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IMPACT OF EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS IN LEGISLATIVE PERFORMANCE AND ETHICAL GOVERNANCE: LESSONS FROM INDIA AND GLOBAL DEMOCRACIES

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I. ABSTRACT

Education has always been considered the basic criterion to get employment in almost all sectors. In the case of politics, especially democratic politics in India, there is no such educational criterion that one must meet to become a member of parliament or a member of the legislative assembly. The discussion concerning the need for compulsory education for political leaders in India is not a new one, but no consensus has been reached till today. People supporting the idea state that mandatory educational qualifications for leaders are a must for a country to have good governance, whereas people who oppose mandatory education for political leaders assert that mandatory education goes against the fundamental principles of democracy. This topic lies at the crossroads of democratic participation and the need for efficiency. According to studies, people with higher education possess better analytical abilities and technical knowledge to make efficient decisions; however, history shows that some leaders lacking proper education changed the lives of their nations with the power of foresight, empathy, and courage. In this research paper, we will discuss whether education plays an important role in the efficiency of political performance. What is more, does it make politicians more ethical? Through the study of the political history of India and comparative political histories from other regions around the world, we can prove that while formal education makes politicians, it does not contribute towards ethics and grassroots connectivity.

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II. KEYWORDS

Legislative qualifications, educational attainment, democratic representation, criminalization of politics, institutional reform.

III. INTRODUCTION

Is it possible for someone with formal education or more formal education to be a successful political leader? The answer to this question is simple and obvious: the development of a nation is influenced by the efficacy of its political leaders. India's democracy, the largest in the world, stands as a vibrant tapestry of diverse social, cultural, and educational backgrounds, woven together within a dynamic multi-party system. India's constitutional democracy is founded on the principle of universal adult suffrage, which emphasizes political equality and the idea that every citizen aged 18 or above has the right to elect their own representatives to parliament. Any property, taxation, or educational prerequisites for voting and holding office are expressly rejected by this.

The farmers deliberately adopted this inclusive approach, aware that educational criteria would disenfranchise most citizens and concentrate power in a select few. The Election Commission of India (ECI) reports that more than 968 million people were registered as eligible voters for the 2024 Lok Sabha general elections, of whom approximately 642 million actually cast their ballots, reflecting a turnout rate of 65.79% the largest absolute number of votes cast in any election in human history. This number surpasses the combined populations of Russia, the United States, and the European Union. It is also important to note that India has a fiercely competitive multi-party system.

The ECI divides parties among thousands of unrecognized registered parties, state parties (more than 50), and national parties (six as of 2024).

Under the Constitution of India, the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha require a minimum age of 25, while the Rajya Sabha requires 30. There are no constitutional requirements for educational qualifications mentioned. However, the modern administrative state's growing complexity has sparked debate over whether lawmakers should meet

minimum educational standards. Supporters argue that the modern government system, with its complicated fiscal policies and technical drafting, requires a basic level of formal education. They believe these qualifications are essential for effective performance. Lawmakers must oversee a specialized executive branch, understand intricate policy briefs, and create competent, informed legislation.

The discussion suggests that the growing gap between the technical complexity of today's governance, such as quantum computing regulations and macroeconomic stability protocols, and the educational preparedness of some lawmakers threatens both administrative efficiency and the overall quality and sustainability of democracy. Without foundational knowledge, representatives may rely too heavily on unelected officials, weakening accountability and democratic legitimacy.

This ongoing discussion about education is evident in the changing demographic profile of legislative bodies, as seen in the increasing number of educated representatives in parliaments worldwide. A strong example of this is the Indian Parliament. The recently elected 18th Lok Sabha marks a historic shift. For the first time in India's democratic history, the 18th Lok Sabha has no illiterate member, all 121 candidates who declared themselves illiterate were defeated in the 2024 general elections, as confirmed by the ADR report.

