

# Relationship between Civic Sense and Civic Responsibility of Junior High School Students

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## Abstract

*The inference of this study, which explored the relationship between civic sense and civic responsibility of junior high school students, is based on the findings of a survey. The sample consisted of 121 students (62 girls and 59 boys) of 8<sup>th</sup> grade at CBSE schools of Varanasi district, UP. The prominent questions of the study were: (a) what is the relationship between students' civic sense and civic responsibility?, and (b) does the relationship between civic sense and civic responsibility differ with gender? Self-developed civic sense test and civic responsibility scale have been used for collection of the data. Product moment coefficient of correlation  $r$  and  $t$  ratio was calculated to analyse the data. The result of the study revealed no significant relationship between students' civic sense and their civic responsibility. On the basis of the findings, it concluded that a student who possesses a high level of civic sense may not be civic responsible. The results also show no significant difference between girls and boys on civic sense test. However, girls outscore boys on the graph of civic responsibility. Girls having equal level of civic sense are more responsible in comparison to boys of the same age group.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Do beliefs of an individual command his/her behaviour? Or an individual's beliefs are the reflections of the ideals of society and his/her behaviour is driven by accessible and favourable social learning.

Civic sense has long been the part and parcel of the curricula in India. However, lack of civic responsibility in our citizens is a matter of piquant debate as well as scholarly articles. Fundamentally, civic sense is that sense which makes an individual civilised (Pillappa, 2012). It encompasses the norms of society and the values enshrined in the Constitution that determine his/her values in the social context. Civic sense sculpts an individual into an entity that the State dreams of. The process of making an individual a citizen is continuous. In broader terms, the ethics and values enshrined in the Constitution and continued with tradition are imbibed by the people of the country. It can be said, as the State develops, civic sense develops as social ethos. A compassionate and cooperative attitude for fellow human beings is the premise of civic sense.

## SOCIALISATION AND CIVIC SENSE

Socialisation is one of the fundamental determinants of an individual's behaviour in a particular situation. Family, neighbourhood, per group and schools shape an individual's beliefs and behaviours (Parsons, 1937). However, changes in family

patterns and the neighbourhood, the influence of technology and media brought a paradigm shift in the process of socialisation. The potential of family as an agent of socialisation is eroding (Sinha, 1984). In the era of growing urbanisation, the structure of neighbourhood is transforming. Now, instead of being a guardian of community values and maintaining an effective social control, the neighbourhood has changed into a complex of houses or apartments. The gadgets have substituted the peers and technology is dominating the making and unmaking of an individual's persona. In spite of all changes, school is still standing with its role and responsibilities. In shaping of the beliefs and behaviour of a child, the role of schools has become even more important in the present situation. Dewey (1916), a prominent educationist, considers schools as a miniature of society. A State imparts the knowledge of the rights and responsibilities to its citizens through schools. The civic education plays a prominent role there and it helps in developing a sense of being responsible citizens in students.

As mentioned earlier, civic sense has been part of the curriculum in India since Independence. In schools, the co-curricular activities are accordingly structured keeping the premises of civic education in mind. They are often revised as per the need of nation from time to time. As in 1961 an emotional integration

committee constituted by the Union Ministry of Education suggested for special assemblies, which had to be held twice in a school year, wherein students would have to be educated about the unity and oneness of the country. They would have to take oath of loyalty and devotion to country as well as for human beings in those assemblies. A suggested text of those oaths was like, "To my country and my people, I pledge my devotion; In their well-being and prosperity alone lies my happiness". In 1968, the National Integration Council suggested to develop the textbooks, which could impart citizenship education to students. The National Policy on Education (MHRD, 1986) envisaged a *Common Core Curriculum*, which extensively discussed on the citizenship education and its implementation policies.

The efforts for developing the civic sense in citizens and making them responsible is a never-ceasing process. However the question arises, are the efforts fructifying in our country? Does the civic sense developed in schools turn into civic responsibility among our students? Taking a sample of junior high school students, the present study provides an empirical answer to the latter question. The answer to this pertinent question is important to understand whether the sense of being a responsible citizen is converting into action amongst our students — who are future citizens.

The present study provides empirical answers to the following specific research questions:

- What is the relationship between civic sense of junior high school students with their civic responsibility?
- Is there any difference in civic sense and civic responsibility of junior high school girls and boys?

