

A STUDY ON THE CHANGING DYNAMICS OF ELECTORAL POLITICS IN VISAKHAPATNAM DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH: INDIA

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Abstract:

The concept of political change is operated in the democratic countries by peaceful or constitutional means mainly through elections. India politics is closely related to its geographical expression of heterogeneity and pluralism. The diversity is marked by multiplicity of communities, caste and sub-castes, ethnic groups, linguistic groups, different regions and sub-regions with varying economic indices etc. Thus India presents an authentic plural society, striving hard to secure the long cherished goal of national integration through a federal democratic, parliamentary paradigm. At the national level there has been a significant change in regard to the political fortunes of different political parties. The domination of Congress was an uninterrupted phenomenon, which slowly transformed into that of a prominent Congress model and by nineties it was eclipsed to a great extent. Consequently the present decade exhibits a coalition culture at the national level. Until 1983 it was the dominance of Congress party, but a shift is marked with the advent of regional Telugu Desam Party with the capture of political power in a most spectacular way. From an exhaustive in depth discussion of the dynamics of state assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh with a particular reference to Visakhapatnam district in North Coastal Andhra so far made over five chapters covering different dimensions.

Introduction:

A study of ongoing Indian politics is marked by innumerable constraints for its diversity, owing to prevalence of array of regions, religious groups, caste and sub-castes, linguistic groups from Himalayas to Kanayakumari and from East to West. Besides, variations in terms of cultural pattern among all the regions and sub-regions of India also contributes significantly in the practice of different ideological and value orientations. As the diversities are phenomenal, the aforesaid factors tend to have an impact on the pattern of governance, political process, dynamics of elections, trend pattern of political parties and party system. A panoramic view of India's independence for the last 50 years is illustrative of the passage of India's system from that of the dominant party model to a prominent party system, and finally, the politics of coalition in which the regional parties and the All India Left parties playing-a pivotal role. Thus India's political system now presents a unique picture in which currently a few national parties coupled with the regional parties are playing a significant role, while a few all India parties have lost legitimacy and political creditability for varied omissions and commissions committed in the course.

The state of Andhra Pradesh much similar to the Union government provided the dominance of the Congress Party in the course of nearly 3 decades from 1956 after the formation of the state. The two principal parties Congress and TDP (regional party) are playing the role of a

musical chair in the capture of political power ever since the beginning of 80's. The TDP rose to power in 1983 and lost the seat of power in 1989 with the rise of the Congress. Again in 1994 and 1999 TDP was back to power making a miserable defeat on the Congress party. And also get back to power in 2014 a significant victory over the YSRCP. Unlike that of other states of India, Andhra Pradesh Provides for a stable administration with sufficient majority to the ruling party either by the Congress or the regional Telugu Desam Party. In the year 2014 YSRCP emerged as local party under the leadership of YS Jagan Mohan Reddy son of former chief minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy. In the same year contested in elections and was defeated by TDP in 2014 and in the year 2019 YSRCP defeated the TDP with magic number of seats.

Review of Literature:

Myron Weiner opined that in a competitive system, parties are organised by politicians to win elections, while in authoritarian system they are organised to manage the attitudes and behaviour of the population.

Samuel Eldersveld observed that parties came into existence to perform certain critical functions for the system and derived their basic form in the process of implementing the functions.

According to **Summon** indeed, the role of parties, and the interaction of parties and elections are central to any study of elections.

As **Duverger** has observed, the electoral system affects then political life of a country mainly through the parties.

Kamala. P states that, yet the logic of electoral politics dictates the conscious creation of such organisation reaching down to the lowest unit.

Linga Murty. V opined that At least the voters of Andhra Pradesh have an alternative to choose between the Congress (I) and the regional parties.

According to **James Walson** Andhra Pradesh like some other Indian states also experienced the existences of several political parties, groups and fronts of regional and sub-regional dimensions different periods of the political history.

Venkateswara Rao. D wrote that in India, the district is not only the basic unit of administrative organization in the country, but also the most meaningful unit for the understanding of Indian political parties.

Sheth. D.L has called certain attitudinal and behaviour changes in the electorate. His analysis of the nature and extent of politicization in India and its meaning, is well worth noting.

Rajni Kothari said that therefore, replacing the one with the other will alter the political complexion of the electorate a little every year; overtime these effects will be cumulative.

Research Gap:

In this context, the study of elections has assumed tremendous significance and several political observers have made efforts for systematic empirical studies following the lead set-forth by United States social scientists since 1940. There are a few other Studies which are of general nature on election politics based on analysis and statistics and attempting to make broad generalisations by way of macro and micro studies.

Objectives of the Study:

The main aim of the present study is to examine political changes that have taken place in the past seven decades of party and electoral politics in the district of Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh in general and the political changes that followed after the emergence of the Local Parties (Telugu Desam Party) in particular.

