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Electoral trends and performance of political parties in 2014 assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract

Elections are the particularly conspicuous and revealing aspects of most contemporary political systems as they serve to highlight and dramatize a political system, bringing its nature into sharp relief, and provide insights into the other aspects of the system, as also the basic nature and the actual functioning of the system as a whole. During an election so to speak a political system is on display even though the features that are most obviously on display may be only a small part of "the iceberg that lies beneath." Elections are complex events involving individual and collective decisions which directly affect and are affected by the total political and social process. They open up channels between the individual and his government. They are major agencies of political socialization and political participation. The study of elections provides an opportunity to the student to understand a political system in action using the various techniques and the methods ranging from survey research and participant observation studies to the analysis of aggregate data. Elections may be studied from the point of view of both macro – and micro – political analyses, and of the linkages between these to forms of analysis. The present paper makes an analysis of elections held to Andhra Pradesh Assembly in 2014.

Keywords: Electoral trends, political parties, assembly elections, Andhra Pradesh

Introduction

In democratic countries, voting is the main instrument of citizens/voters to interfere in the political power of their country. The ability to influence public policy comes from the voting right. On the other hand, the voters' participation can be seen as an isolated connection between the citizens and the political system, whereas other forms of more demanding and regular involvement than voting may be more important, as advocated by the theories of democratic participation. Considering that the vote is supreme in democracy and voting is the activity involving the largest number of citizens, it is necessary to understand the impact of policies and programmes on electoral participation.

Democracy is not adopted merely to make governmental decisions. Democracy, in the 20th century involves more than just universal suffrage and elected representatives. Its requirement on the part of the voters and their elected representatives is to follow certain kinds of social and economic policies. In the words of Maxey, "Democracy as interpreted in the twentieth century is, thus, seen to be more than a political formula, more than a system of government, more than a social order. Some policy scientists speculate that voting in genuine elections may be an important method of citizens' influence on policy not so much because it actually permits citizens to choose their officials and to some degree instruct these officials on policy, but because the existence of genuine elections puts a stamp of approval on the citizens' participation. Indirectly, therefore, the fact of elections enforces on proximate policy makers a rule that the citizens' wishes count in policy making.

The question of elections is at the centre of politics everywhere. It is an essential feature of parliamentary democracy that competition for power takes place through periodical free elections. The constitutional requirement that the ruling party renew its mandate at fixed intervals through free elections makes it ultimately accountable to the electorate which is the essence of democracy. The introduction of universal adult franchise for the elections to the State and Central Legislatures has brought the political parties in the country into an intimate and direct relationship with the Indian society with its two principal features namely, a relatively low level of social integration and an essentially agglomerative character.

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Review of Literature

Reddi Easwara Agarala (1985) [1] made an attempt to study, analyze and evaluate the trends of electoral politics in the Lok Sabha elections in Andhra Pradesh. Two consecutive mid-term elections to the Lok Sabha held in March 1977 and in January 1980 have been chosen for the study to ascertain and evaluate the voting behaviour of the Andhra Pradesh electorate in the backdrop of the trends in the national scene. The study reveals that the poor and backward classes, minorities and women invariably support the Congress. The Congress Party gets the support of both of the rural and the urban votes. Another feature which has become evident in this study is that the traditional Kamma - Reddy race for power is not such as to undermine the base of support of the Congress which covers both the caste groups.

Reddy Gopal G., (1987) [2] made a comprehensive analysis of financing of elections in India. The author felt that the wheels of Parliamentary democracy run on votes. But it is money that lubricates the democratic machinery, and the amount of lubricant which has been used in Indian elections is a matter of serious concern. An excessive dose of political oil can well cause democracy to slide off its rails. The author further felt that Election Commissions ceiling on expenditure by individual candidates is unrealistic. The Election Commission failed to impose any ceiling on the expenditure to be incurred by the particular political party. It is therefore very easy for candidates, with money to throw it around and show that it has been incurred by their parties.

Yadav Yogendra (1997) [3] analyzed the assembly elections held in 16 states from November 1993 to March 1995. The author states that practically, everywhere rural constituencies report a higher turnout (8, 10 and 17 per cent higher in Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra respectively) than urban constituencies. According to author the most visible outcome of the assembly election of 1993-1995 is the large-scale change in governments at the state

level. With the minor exceptions of Arunachal Pradesh, Goa and Rajasthan and the major exception of Bihar all the states witnessed the defeat of the ruling party at the polls. The outcome of these elections as per author, makes the consolidation of bi-polarity at the state level to add up to anything like a two-party system at the national level more improbable than ever before. These elections demonstrated the Congress's loss of institutionalized will to power which had characterized its days of dominance in Indian Politics. Singh Bhupinder (2009) [4] in his paper made a modest attempt to analyse the 2007 elections to Punjab Legislatures Assembly. The paper has been divided into five parts. The first deals with the historical perspective, the second with the strategies adopted by the political parties during the 2007 Assembly elections, the third with the electoral outcome, the fourth with the challenges before the coalition government, and the last with the conclusions.