The new assembly boasts an overwhelming majority of representatives with graduate or postgraduate degrees. This shift is no coincidence; voters increasingly favor formal education and strong skills when choosing their representatives. The move toward electing legislators with formal education shows that the public recognizes the need for skilled leaders. In the 21st century, governance requires intellectual and professional readiness to address issues such as geopolitical conflicts, economic growth, and public health policy. This trend connects educational background with the belief that these individuals can serve the public effectively. Voters see academic credentials as a sign of someone's ability to understand complex information, think critically, and make sound decisions in national policy. This creates a conflict between technical skill and inclusive representation, a significant challenge for diverse, developing democracies. Ultimately, this analysis argues that while human capital

enhances legislative proficiency, the pillars of ethical governance and transformational success rest more fundamentally on institutional robustness, moral character, and inclusive representation. This research paper investigates the true impact of educational qualifications on a politician's legislative performance and ethical conduct. The paper traces the historical evolution of the Indian polity up to now, analyzing how the framers of the Constitution viewed education and how the profile of the Indian Parliament has shifted over 75 years.

Articles 84 and 102 of the Constitution of India delineate the qualifications and disqualifications for membership of Parliament, explicitly omitting any requirement of formal educational qualifications, thereby reinforcing the constitutional commitment to universal adult franchise and broad-based democratic inclusion.

A. Research Framework

This analysis is highly significant because it addresses a rising tension between democratic inclusion and administrative competence. As citizens become more frustrated with poor governance and corruption, there is naturally a demand that politicians hold academic degrees. However, implementing such rules could permanently alter the nature of representative democracy. By testing the actual impact of education on a politician's performance and ethics, this research provides evidence-based guidance for future constitutional and electoral reforms.

The primary objectives of this research paper are:

1. To trace the historical evolution of the Indian polity regarding the educational profile of its leaders, from the Constituent Assembly to the 18th Lok Sabha.
2. To analyze the impact of a politician's formal education on their technical legislative performance (such as debate participation and lawmaking).
3. To investigate the interrelation, if any, between a politician's educational qualifications and their ethical conduct, specifically looking at criminal records.

4. To explore global and historical evidence regarding the capability of leaders with and without formal academic degrees.
5. To suggest practical, democratic reforms that can improve the quality of governance without restricting the fundamental right to contest elections.

B. Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following core questions:

1. Did the framers of the Indian Constitution view formal education as a necessary requirement for political leadership?
2. Does possessing a higher educational degree make a lawmaker more active and productive in the legislature?
3. Does a higher level of formal education result in more ethical governance and lower rates of political criminalization?
4. If mandatory educational qualifications are harmful to democracy, what alternative changes must be adopted to ensure smooth and capable governance?

C. Scope and Limitations

1. **Scope:** The scope of this paper is primarily focused on the Indian political system, examining the constitutional framework, historical debates, and the current profile of the national Parliament (up to the 18th Lok Sabha elected in 2024).
2. **Limitations:** The study relies entirely on secondary data sources, such as reports from PRS Legislative Research, the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), and established academic journals. It does not involve primary field surveys or interviews with current politicians.

D. Methodology

This research employs a qualitative and analytical methodology based on secondary data collection:

1. **Historical Analysis:** The paper reviews the Constituent Assembly Debates to understand the foundational philosophy of Indian democracy regarding voter and candidate eligibility.
2. **Statistical Review:** Quantitative data from PRS Legislative Research is used to measure legislative performance (debate participation, bill introduction) based on educational levels. Data from the ADR is analyzed to track the correlation between the educational backgrounds of MPs and their criminal records.
3. **Case Studies:** The paper uses specific historical and global case studies (such as the leadership of K. Kamaraj and global economic studies) to test the theoretical arguments for and against educational thresholds.
4. **Literature Review:** The study analyzes the writings of key political thinkers (Mill, Rousseau, Sen) to build a theoretical framework for the arguments presented.

IV. PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND

To understand the debate over educational qualifications, it is important to learn how great political thinkers have viewed the relationship between education, equality, and human capability.