1. To examine the origin and activities of other local parties like Praja Rajyam Party, YSRCP and Janasena.
2. To understand the role of political parties and elections as mechanisms for political mobilisation, recruitment and change.
3. To elicit the roles played by important political leaders and factions in strengthening the party or otherwise at the district as well at the grass-roots levels.
4. To analyse the reasons for the declining fortunes for the Congress and conversely the rise of T.D.P. and other regional parties in the State in general and in the district of Visakhapatnam in particular.
5. To highlight not only such aspects as candidate selection, manifestoes, campaign strategies, etc., and the role of local factors like caste, faction, party and personality.

METHODOLOGY:

The study adapted qualitative in nature and follows historical, descriptive and field content analysis method. 400 respondents are selected as a sample for this study across the region and the sample was selected on purposive basis. The research was based on primary and secondary sources of information.

DATA ANALYSIS**Are elections important for democracy?**

S. No	Opinions	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	296	74
2	No	65	16.25
3	No Response	39	9.75
	Total	400	100

Source: Primary Data

Regular elections are essential for bringing about change and forming a new government in any democracy. An individual or group of people can directly engage in choosing their representatives through elections. Democracy is made more meaningful and functioning by holding regular, recurring elections in which a larger percentage of voters participate. The purpose of the study was to find out if voters believed that elections were a reliable way to build government. The data included in the table makes it abundantly evident that almost three-fourths of the respondents, or 296 (74%) of the electorate, think that elections should be used to form government rather than other channels. However, 65 (16.25%) of the electorate disagree, and the remaining 39 (9.75%) of the respondents did not answer when asked about this topic. Based on a variety of factors, this is the respondent's general impression.

Do you aware about politics and political parties?

S. No	Opinions	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	318	79.5
2	No	53	13.25
3	No Response	29	7.25
	Total	400	100

Source: Primary Data

The details depicted in this table presents that the overwhelming majority of the respondents 318 (79.5%) agreed that they aware about politics and political parties however 53 (13.25%) of the respondents agreed that they were not aware about politics and political parties and rest of the 29 (7.25%) of them not responded for this aspect.

Do you agree the changing of Political Parties/Governments in Andhra Pradesh?

S. No	Opinions	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	255	63.75
2	No	108	27
3	No Response	37	9.25
	Total	400	100

Source: Primary Data

The details presented in the above table reveals that the majority of the respondents 255 (63.75%) agreed that the changing of Political Parties/Governments in Andhra Pradesh whereas 108 (27%) of them did not agreed that the changing of Political Parties/Governments in Andhra Pradesh and rest of them 37 (9.25%) were not responded.

Do you agree the increased participation by the sections of Dalits, Tribes, Women and OBC's in the election?

S. No	Opinions	Frequency	Percentage
1	Agree	199	49.75
2	Disagree	180	45
3	No Response	21	5.25
	Total	400	100

Source: Primary Data

The details indicated in the above table reveals that the majority of the respondents 199 (49.75%) perceived that the increased participation by the sections of Dalits, Tribes, Women and OBC's in the election whereas 180 (45%) of them disagreed that the increased participation by the sections of Dalits, Tribes, Women and OBC's in the election and last 21 (5.25%) of them not responded on this sensitive aspect.

What are the factors influencing the elections in Andhra Pradesh?

S. No	Opinions	Frequency	Percentage
1	Money factor	114	28.5
2	Caste/religion	105	26.25

3	Underdevelopment	70	17.5
4	Unemployment & corruption	67	16.75
5	Illegal Immigration/insurgency	44	11
	Total	400	100

Source: Primary Data

The data mentioned in the above table shows that the majority of the respondents 114(28.5%) agreed that money is influencing the elections in Andhra Pradesh, 105(26.5%) of the respondents agreed that Community/religion is influencing the elections, 70(17.5) of the respondents agreed that Underdevelopment is influencing the elections, 67(16.75%) of the respondents agreed that Unemployment & corruption is influencing the elections, and last only 44(11%) of the respondents agreed that Illegal Immigration/insurgency is influencing the elections.

Do you want to change the voting if your leader changes the party?

S. No	Opinions	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	96	24
2	No	274	68.5
3	No Response	30	7.5
	Total	400	100

Source: Primary Data

As can be seen from the above table, just 96 (or 24%) of the total respondents said that they would leave their party if their leader made a change. However, just 30 (7.5%) of the respondents had no response when asked about this matter, whereas 274 (68.5%) of the respondents stated they would stick with their current leader and not leave the party. Based on these figures, we can conclude that leaders who switch political parties risk losing their supporters support, albeit there might be an exception in a unique or extraordinary circumstance.