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study achieved the following specific objectives

- To study the relationship between civic sense and civic responsibility of junior high school.
- To compare the level of civic sense of junior high school girls and boys.
- To compare the level of civic responsibility of junior high school girls and boys.

### **THE RATIONALE AND HYPOTHESES**

The major research premise of this study was that the civic sense taught and developed through the civics curriculum at the junior high school level should be reflected in the civic responsibility of the students. Accordingly, the expectation in this study was that a significant positive relationship must exist between civic sense and civic responsibility. Further, since both boys and girls are studying the same civics syllabus, it was expected that significant differences will not be found in their civic sense and civic responsibility.

In order to verify the above expectations, the following null hypotheses had been formulated and subjected to empirical verification:

- There is no significant relationship between civic sense and civic responsibility of junior high school students.
- There is no significant difference between civic sense of junior high school girls and boys.
- There is no significant difference between civic responsibility of junior high school girls and boys.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The research design adopted for the study was descriptive survey design.

#### **Sample**

The sample of the study comprised 121 students (62 girls and 59 boys) of 8<sup>th</sup> grade studying in two schools of Varanasi following the Central Board of Secondary Education syllabus. Random cluster sampling technique had been used to select the sample.

#### **Tool Used**

“Test of Civic Sense” constructed and standardised by Singh (2013) had been used to measure the civic sense of junior high school students. This tool consists of 44 items on civic sense. The test-retest reliability coefficient of this test was 0.87. The author of the tool ensured its content validity besides establishing its construct validity by calculating Cronbach alpha value for each dimensions of civic sense.

The civic responsibility of students had been measured by civic responsibility scale developed and standardised by the researcher herself. The scale consisted of total 42 items of civic responsibility. Test-retest and split-half reliability of instrument was found to be 0.73 and 0.78 respectively. In order to establish the validity of the tool, Cronbach alpha value was calculated for each dimension and was found to be satisfactory.

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

For extracting meaningful inferences, the data was subjected to compute the mean, S.D., Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient  $r$  and  $t$ -test.

### **THE RESULTS**

For verification of *first hypothesis*, i.e., there is no significant relationship between civic sense and civic responsibility of junior high school students, the Pearson product moment correlation was computed. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 shows that the value of correlation between civic sense and civic responsibility (0.127),  $p=0.161$  is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies

**Table 1**  
**Relationship between Civic Sense and Civic Responsibility of Junior High School Students**

<b>N</b>	<b>Value of correlation</b>
<b>121</b>	<b>0.127</b>

that civic sense and civic responsibility of junior high school students do not strongly go together and the expectation that learning of civic sense as an outcome of school Civics curriculum should be translated or reflected in students' civic responsibility is not found to be true. Therefore, it can be concluded that a student who is having a high level of civic sense may not necessarily demonstrate a high level of civic responsibility on an action level in day-to-day life.

For the verification of *second null hypothesis*, i.e., there is no significant difference between civic sense of junior high school girls and boys, the t-test was applied to compare the means and standard deviations. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 2.

The result in Table 2 shows that significant difference does not exist between civic sense of junior high school girls and boys. Consequently, the second null hypothesis has also been accepted.

The t-test results pertaining to *third null hypothesis* comparing the means and standard deviations civic responsibility scores of junior high school girls and boys have been presented in Table 3.

Based upon the significant t-value in Table 3, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between civic responsibilities of junior high school boys and girls is rejected. Since the mean scores of female students is significantly higher than male students, it may be concluded that junior high school girls are significantly more civic than their male counterparts.

## DISCUSSION

The results of the present study reveal that civic sense does not essentially convert into civic responsibility in students most of the time. In this context, a careful examination of the scores of the civic sense test and civic responsibility scale suggests that students who are excellent at civic sense test ( $M= 41.73$ ) most of the time were scoring average on the civic

**Table 2**  
**T-test Analysis of Male and Female Students in their Civic Sense**

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	T-ratio	5% level of significance
Civic Sense	Male	59	41.67	1.67	0.370	not significant
	Female	62	41.79	1.66		

**Table 3**  
**T-test Analysis of Male and Female Students in their Civic Responsibility**

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	T-ratio	5% level of significance
Civic Sense	Male	59	64.88	1.84	4.035	Significant
	Female	62	66.17	1.68		

responsibility scale (M=65.54). This result indicates that the students are aware about the social ethos and constitutional norms. However, when the question of practising those values and norms is asked, they simply choose the favourable alternatives. For example, they are aware that road is not to be crossed when the light is red but they cross it, as it is in their favour at that point of time. Most of the time, these alternatives are the reflexes of favourable social learning. It appears that socialisation rather than classroom learning is an important factor in shaping the civic behaviour of an individual.