A. The Danger of Exclusion: John Stuart Mill

According to renowned representative democracy philosopher John Stuart Mill, possessing political authority over others necessitates a certain amount of competence.³ He maintained that before people are granted the ability to vote or govern, they should be able to read and write. But according to Mill, the government is solely to blame for illiteracy. He was adamant that it is a personal injustice to deny someone the opportunity to engage in politics if a society does not offer universal instruction. He maintained that keeping people out of politics makes them feel as though the laws do not apply to them, making them "pariahs in a full-grown and

³ The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, Volume XIX - Essays on Politics and Society Part 2, <https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/robson-the-collected-works-of-john-stuart-mill-volume-xix-essays-on-politics-and-society-part-2>

civilized nation." According to Mill, we cannot penalize the impoverished for the state's failure to build schools.

B. The Principle of Equality: Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Jean-Jacques Rousseau placed a lot of emphasis on human equality. He made the case very clear in his well-known book 'The Social Contract' that everyone is equal by law and by right, even though people may differ in their physical prowess or intelligence. ⁴ Rousseau cautioned against structures that grant the wealthy or the highly educated elite an excessive amount of control. He pointed out that laws are frequently designed to benefit the wealthy while harming the poor or the impoverished. We run the risk of establishing a government that does not comprehend or care about the problems faced by the average, uneducated citizen if we limit political office to members of the educated class.

C. The Capability Approach: Amartya Sen

Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen offers a contemporary perspective on this matter with his "Capability Approach." Sen contends that we should consider a person's true potential rather than just their assets (such as money or a degree). A formal degree is merely a tool when it comes to political leadership. True capability entails a leader's practical capacity to comprehend community concerns, demonstrate empathy, and promote constructive change. A highly educated leader who has never experienced hardship may not be as capable of creating effective social measures as a leader who has personally experienced poverty. Sen's method teaches us to evaluate leaders based on their moral vision and their accomplishments rather than just their academic certificates.

This analysis heavily relies on a tripartite foundation: human capital theory, leadership theory, and institutionalism. These frameworks provide the necessary lenses to evaluate diverse manifestations of political competence.

⁴ The Social Contract Quotes by Jean-Jacques Rousseau - Goodreads, <https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/702720-du-contrat-social-ou-principes-du-droit-politique>

D. Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory, rooted in labor economics and political economy, posits that education enhances cognitive abilities, analytical skills, and technical competence.⁵

In politics and public administration, a legislator's human capital serves as a reliable proxy for their capacity to comprehend policy details, navigate bureaucratic structures, and allocate state resources.⁶ Within a modern economy and complex legislative environment, transforming human capital into organizational learning is vital.

Highly educated leaders are better equipped to adapt to novel policy challenges, such as digital infrastructure deployment or clean energy transitions, thereby improving constituency outcomes. This theory supports the argument that formal education accelerates legislative productivity. Under this framework, an educated legislator is not just a representative but a competent administrator who can decipher governance's technical minutiae, reduce reliance on bureaucrats, and exercise superior oversight over the executive branch.

E. Leadership Theory

Leadership Theory diverges from Human Capital Theory's technocratic focus, emphasizing intrinsic traits, moral philosophy, and behavioral competencies not solely conferred by formal

academic institutions.⁷ Two dominant paradigms within this broad family are Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership. Servant leadership is rooted in a conviction of justice, ethical reasoning, and natural law.⁸ It focuses on the polity's

⁵ Human capital: the link between leadership and organizational learning | European Journal of Management and Business Economic EmeraldPublishing, <https://www.emerald.com/ejmbe/article/28/1/25/94216/Human-capital-the-link-between-leadership-and>

⁶ Do educated leaders perform better? Evidence on parliamentary ..., <https://ideas.repec.org/a/eee/ecmode/v152y2025ics0264999325001725.html>

⁷ Leadership Theories and Styles, <https://www.wgu.edu/blog/leadership-theories-styles2004.html>

