

Political participation and civic literacy in Bajung: an empirical study with correlation analysis

Khadga K.C.

Nagasaki University

A certain minimum level of political knowledge is considered necessary in democracy, and the political knowledge is considered to increase political literacy and competence, which may foster citizens' engagement in associations and their participation in politics. The following quotes show that scholars have differed on the relationship between political knowledge and civic engagement and political participation:

There is near universal agreement that more knowledgeable people participate at a much higher rate (Pop kin and Dimock 1999; 137).

We know that decline in political knowledge and voter turn out has coincided with a rise in educational level, a surprising fact since more educated persons tend not only to be more knowledgeable but to vote more (Nie, Junn, and Stehl-Barry 1996:34).

If we control for socioeconomic class, we know that more highly educated strata generally earn higher income, and the better-off vote (Dopplet and Shearer 1999:18).

We also find that education has less of an effect on participation than age: people vote more as they grow older. But age included at least two distinct elements: life experience and generation (Coulson 1999).

Given the above backdrop, I have tested the hypothesis that the political knowledge will be a significant factor to promote civic engagement and electoral and other forms of political participation of citizens. I use a bivariate correlation analysis, assuming political knowledge as an independent variable and civic engagement and political participation as dependent variables. The research finds that, compared to other citizens, politically knowledgeable citizens in the village of Bajung in Parbat district of Nepal engaged more in civic and political activities. This finding may provide decisive policy implications towards the enhancement of the level of political knowledge of the people to improve their political participation.