioning of a healthy democracy. As the youth of Tripura navigate an increasingly complex political landscape, it is imperative that educational authorities and stakeholders take decisive actions to reform political science education. By integrating contemporary issues into the curriculum, promoting active learning strategies, and enhancing resource availability, schools can foster a more engaging and relevant learning environment.

Moreover, equipping teachers with the necessary training and ongoing professional development is essential to empower them to deliver effective instruction and inspire a greater interest in political science among students. Understanding the importance of civic education is crucial not just for individual student development but also for the progress of society as a whole.

In summary, the findings of this study underscore the urgent need for a coordinated effort to reform political science education in Tripura. By addressing the identified challenges, educational policymakers can enhance the quality of



political science instruction, ultimately cultivating a citizenry that is not only knowledgeable about political processes but also motivated to engage actively in civic life.

Future research should continue to explore innovative practices in political science education and assess the impact of implemented reforms. Continuous monitoring and evaluation will be key to ensuring that political science education evolves to meet the needs of students and society, preparing them to become informed and responsible citizens in a democratic society.

### **CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

None.

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