⁸ Abraham Lincoln: A Wise and Just Servant Leader Motivated by Natural Law Principles, Faith, and Virtue - Regent University, <https://www.regent.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Regent-Research-Roundtables-2022-Servant-Leadership-Faulhaber.pdf>

betterment and suffering alleviation, not personal power or ambition. Historical texts like Cicero and Thomas Aquinas detail the relationship between moral reasoning and public policy.⁶ Transformational leadership involves charismatic engagement, rallying a populace during a crisis, and formulating a unifying vision. These theoretical models suggest that while formal education imparts technical and administrative skills, the essential qualities of political leadership such as empathy, courage, integrity, and the ability to inspire are cultivated through personal experiences and challenges. Therefore, visionary leadership and moral fortitude can substitute for a lack of formal university degrees.⁹

F. Institutionalism

The third foundational pillar, Institutionalism specifically New or Historical Institutionalism argues that the ultimate quality of governance is determined far less by the individual traits, educational backgrounds, or personal charisma of the actors, and far more by the strength, design, and independence of the institutions within which they are forced to operate.¹⁰

Institutions represent the formal and informal "rules of the game" that constrain human behavior, mitigate corrupt practices, and rigidly guide policy implementation.¹¹ From this perspective, the effectiveness of an elected representative is heavily mediated, supported, or restricted by institutional guardrails. These include robust parliamentary research services, independent and powerful ethics committees, vigilant electoral commissions, and an active civil society.¹²

⁹ What Leadership Style Was Winston Churchill: Executive Lessons - Quarterdeck, <https://quarterdeck.co.uk/articles/what-leadership-style-was-winston-churchill/>

¹⁰ Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge University Press, 1990); James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, 'The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life' (1984) 78(3) *American Political Science Review* 734.

<https://www.centerconsulting.org/blog/6-leadership-lessons-from-the-legacy-of-winston-churchill>
¹¹ hybridising (e)-governance in india: the interplay of politics, technology and culture - Heidelberg University, http://archiv.ub.uniheidelberg.de/volltextserver/14223/1/PhD_HYBRIDISING%20%28E%29GOVERNANCE%20IN%20INDIA_THE%20INTERPLAY%20OF%20POLITICS%2C%20TECHNOLOGY%20AND%20CULTURE_BIDISHA%20CHAUDHURI.pdf

¹² The Indian Parliament as an Institution of Accountability - <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/46370/23.pdf>

If strong institutions are in place, they can often compensate for a legislator's lack of formal education by providing the necessary technical, legal, and administrative support required to draft laws and formulate policy.¹³ Conversely, even the most highly educated and credentialed politicians will fail to deliver ethical governance if they operate within a degraded institutional framework that permits unchecked rent-seeking, defection, and authoritarianism.¹⁴ Institutionalism thus posits that systemic reform must focus on the architecture of the state rather than the academic credentials of the individual.

V. HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF INDIAN POLITY

The evolution of the Indian political system offers the ideal setting for researching how education affects governance. The historical development of Indian politics from 1947 to the present reveals a significant change in the leaders' educational backgrounds.

A. The Constituent Assembly: Faith in the Common Man

Around 12% of Indians were literate when the country achieved its freedom. The Constituent Assembly engaged in heated discussions during the writing of the Constitution on whether state legislature and members of Parliament should have a certain level of education.

K.T. Shah was among the MPs who advocated a clear rule prohibiting anyone without literacy from serving in the legislature.⁵ But Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the principal drafter of the Constitution, and other notable figures vehemently disagreed with this notion. According to Ambedkar, future Parliaments should have the authority to determine whether or not educational requirements are necessary.⁵ More significantly, the founders understood that imposing educational barriers would prevent millions of impoverished farmers, laborers, and the very freedom fighters who had left their

¹³ Bridging the gap between research and parliament: An examination of parliamentary mechanisms for engaging with academic research, <https://www.ruru.ac.uk/files/2024/05/POST-final-report.pdf>

¹⁴ CHAPTER 3: DEVELOPMENT: MODERNIZATION THEORY AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY - UC Berkeley Law, <https://www.law.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/External-State-Building-We-Should-Aim-for-Good-Enough-Governance.pdf>

schools to fight for the country's independence.⁵ They placed their absolute faith in universal adult franchise, believing that an uneducated citizen still possesses the wisdom to know what is good for them and to choose the right representative.⁷

B. Evolution from the 1st to the 18th Lok Sabha

The Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Indian Parliament, has undergone substantial demographic change over the years. Approximately 58% of the Members of Parliament (MPs) in the First Lok Sabha (1952–1957) held graduate or higher degrees, as reported by PRS Legislative Research.

