



POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT OF SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES SARPANCH THROUGH PARTICIPATING IN LOCAL POLITICS OF ANDHRA PRADESH

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Abstract

Empowerment of gained currency in the last decade of the Twentieth century. Empowerment of the rural masses in India began with Panchayat Raj which became a reality as the outcome of Balwant Rai Mehta committee recommendations. It was implemented first in Rajasthan and other states followed soon. After two decades, the Women's movement reverberated in India in the form of 73rd amendment which paved way for the reservation for SCs and , STs with 33% reservation for women in Panchayati Raj which set the tone for the Empowerment of the women from marginalized sections to enter into Panchayati Raj. This has resulted in the social Inclusion of the Disadvantaged section like SC, STs and Women into the political realm. The mid -eighties saw the term empowerment becoming popular in the field of development especially with reference to women. The Empowerment is an active, multidimensional process which enables women to realize their full identity and powers in all shares of life. The present paper is highlighted that the political empowerment of SC/ST sarpanch through participating in local politics in Andhra Pradesh state.

Key words: *Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, Local Politics, Empowerment.*

Introduction

Empowerment of gained currency in the last decade of the Twentieth century. Empowerment of the rural masses in India began with Panchayat Raj which became a reality as the outcome of Balwant Rai Mehta committee recommendations. It was implemented first in Rajasthan and other states followed soon. After two decades, the Women's movement reverberated in India in the form of 73rd amendment which paved way for the reservation for SCs and STs with 33% reservation for women in Panchayati Raj which set the tone for the Empowerment of the women from marginalized sections to enter into Panchayati Raj. This has resulted in the social Inclusion of the Disadvantaged section like SC, STs and Women into the political realm. The mid -eighties saw the term empowerment becoming popular in the field of development especially with reference to women. As Pillai (1995) pointed out Empowerment "is an active, multidimensional process which enables women to realize their full identity and powers in all shares of life".

The present paper made an attempt to examine the political entry of SCs and STs into Panchayati Raj as Sarpanches in the four districts of Rayalaseema region viz. Anantapuramu, Chittoor, Kadapa and Kurnool. This chapter in depth examines the causes, process of their political entry of these Sarpanches. The latter part of the chapter analyzes their opinion and self-appraisal of their performance, political attitude so as to understand the degree of their empowerment as they experienced after entering the Panchayati Raj.

Objectives

1. To study the concept of Local politics.
2. To discuss and analyse the political empowerment of SC/ST sarpanch in Andhra Pradesh.



Methodology

Table -1: Universe and Selection of Sample

S. No	Name of the District	Total Panchayats	Reserved Category	Total Reserved	Gender	Sample Size
1	Anantapuramu	1013	SC	178	Male	40
					Female	49
			ST	48	Male	10
					Female	14
2	Chittoor	1387	SC	228	Male	55
					Female	69
			ST	52	Male	12
					Female	14
3	Kadapa	804	SC	130	Male	28
					Female	37
			ST	16	Male	04
					Female	04
4	Kurnool	959	SC	204	Male	48
					Female	56
			ST	22	Male	05
					Female	06
Total		4163	878		451	

Universe & Sample

The Total Panchayats in Rayalaseema region in all the four districts are 4163 in which Anantapuramu has 1013, Chittoor 1387, Kadapa 804, and Kurnool 959 Panchayats respectively. Among the 4163 Panchayats, 878 Panchayats are reserved for Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes. In Anantapuramu 178 & 48, Chittoor 228 & 52, Kadapa 130 & 16, and Kurnool 204 & 22 for SCs & STs respectively. In all the 4 districts a 50 per cent sample was drawn at Random from among the 878 reserved Panchayats from all revenue Mandals. Altogether 451 Sarpanches (202 Male and 249 Female) Sarpanches were drawn at random and selected for detailed study.

Tools of Data Collection

Primary data was collected through well prepared Interview Schedule which was pretested in a Pilot survey and perfected by adding some questions deleting repetitive ones and adding clarity some questions which were vague. Secondary data was gathered from government sources at the Panchayati Raj Department at District Headquarters the State. The data is presented in form of two way tables and percentages and averages are calculated. The inferences are drawn from the tables.