The respondents were asked to share their opinions on a number of criteria in order to determine the key variables influencing the politics of the Andhra Pradesh state's elections. The following broad headings are used to categorize the responses.

Do you take decision making due to the influence of below factors?

S. No	Opinions	Frequency	Percentage
1	Newspaper/TV, Radio	111	27.75
2	In public meeting	78	19.5
3	Not interested to discuss	51	12.75
4	Social media	160	40
	Total	400	100

Source: Primary Data

The information in this table presented above shows that the majority of the respondents 160 (40%) express their views through social media, 111 (27.75%) of them express their views

through print and electronic media, 78 (19.5%) of the respondents took part in the public meetings and shared their opinions. Fifty-one (12.75%) of the respondents expressed no interest in sharing their opinions or engaging in discussion. This finding indicates that the majority of the general public is eager to voice their opinions through discussions and debates on particular topics on social media.

Do you support the alliance of political parties?

S. No	Opinions	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	200	50
2	No	151	37.75
3	No Response	49	12.25
	Total	400	100

Source: Primary Data

The data given in this table shows that the half of the respondents 200(50%) agreed that they are support the alliance of political parties whereas 151(37.75%) of the respondents agreed that they are not support the alliance of political parties and last 49(12.25%) of the respondents not given any answer for this question.

Do you feel turnout at elections?

S. No	Opinions	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	268	67
2	No	107	26.75
3	No Response	25	6.25
	Total	400	100

Source: Primary Data

The data given in this table presents that the maximum respondents 268 (67%) feels that turnout at elections however 107 (26.75%) of them not feels that increase of turnout at elections and remaining only 25 (6.25%) of them did not responded for this issue.

Is state really developed due to the performance of the political parties?

S.No	Opinions	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	243	60.75
2	No	129	32.25
3	No Response	28	7
	Total	400	100

Source: Primary Data

The details depicted in this table reveals that the majority of the respondents 243 (60.75%) agreed that the state really developed due to the performance of the political parties, 129 (32.25%) of them state really not developed due to the performance of the political parties and rest of the only 28 (7%) respondents having no answer for this aspect.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION:

Almost three-fourths of the respondents, or 296 (74%) of the electorate, think that elections should be used to form government rather than other channels.

An overwhelming majority of the respondents 318 (79.5%) agreed that they aware about politics and political parties.

The majority of the respondents 255 (63.75%) agreed that the changing of Political Parties/Governments in Andhra Pradesh.

The majority of the respondents 199 (49.75%) perceived that the increased participation by the sections of Dalits, Tribes, Women and OBC's in the election.

The majority of the respondents 114(28.5%) agreed that money is influencing the elections in Andhra Pradesh.

The majority of the respondents 274 (68.5%) stated they would stick with their current leader and not leave the party.

The majority of the respondents 160 (40%) express their views through social media.

The half of the respondents 200(50%) agreed that they are support the alliance of political parties.

The maximum respondents 268 (67%) feels that turnout at elections.

The majority of the respondents 243 (60.75%) agreed that the state really developed due to the performance of the political parties.

The study is a modest attempt to understand the dynamics of electoral politics of Visakhapatnam District in the state of Andhra Pradesh. The shifting preferences and loyalties of the people and their verdict either for or against a party or candidate are indicative of the growing maturity of the people. They articulate their demands through the ballot. They reiterate their demand that local problems be solved and local needs met first before parties and candidates project national leaders and national problems. They are willing to subordinate their primordial loyalties for the sake of common good and overall development of the area. Their active participation in elections and interest in electoral politics are a source of strength to Indian democracy.

CONCLUSION:

India went to general elections in 2009, 2014 and 2019, and these elections marked the emergence of new political parties along with a significant turn in the history of prominent political parties. For instance, a new party YSR Congress Party in Andhra Pradesh came into existence after the party chief Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy split from the Congress party and founded his party after 2009 elections. Some new parties like Praja Rajyam Party, Janasena and so on were launched on the eve of these elections, posing a challenge to the decades-old parties. As such an analysis is made to know the electoral trends and the system of voting in these three elections and it is marked from this outcome that the Congress, TDP and YSRCP Parties had base here and many factors may be responsible for this electoral trend and political change.

The period of 2009 to 2019 is unique in the political history of Andhra Pradesh state in many ways. In the year 2009 the national party Congress form the government under the leadership of Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, and in the year 2014 this state was bifurcated in to two states like Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. With the effect of the separation of state the Congress party paid its dues then all of sudden disappeared from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh states and

disparately defeated in the hands of regional parties. The TDP form the government in 2014 which defeated the YSRCP and finally in the year 2019 YSRCP got the victory over the TDP. Hence these elections (2009, 2014 and 2019 the matter of one decade changing politics) are very significant and important for the present study.

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