Voters inevitably started choosing more educated representatives as education spread throughout the nation. When the 18th Lok Sabha is elected in 2024, the change is finalized. There are no illiterate MPs in the current Lok Sabha, according to an analysis by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR). 5% of MPs have advanced doctorates, while an astounding 78% of MPs have at least an undergraduate degree. Just 19% of MPs have only completed their education between Class 5 and Class 12.

The historical development demonstrates that Indian voters have naturally chosen to pick highly educated leaders in the absence of a clear constitutional requirement. However, the crucial question still stands: has this highly educated parliament produced better, more moral governance?

VI. CASE STUDIES: TESTING THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION

To understand if educational qualifications truly improve legislative performance and ethical governance, we must look at concrete data and historical examples. The following case studies explore different angles surrounding this debate.

A. Education and Legislative Performance (PRS Data)

The first justification for educated politicians is that their performance in the legislature is superior. This assertion is well supported by data from PRS Legislative Research's analysis of the 17th Lok Sabha. The information demonstrates a strong correlation between an MP's level of education and their involvement in parliamentary discussions. MPs with postgraduate degrees took part in 59 debates on average. On average, MPs with a standard graduate degree took part in 47 debates.

MPs with merely higher secondary education, on the other hand, took part in an average of just 34 debates. This case study demonstrates how formal education improves the technical facets of legislative effectiveness. Educated MPs possess the critical thinking and analytical skills needed to digest complex policy documents, draft bills, and confidently express their views in the parliamentary forum.

B. Education and Ethical Governance (ADR Report 2024)

The empirical data relied upon in this analysis, particularly from the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), is rooted in the landmark judgment of the Supreme Court in *Association for Democratic Reforms & Anr v Union of India*¹⁵. In this case, the Court mandated that all electoral candidates disclose their criminal antecedents, financial assets, and educational qualifications through sworn affidavits. This judicial intervention established the legal foundation for transparency in electoral politics and enabled civil society organizations such as ADR to systematically collect and analyze candidate data. Consequently, the present discussion on the relationship between education and ethical governance is intrinsically linked to this constitutional framework of enforced disclosure.

Does education make politicians more moral, even though it might increase debate participation? The ADR's analysis of data from the 2024 Lok Sabha election presents a grim picture of the connection between ethics and education in Indian politics. With 78% of its members being graduates, the 18th Lok Sabha is the most educated in history, yet it also boasts the greatest number of parliamentarians facing criminal accusations. A startling 251 MPs (46%) of the 543 candidates that won in 2024 have filed criminal charges against themselves. This is a massive jump from 30% in 2009. Even more alarming is that 170 MPs (31%) are facing serious criminal charges, including murder, kidnapping, and crimes against women. Furthermore, the ADR data shows that crime pays in modern politics. In the 2024 elections, candidates with criminal cases had a 15.3% chance of winning, while candidates with a clean background had only a 4.4% chance of winning.

¹⁵ *Association for Democratic Reforms & Anr v Union of India AIR 2002 SC 2112.*

This case study shatters the myth that formal education automatically leads to ethical governance. A parliament full of graduates has not been able to prevent the deep criminalization of Indian politics.

C. K. Kamaraj - The Uneducated Visionary

If highly educated leaders can fail ethically, can uneducated leaders succeed administratively? The life of K. Kamaraj, a former chief minister of Tamil Nadu (then Madras State), proves that they can.

Kamaraj was born into a poor family and had to drop out of school at the age of twelve to support his mother. He lacked any formal higher education. Yet, when he became chief minister in 1954, he delivered what is widely considered the "golden era" of Tamil Nadu's development.