As the findings of this study reveal that the students have sufficient level of civic sense, it is clear that the efforts done by schools in promoting the civic sense are fructifying. Hence, our curriculum is in tandem with the need of society. But, somewhere the other agents of socialisation like family, neighbourhood are not disseminating the idea of practising civic sense. The result of present study affirms the study of LaPiere (1934). He did a study to know the belief and behaviour of American people towards Chinese people. He found that 91 per cent of the participants of his survey were not biased in their belief towards Chinese people, but were discriminatory in their behaviour for them.

Wicker (1969) reviewed a number of studies with a variety of samples and concluded that our attitudes are

not the predictor of our behaviour. Diener and Wallbom (1976) did a study to know the attitude of students towards cheating. He noted that all university students say that cheating is morally wrong. However, when a test was taken to check whether students follow what they believe in or not, they asked the students to work on an anagram solving task and told them to stop when a bell in the room sounded. They found that 71 per cent students cheated by working past the bell. Batson termed such kind of attitude as moral hypocrisy. We do witness such a moral hypocrisy in our society and it appears our youngsters are swayed by it more than what they are taught in schools.

The attitude of an individual is the sedimentation of experiences. It guides individual's action in a particular situation. Study of Fazio and Zanna (1981) suggests that when attitude arises from experience, they are far more likely to guide actions. Samples of the present study are the students of 8<sup>th</sup> class. It might be possible they are having less exposure, consequently less experience. Therefore, what is present on cognitive level is not converting into action. That's why the students are aware about civic values, but they are not practising them. These observations certainly raise issues for further research into this domain of social importance.

Further related to second and third hypothesis, it is found that girls and boys are somewhat same on the



level of civic sense ( $M=41.67$  and  $M=41.79$ ), however, on responsibility scale girls outscore boys. The analysis done on various dimensions shows that girls are similar to boys in: (a) responsibility towards environment; (b) to act towards fraternity and cooperation; (c) leadership skills; and (d) to act for enhancing sensitivity towards gender, minority, physically challenged and socially deprived. But girls achieve higher at: (a) safeguarding public property; (b) critical appraisal towards surrounding activities; and (c) abiding by the rules, and rights and duties enshrined in the Indian Constitution. The findings suggest that girls are equal to boys on the cognitive level but they do better on action level. However, the sample size of girls taken in the study is too small to generalise the result.

### **IMPLICATIONS**

The present study has immense implications for policy-makers of education, teachers and parents. As the study reveals that the students of junior high school level are cognizant of the civic values but they do not practise them. It can be said the changes and reviews of educational policy till now are only fruitful for developing civic sense in students but have failed to translate it into actions to behave as civic responsible citizens. The students are aware about the civic values, which is a praiseworthy accomplishment. Now the policy-makers should shift the

focus on the practice of those values at the students' action level.

For the purpose, the educational practices should be restructured in such ways, which can make students active members of society rather than simply passive learners and knowledge bank. On the level of curriculum, cooperative learning and group learning based on experience and practice should be given more weightage in place of traditional memorisation method of teaching. On the level of co-curricular activities, service learning, field trips, community learning should be introduced. These activities will make students more aware about society issues and construct situations where students will learn to practise the civic values. If those situations are identical to real life, the learning will become the part of their habit and eventually change the attitude. The results of the present study are useful for school administrators and classroom teachers. They can change the school climate and the method of teaching in class as per the suggestion of the study.

The family is considered as the nucleus of society. Its role is more prominent in socialisation in comparison to other agents. The process of socialisation cannot be successful without the involvement of family. The parents need to take their role more seriously for making the child a responsible citizen. Moral hypocrisy in the family should be denounced before the children. The study can be enlightening for them.

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