Chari A V and Annemie Maertens (2012) [5] noticed a sharp trend-break in participation (as measured by turnout rates as well as number of candidates contesting) in state assembly elections in India, spanning the period 1977-2002. Specifically, the study found that turnout rates as well as the number of contesting candidates declined sharply starting in 1993 and this trend continued till 2002 (the end point of the data studied). There is suggestive evidence that this trend-break coincided with a sharp uptick in the correlation between male and female rates of electoral participation. The formal devolution of powers to panchayati raj institutions starting in 1993 may explain these findings in the data.

The voter casted their votes on the basis of issues like bifurcation, price rise and inflation, economic downslide, corruption, power shortages, power bills and political instability besides the development-factor in both the states. In Seemandhra, the key issue is state's bifurcation. Table 1 gives the details of electors participation in 2014 general elections held to Andhra Pradesh State Assembly.

Table 1: Participation of Electors in 2014 AP General Election, 2014

Polling Particulars	Male	Female	Others	Total
No. of Electors (Including Service Electors)	32676266	32252318	5554	64934138
No. of Electors Who Voted at Polling Stations	24253786	23923924	274	48177984
Polling Percentage	74.22 %	74.18 %	5 %	74.20 %
No. of Valid Votes (Evm Valid +Postal Valid)	-	-	-	48092120
No. of Votes Rejected (Postal)	-	-	-	48658
No. of Votes Not Retrieved from Evm, Test Votes, Rejected Votes Due to Other Reason and Nota Votes	-	-	-	351689
No. of Polling Stations	-	-	-	71223
Average No. of Electors Per Polling Station	-	-	-	912

Source: Statistical Report on General Election, 2014 to the Legislative Assembly of Andhra Pradesh, Election Commission of India, New Delhi.

It is evident from table 1 that there are 32,676,266 male registered voters in the state and 32,252,318 were female voters. The remaining 5, 554 were transgender voters. So the share of women in the total voters of the state is 49.67 per cent and the share of transgender is 0.01 per cent. Among the male voters 74.22 per cent, among the female voters 74.18 per cent and among transgender 5 per cent cast their votes in 2014 AP general elections. The share of women voted in 2014 elections stood at 49.66 and that of males is 50.34 per cent. The share of transgender is negligible as it stood at 0.0006 per cent of total votes polled in elections. The total number of valid votes registered in elections is 48,092,120. Among them 0.10 per cent of votes

were rejected on various grounds. The total number of polling stations established in the state is 71, 223 and the average number of electors for each polling station stood at 912. The (None of the above) NOTA votes polled in the elections is 308, 286.

Performance of Contestants

The particulars with regard to category wise Assembly segments and number contestants and average number contestants etc has been presented in table 2.

Table 2: Performance of Contestants in 2014 AP General Elections

No of Constituencies								
Type of Constituency of Constituencies	General	SC	ST	Total				
	227	48	19	294				
No of Contestants								
No. of Contestants in a Constituency	1	2	3	4	5	6-10	11-15	Above15
No. of Such Constituencies	0	0	0	0	2	86	147	59
Total Contestants in Fray :	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3910
Average Contestants Per Constituency :	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Minimum Contestants in a Constituency :	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Maximum Contestants in a Constituency :	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	36

Source: Statistical Report on General Election, 2014 to the Legislative Assembly of Andhra Pradesh, Election Commission of India, New Delhi.

As per table 2 (0.68 per cent) there are 294 Assembly segments in the state during 2014 elections. Among these 294 seats, 227 constituting 77.21 per cent of total seats were unreserved seats. The number of seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the state stood at 16.33 per cent and 6.46 per cent respectively. There is no constituency in state with 4 or less than 4 contestants. In 2 out of 294 constituencies 5 candidates were in the fray. In 29.25 per cent of constituencies the number of constituencies ranges between 6 to 10. In exactly half of the

constituencies the number of contestants varies between 11 to 15. More than 15 candidates were in the fray in 20.07 per cent of constituencies. The average number of contestants in a constituency stood at 13. The minimum and maximum number of contestants in a constituency is 5 and 36 respectively.

Gender Wise Performance of Contesting Candidates

The details with regard to gender wise performance of contesting candidates are presented in table 3.

Table 3: Gender Wise Performance of Contesting Candidates in 2014 AP General Elections

	Male	Female	Others	Total
No. of Contestants	3591	317	2	3910
Elected	266	27	0	293
Forfeited Deposits	2998	259	2	3259

Source: Statistical Report on General Election, 2014 to the Legislative Assembly of Andhra Pradesh, Election Commission of India, New Delhi.

Table 3 reveals that the share of women among total contestants is 8.11 per cent and others are 0.05 per cent. But the share of women among the elected representatives is bulged to 9.22 per cent. Among the candidates who forfeited deposits the share of male and female stood at 91.99 per cent and 7.95 per cent respectively. The success rate of women in the elections is higher than men. To be precise the success rate among women is 8.52 per cent and it is 7.41 per cent among men.