Using his own lived experience of poverty, Kamaraj understood that hungry children cannot study. He introduced the historic free midday meal scheme in schools, a revolutionary idea that dramatically increased school attendance and broke down caste barriers as children ate together. He ensured that almost every village with a population of 300 had a primary school, increasing the number of schools from 16,037 to 30,554 during his tenure. He also brought electricity to rural areas and built vast road networks. Kamaraj's legacy proves that genuine empathy, a desire for public service, and visionary thinking are far more powerful tools for smooth governance than any university degree.

D. The United States and United Kingdom: Western Precedents

Western democracies have a long history of prioritizing character, vision, and institutional dependence over formal academic credentials; this pattern is not exclusive to developing nations. Abraham Lincoln, who is widely recognized as one of the country's finest presidents, was born into extreme poverty on the frontier and only attended formal school for a single year of his life.¹⁶ He was entirely self-

¹⁶ Lincoln, An Example of Leadership, Humility & Perseverance - FSU Panama City - Florida State University

https://pc.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu1536/files/media/PDFs/Student%20Research%20Symposium/EIN_5930_Research_Symposium_Poster_Syed%20Nazem_SP22%20-%20-%20Read-Only.pdf

educated, teaching himself law by reading borrowed books by firelight. Yet, he was able to successfully lead the nation through its greatest existential, constitutional, and moral crisis – the American Civil War – and authored the Emancipation Proclamation and the Gettysburg Address, masterpieces of political thought.

Lincoln's leadership was based on a deep, self-taught grasp of civic morality, human equality, and natural law. His ability to reason correctly and lead with servant leadership produced a just polity far more successfully than his contemporaries' official academic credentials.¹⁷ In contrast, modern American political history has been dominated by presidents possessing elite degrees from Ivy League institutions. While highly educated, these modern administrations have frequently been paralyzed by severe partisan gridlock, institutional decay, and ethical controversies, clearly demonstrating that advanced degrees offer no immunity against political dysfunction or moral failure.

Similarly, in the United Kingdom, Winston Churchill's academic record was notoriously poor. He was an underperforming, mediocre student at Harrow and struggled to pass the entrance exams for the Royal Military College at Sandhurst.¹⁸ He possessed no advanced university degrees in political science, economics, or law. However, Churchill demonstrated remarkable transformational and charismatic leadership when Britain confronted the ultimate crisis of World War II and the looming threat of Nazi invasion. He showed remarkable decisiveness, a readiness to take measured risks, and an unmatched capacity to convey intricate, cohesive visions to a fearful populace. His crisis leadership skills were forged through intense adversity, military service, and character development, not through standardized academic testing or university lectures.

¹⁷ Abraham Lincoln: A Wise and Just Servant Leader Motivated by Natural Law Principles, Faith, and Virtue - Regent University, <https://www.regent.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Regent-Research-Roundtables-2022-Servant-Leadership-Faulhaber.pdf>

¹⁸ What Leadership Style Was Winston Churchill: Executive Lessons - Quarterdeck, <https://quarterdeck.co.uk/articles/what-leadership-style-was-winston-churchill/>

VII. FINDINGS

The thorough integration of quantitative econometric data and comparative historical case studies results in several conclusive, indisputable conclusions about the intricate connection between legislative performance, ethical behavior, and educational credentials.

First, the data demonstrates that formal education serves as a clear and quantifiable operational advantage in the technical performance of legislative obligations. The Indian Parliament's empirical data clearly shows that lawmakers with higher levels of education are better able to interact with intricate fiscal policies, create independent legislation, and successfully oversee state machinery to guarantee real development results for their constituents. Human capital is thus positive and strongly correlated with technical legislative effort.

Second, the essential values of democratic legitimacy, justice, and inclusivity are incompatible with the imposition of mandated educational qualifications. It drastically changes and diminishes the state's representational character by substituting an artificial technocratic elite for the democratic will of the populace.

