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**EMPOWERING CITIZENS: DOES GENDER DIFFERENCE PREVAILS IN
THE EXERCISE OF CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY**

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ABSTRACT

Empowering civic responsible citizens ensure a better nation. The present study aims at investigating how far the history students are responsible as future citizens and whether there exist any gender difference exist among them. The sample consists of 1611 students of B.A (History) studying at various colleges of arts and science in TamilNadu. Descriptive method using survey as technique was used to solve the present problem. Exercise of Civic Responsibility Scale (ECRS) developed and validated by V.Sasikala and S.Francisca (2016) had been used for collecting the data. The data was analyzed using mean, S.D and 't' test. The result showed that majority of the college students exercise their civic responsibility moderately and gender difference prevails in the exercise of civic responsibility.

KEYWORDS: Active participation, Civic Responsibility, Empowerment, History Students.

INTRODUCTION

Everyone is accountable to their own needs and for the welfare of others. Today people forget their responsibilities but instead blame others. A responsible personality must reflect the reliability and trustworthiness. "Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the

the life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non political processes" (Thomas Ehrlich, 2000). Civic engagement and national service can contribute to educational and occupational development and continued citizenship (Bonnie R. J, Stroud C & Breiner H, 2015). Kindling the spirit of youth to explore, solve, contribute and reflect in various civic activities would help in strengthening their social connections.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Joshi and Uma soni (2016) conducted a study on Civic Responsibility of Undergraduate students of the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara. Findings revealed that majority of the respondents were highly civic responsible. There was a significant difference in civic responsibility of the students in relation to their faculty, type of family, board of education school and medium of instruction in school.

Flanagan, C & Matthew Bundnik (2011) conducted a study on Civic Engagement and Psychosocial Well-Being in College Students. The results provide window into the range of psychological factors like sense of benevolence, connectedness, and decrease in stress levels that are positively impacted by students' civic participation.

Emmanuel Oritsejafor & James S Guseh (2004) undertaken a case study on Civic Education among College Students. the findings of the study reveals that institutions of higher learning that include community service in their academic programs contribute to the promotion of civic engagement and, hence, political participation.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Social issues, scientific developments and arising political controversies call for an active participation from youth community. Thus, there is an urge need for youth civic engagement among the countries of the world as a long time solution to global issues. Civic responsibility refers to the participation and contribution to civic and public life by means of voting, staying politically informed and engaging in community and social service activities. Youth's civic participation, act as a barometer for future democracy. The importance of clear understating of their significant share in community and nations development has to be instilled in their minds. Providing opportunities during adolescence to work in collaboration with peers and adults on engaging issues regarding civic engagement contribute to education, occupation and psychological well being (Constance Flanagan and Matthew Bundick, 2011). Volunteering for civic activities during adolescence and young adulthood is associated with improved health and well-being (Pasque, P. A., 2008).

The present study has been undertaken to find out how far the college students exercise their civic responsibility. People are aware of their rights but when it comes for duty and their responsibility they take a step backward. Their accountability to the political structure, society, nation, environment, democracy and in their personal life forms a base for their active participation as responsible citizens.

The study also augments the gender difference that exists among the youth. It helps the educators and policy makers to pay attention and formulate plans and activities that will help to curb the differences and encouraging active partnership among the youth in civic and public life.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To find out the level of exercise of civic responsibility and its dimensions of history students with reference to gender.

To find out whether there is any significant difference between the mean scores of exercise of civic responsibility and its dimensions of history students with respect to gender.

HYPOTHESES

The level of exercise of civic responsibility and its dimensions of history students is low with reference to gender.

There is no significant difference between the mean scores of exercise of civic responsibility and its dimensions of history students with respect to gender.

METHODOLOGY

The investigators have employed descriptive method using survey as technique to study the exercise of civic responsibility among the history students. Exercise of Civic Responsibility Scale (ECRS) developed and validated by V.Sasikala and S.Francisca (2016) was used for collecting data. The investigators had drawn a sample of 1611 students of B.A (history) studying at various arts and science colleges in TamilNadu using simple random sampling technique through lottery method.

PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS:

NULL HYPOTHESIS 1

The level of exercise of civic responsibility and its dimensions of history students is low with reference to gender.