Performance of Parties

In 2014 Andhra Pradesh general elections the candidates belonging to national parties, state parties, state parties of other states, registered (unrecognized) parties were in the fray apart from Independent candidates. Table 4 gives the clear picture of performance level of various types of parties in 2014 AP general elections.

Table 4: The Performance of National, Regional and Other Parties

	Contested	FD	Won	Won%	FD%	% Votes
National Parties	723	590	34	11.56	81.60	18.19
State Parties (TDP & Trs)	356	49	180	61.22	13.76	46.21
State Parties - Other State	233	232	0	0.00	99.57	0.32
Registered (Unrecognized) Parties (Aimim, Ysrcp, Npt Chirala)	1087	892	78	26.53	82.06	31.58
Independents	1511	1499	2	0.68	99.21	3.07
NOTA	294	294	0	0.00	100.00	0.64
Total	4204	3556	294	100.00	84.59	100.01

Source: Statistical Report on General Election, 2014 to the Legislative Assembly of Andhra Pradesh, Election Commission of India, New Delhi.

It can be inferred from table 4 that among the contestants 35.94 per cent were Independent candidates. They are followed by registered (unrecognized) parties, national parties, state parties and state parties of other state by 25.86 per cent, 17.20 per cent, 8.47 per cent and 5.54 per cent respectively. The per cent of other state parties' candidates who lost their deposits is 99.57. Among the Independent candidates 99.21 per cent of candidates forfeited their deposits. It is 82 per cent in case of registered (unrecognized) parties and 81.60 per cent in case of national

parties. Only 13.76 per cent of candidates contested on the tickets of state parties lost their deposits. The state parties i.e. TDP and TRS fared well in the elections held in 2014. It is these two parties which assumed the reins of power after bifurcation of the state in to Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The success rate of these State parties stood at 61.22 per cent. These state parties got 46.21 per cent of total valid votes in the state. The per cent of votes gained by registered (unrecognized) parties in the state stood 31.58 per cent ant they won in 78 constituencies. Among these 78 seats, the

newly emerged Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party emerged victorious in 70 seats, All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen gained 7 seats and 1 seat has gone in favour of Navodayam Party (NPT). The national parties by getting 18.19 per cent votes bagged 34 seats. In none of the constituencies the NOTA votes never come nearer or above the required forfeited deposit votes.

Party Wise position

The individual party wise seats gained by various political parties in 2014 Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections 2014 are given in table 5.

Table 5: Party Wise Seats won by various Political Parties

S. No	Name of the Party	No of Seats Won
1	All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen	7
2	Bahujan Samaj Party	2
3	Bharatiya Janata Party	9
4	Communist Party of India	1
5	Communist Party of India (Marxist)	1
6	Independent	2
7	Indian National Congress	21
8	Navodayam Party	1
9	Telangana Rashtra Samithi	63
10	Telugu Desam	116
11	Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party	70

Source: Statistical Report on General Election, 2014 to the Legislative Assembly of Andhra Pradesh, Election Commission of India, New Delhi.

Table 5 reveals that the Telugu Desam Party by winning in 39.59 seats stood at the top of ladder in case of total seats in undivided seats. The second place was occupied by Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party with 23.89 per cent of votes. Telangana Rashtra Samithi emerged victorious in 21.50 per cent of constituencies. With the division of the state the TRS emerged as majority party in the newly formed Telangana State. The Indian National Congress won in 21 out of 294 seats. All these seats won by the party is Telangana area of the undivided state. in Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema regions it failed to open account as it is considered by the voters responsible for unscientific division of the state hastily. The other national party i.e. Bharatiya Janata Party won 9 out of 294 seats. The two left parties i.e. Communist Party of India (Marxist) and Communist Party of India confined 1 seat each. The All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen Part won in 7 seats. Bahujan Samaj Party and Navodayam Party bagged 1 seat each. The remaining 2 seats have gone in favour of Independent candidates.

Conclusion

The results reversed many pre-poll surveys in the state. The elections held in 2014 shows that the TDP didn't did not suffer by any negative impact for giving a letter in support of bifurcation nor is YSRC chief Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy making gains for supporting united AP in Seemandhra (present Andhra Pradesh). In Telangana, the separate state sentiment played a key role in the northern region, giving a clear edge to the TRS. The major loosed in these elections is Indian National Congress Party, for which both Telangana and Seemandhra regions are considered as the bastions. But due to the initiative taken by the INC to bifurcate the state it paid heavily especially in Seemandhra. The Congress has

failed to capitalize on party chief Sonia Gandhi's initiative to grant statehood. As expected the two regions of the State voted differently. The voting patterns reflect that the electorate accepted the reality of the bifurcation even before Telangana was formally created. The TDP, however, has emerged as a party that has some base in both halves of the undivided State of Andhra Pradesh. This might enhance the prestige and strength of that party at the national level.

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