Third, formal education is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for ethical, transformational governance. The monumental historical legacies of K. Kamaraj, Abraham Lincoln, and Winston Churchill demonstrate unequivocally that visionary leadership is born of lived experience, intense moral conviction, and an innate, empathetic understanding of the populace. Leaders entirely lacking in formal degrees have successfully architected some of the most profound social, educational, and infrastructural reforms in modern history by astutely leveraging the expertise of the civil service and adhering to strict ethical codes.¹⁹

The evidence clearly shows that putting educational barriers on political candidates is not the right way to fix our political system. However, we cannot ignore the fact that

¹⁹ (PDF) CONTRIBUTION OF K. KAMARAJAR EDUCATION AND ..., https://ijcrme.crystalpen.in/uploads/67c54e51d5dad_432.pdf

modern governance is highly complex and requires competent administration. To ensure smooth governance, we must adapt and implement new, progressive changes.

VIII. DISCUSSION

The intense public debate over educational qualifications in India often relies on a deeply flawed, false dichotomy: the assumption that a nation must choose between an uneducated but representative legislature and an educated but elitist one. A strong, resilient democracy necessitates a careful synthesis of both, which is accomplished through institutional support rather than exclusion, according to the empirical and historical data gathered in this research. In India, social representation has proven to be a very effective tool for maintaining the country's huge democratic endeavor and preventing conventional upper-caste elites from permanently controlling political power.²⁰ Introducing severe educational obstacles in an attempt to "cleanse" the political system is a misguided, reactive endeavor that completely misunderstands the underlying causes of bad governance.

The comparative literature from Pakistan shows that when a democracy's formal, legal rules clash violently with the socioeconomic realities of the electorate, the outcome is not better governance but rather the cynical subversion of the rules, as evidenced by the widespread use of proxy candidates and phony degrees.²¹ If the ultimate purpose of the Indian state is to increase the legislative competence and ethical conduct of its parliamentarians while not disenfranchising the grassroots, the solution comes squarely within the framework of Institutionalism rather than excluding human capital requirements. The state must direct its resources toward enhancing the institutional framework that surrounds and supports the lawmaker. To directly overcome the technical gap faced by less-educated grassroots leaders, democracies must spend extensively in strong Parliamentary Research Services (PRS).

²⁰ 601 Yogendra Yadav, Rethinking social justice - India-seminar.com, https://www.india-seminar.com/2009/601/601_yogendra_yadav.htm

²¹ Does the Education of Politicians Matter? Evidence from a Bachelors Degree Requirement for Legislators in Pakistan - Center for Global Development, https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/archive/doc/events/9.15.09/Madiha_Afzal_9.15.09.pdf

A comprehensive, non-partisan research infrastructure can provide all MPs, regardless of their educational background, with the highly digested data, policy briefs, and legal analysis required to effectively scrutinize executive action and draft competent legislation. Furthermore, expanding the role and resources of Parliamentary Committees allows for detailed, cross-party deliberation aided by subject-matter experts, ensuring that the technical burden does not rest solely on the individual MP.²² The state can improve the technical proficiency of the entire legislative body without changing the inclusiveness of the electoral process by democratizing access to specialist information within the parliament itself.

Strict institutional and legal accountability, not the display of academic credentials, must be relied upon to remedy the serious ethical deficiency in politics. History repeatedly demonstrates that education does not stop corruption; if institutional restraints are lax, even highly educated people are capable of sophisticated rent-seeking conduct. As a result, the broad policy suggestions made by groups like the Law Commission of India and the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) are crucial.²³

It is essential to increase the transparency of candidates' backgrounds. In order to eliminate the lenient option of a mere fine, the ADR advocates for severe implementation of the Representation of the People Act, arguing for a minimum of two years in prison for candidates who conceal or supply incorrect information on their nomination papers. Furthermore, implementing the Law Commission's recommendation to disqualify candidates the moment criminal charges for heinous crimes are framed by a court—rather than waiting for a final conviction—would drastically reduce the criminalization of politics. Enforcing the strict financial auditing

²² Parliamentary Committees Increasing their effectiveness.pdf - PRS India, https://prsindia.org/files/parliament/discussion_papers/Parliamentary%20Committees%20Increasing%20their%20effectiveness.pdf

²³ ADR/NEW Recommendations for Electoral Reforms - Association for ..., https://adrindia.org/sites/default/files/ADR_and_NEWs_recommendations_for_electoral_and_political_reforms_Final_April_20_2011.pdf

of political parties by CAG-approved firms is a structural reform that directly and effectively targets unethical behavior at its source.