TABLE. 1
LEVEL OF EXERCISE OF CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY AND ITS DIMENSIONS OF HISTORY STUDENTS WITH REFERENCE TO GENDER

Dimensions	Gender	Low		Average		High	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Political Responsibility	Male	11 9	16.2	516	70.4	98	13.4
	Female	14 4	16.4	595	67.8	13 9	15.8
Social Responsibility	Male	11 3	15.4	516	70.4	10 4	14.2
	Female	14 6	16.6	601	68.5	13 1	14.9
Democratic Responsibility	Male	12 6	17.2	468	63.8	13 9	19.0
	Female	14 9	17.0	538	61.3	19 1	21.8
National Responsibility	Male	15 2	20.7	444	60.6	13 7	18.7
	Female	14 3	16.3	582	66.3	15 3	17.4
Environmental Responsibility	Male	10 1	13.8	501	68.3	13 1	17.9
	Female	18 4	21.0	619	70.5	75	8.5
Personal Responsibility	Male	12 0	16.4	440	60.0	17 3	23.6
	Female	15 3	17.4	483	55.0	24 2	27.6
ECR in Total	Male	11 4	15.6	491	67.0	12 8	17.5
	Female	14 6	16.6	591	67.3	14 1	16.1

is inferred from the above table I that majority of the history students exercise a moderate level civic responsibility with reference to gender. But, 23.6% of male and 27.6% of female exercise level of personal responsibility.

NULL HYPOTHESIS 1

There is no significant difference between the mean scores of exercise of civic responsibility and its dimensions of history students with respect to gender

TABLE.2

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MEAN SCORES OF EXERCISE OF CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY AND ITS DIMENSIONS OF HISTORY STUDENTS WITH RESPECT TO GENDER.

Exercise of Civic Responsibility	Male		Female		Calculated 't' Value	Remark
	N= 733		N= 878			
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
Political Responsibility	28.14	4.867	28.04	4.813	.389	NS
Social Responsibility	27.48	5.577	27.97	5.389	1.781	NS
Democratic responsibility	22.23	4.942	22.56	5.081	1.304	NS
National Responsibility	22.55	4.258	23.51	3.915	4.665	S**
Environmental Responsibility	21.16	4.207	22.06	3.963	4.382	S**
Personal Responsibility	23.72	4.890	24.96	4.692	5.186	S**
ECR in total	145.28	17.91	149.08	16.446	4.399	S**

S**= 1% level of significance the table value is 2.617, NS-not-significant)

It is observed from the above table 2 that the calculated 't' value is greater than the table value at 1% level of significance in the dimensions of National responsibility, environmental responsibility, personal responsibility and ECR in total. Whereas, it is less for the dimensions of political responsibility, social responsibility and democratic responsibility.

DISCUSSION

There is significant difference between male and female history students in their exercise of civic responsibility and its dimensions of national responsibility, environmental responsibility, personal responsibility and ECR in total.

Comparing the mean scores it is evident that the female students exercised their national responsibility, environmental responsibility, personal responsibility and ECR in total in a better way than their male counterparts. The reasons may be that females are equipped with better understanding and anticipating qualities than male students. In their way to "empowerment" women build up positive and service oriented, eco-centric and value based environment which gives them the tools to better their position in life. Fighting for equality and social justice laid the basis for their awareness on their rights and duties which in turn helped them to be civic responsible than male counterparts. The findings of Uma Joshi and Uma soni (2016) contradicts the present study and reports that there exists no gender difference in civic responsibilities among the undergraduate students

... have great admiration towards nature. They involve themselves in eco-centric activities and conservation policies. The Descriptive analyses of various studies show that females are significantly greater environmental concern than males (Lynnette C. Zeleny, Pol-Ping and Christian Adrich, 2000). The study of Ataraz, Sharmir, Celik, Bilge Gokhan (2015) supports the study that female students are more environmentally responsible than males.

... ally, the profile of the care giver is owned by a woman. Female's invisible efforts and roles in family, society and nation's development are documented nowadays. Increased women's participation in military, nation building activities, economic activities reveal their leading role in the behaviour in their personal life and towards the nation. But, the study of Beulah (2015) contradicts this study and states that gender difference does not exist in social responsibility and personal responsibility. The contradiction may be due to the consideration of a different group of higher secondary schools as the sample concerned for the study. Whereas in the present study the history students who are better aware of their rights, duties and responsibilities due to the subject of their study might have been reflected in gender differences.

CONCLUSION

Higher education is a crucial milestone in a student's career. Teaching and enlightening them about their responsibility as a citizen towards their nation, society, environment, family is an essential need for the betterment of any nation. Volunteering at young age is the best single indicator of later volunteering. Hence, higher education must hold the responsibility to prepare youth for adulthood. Policies to integrate more of practical adult and social life situations in the curriculum must be concentrated. So, embedding civic engagement programmes throughout the educational institutions as a campus compact work is the heart of enlightening young men and women.

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