Lastly, the Ethics Committee and other internal parliamentary committees need to be transformed from advisory groups into strong, independent regulatory watchdogs. Ethics committees impose a strict standard of constitutional morality that no university degree can ever guarantee when they have the unwavering authority and independence to rapidly investigate and severely condemn misconduct, such as the infamous cash-for-query scandals.²⁴

Essentially, each legislator's pre-existing human capital should not bear the entire weight of competent government. Rather, it has to be fully backed by an advanced, uncompromising institutional framework that is intended to extract the best from representatives at the grassroots level while ruthlessly punishing unethical behavior.

IX. SUGGESTION AND RECOMMENDATION

In light of the foregoing analysis, the following policy measures are recommended to enhance legislative competence and ethical governance without undermining democratic inclusivity:

- 1. Strengthening Parliamentary Research Infrastructure:** The State should substantially expand non-Partisan Parliamentary Research Services (PRS) to provide all Members of Parliament with accessible, high-quality policy briefs, legislative drafting assistance, and data analytics support.
- 2. Empowerment of Parliamentary Committees:** Parliamentary Committees must be institutionally strengthened with greater autonomy, resources, and expert consultation mechanisms to facilitate informed, cross-party deliberation on complex legislative matters.
- 3. Implementation of Law Commission Recommendations:** The recommendations of the Law Commission of India, particularly Report No.

²⁴ Pratap Bhanu Mehta writes: A modest plea for constitutional morality
<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/pratap-bhanu-mehta-writes-a-modest-plea-for-constitutional-morality-10630299/>

255, should be enforced to enable the disqualification of candidates upon the framing of charges in serious criminal offences, thereby curbing the criminalization of politics.

4. **Strengthening Legal Accountability Mechanisms:** Section 125A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 should be rigorously enforced with stricter penalties, including mandatory imprisonment, for candidates filing false affidavits.
5. **Financial Transparency and Auditing of Political Parties:** Mandatory auditing of political party finances by Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)-approved independent bodies should be institutionalized to ensure transparency and curb illicit financial practices.
6. **Institutional Strengthening of Ethics Committees:** Parliamentary Ethics Committees should be transformed into independent and authoritative bodies with the power to investigate and impose meaningful sanctions for misconduct, thereby reinforcing constitutional morality within the legislature.”

X. CONCLUSION

The Indian republic faces a constant, changing challenge in its unrelenting pursuit of excellence in legislative performance. Educational credentials should never be confused with the entirety of political competence or moral worth, even though the dramatically rising educational attainment of Indian parliamentarians has clearly improved the technical rigor of legislative proceedings and measurably improved specific constituency outcomes. It is clear from a thorough comparative analysis of the history of democracy around the world that requiring educational degrees for elected office is a damaging, anti-democratic interference. By substituting democratic representation with a technical oligarchy and, ironically, encouraging corruption through the falsification of credentials, such strict mandates forcefully cut off the crucial connection between the state and the marginalized electorate.

The profound, long-lasting historical successes of leaders with no formal education – most notably K. Kamaraj's transformational administration in India and Abraham Lincoln and Winston Churchill's monumental crisis leadership in the West – prove

beyond doubt that lived adversity, deep empathy for the subaltern, and an unwavering commitment to ethical integrity are far superior drivers of public welfare than formal academic training. Grassroots leaders have localized legitimacy and an indisputable mandate for social justice, which is critical for the security and survival of a varied democracy. As a result, the research concludes unequivocally that India must reject all requests for exclusionary educational eligibility standards for its parliamentarians. Instead, the democratic system should be relentlessly optimized by rigorously reinforcing institutional guardrails. India can maintain its founding commitment to universal representation while also achieving the highest global standards of legislative competence and constitutional morality by significantly expanding parliamentary research support to bridge the technical gap for less-educated members, as well as empowering ethics committees and judicial mechanisms to ruthlessly expel criminality and corruption from the political sphere.

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