Results and Discussions

Political background is very much a key factor in the rural context. Though many are first timers quite a sizable number are second generation and even third generation leaders, which means experience does count in the political context for those whose people had participation earlier or political connections ease in winning election or even in the performance as Sarpanch. Those Sarpanches whose siblings or parents and also relatives who had held positions or connections go a long way to widen your political circles which bring you awareness about political process, political outlook which matter a lot to enter positions of power.



The familiarity with the system and people does carry weight in strengthening the candidature of persons particularly for those like the SCs and STs who had limited access to political systems. In the rural electorate this is an added advantage knowing the voters is really an added advantage. The researcher made an attempt to elicit information about the political participation of the family members and the level of their participation to know whether they would have had their bearing on the incumbents' entry into Panchayati Raj. It was both examined from their parental side i.e Family of orientation and Family of procreation i.e family into which they were married.

Entering into politics by the SC and ST caste leaders was examined whether the Sarpanches were selected with their strength or by the political background of their families of orientation or families of procreation. In rural areas to accept as a political leader there must be god father or back support of the family to participate in the political system. Family honor, political stature, caste dominance and personal strength are the some of the factors influenced for political participation

It can be observed from the data that on the side of Families of Orientation of the Sarpanches, on the whole 60.31 percent had no political participation which means 39.69 only had some political participation of which 24.83 per cent at village level, 8.87 at Mandal level 3.77 per cent at the District level 2.22 at state level. It was in Kurnool district and Chittoor district Sarpanches we could find relatively more percentage of family members participation at various levels among whom we find more at the Panchayat level. Kadapa and Ananthapur Sarpanches have less per cent of family members with political participation.

Table 2: Distribution of the Sarpanches by Political Participation of Their Families

S.No	Families	No. of Respondents					T o	P e r	
		Village level	Mandal level	District level	State level	No particip ation			
1	Family of Orientation	Anantapuramu	28 (24.78%)	9 (8%)	2 (1.77%)	1 (0.88%)	73 (64.60%)	113	25.05
		Chittoor	35 (23.33%)	11 (7.33%)	5 (3.33%)	3 (2%)	96 (64%)	150	33.26
		Kadapa	17 (23.29%)	7 (9.59%)	4 (5.48%)	2 (2.74%)	43 (58.9%)	73	16.19
		Kurnool	32 (27.83%)	13 (11.30%)	6 (5.22%)	4 (3.48%)	60 (52.17%)	115	25.5
		Total	112 (24.83%)	40 (8.87%)	17 (3.77%)	10 (2.22%)	272 (60.31%)	451 (100%)	100
2	Family of Procreation	Anantapuramu	27 (23.9%)	7 (6.19%)	1 (0.88%)	2 (1.77%)	76 (65.26%)	113	25.05
		Chittoor	32 (21.33%)	13 (8.67%)	6 (4%)	4 (2.67%)	95 (63.33%)	150	33.26
		Kadapa	14 (19.18%)	8 (10.96%)	3 (4.11%)	3 (4.11%)	45 (61.64%)	73	16.19
		Kurnool	35 (30.43%)	15 (13.04%)	7 (6.09%)	5 (4.35%)	53 (46.09%)	115	25.5
		Total	108 (23.95%)	43 (9.53%)	17 (3.77%)	14 (3.10%)	269 (59.65%)	451 (100%)	100

Source: Field Survey



On the side of their Families of procreation i.e. families of marriage the data reveals that 59.65 per cent had no political participation in their families which means 41.35 percent had some political participation from their family members. Among those who had political participation 23.95 per cent at Panchayat level followed by 9.53 at Mandal level 3.77 at District level and 3.10 at state level politics. In this also Kurnool and Chittoor district Sarpanches are more than that of the Sarpanches of Kadapa and Ananthapur Districts.

On the whole the Political participation from their Families of orientation is slightly higher than that of the political participation from their families of orientation. The level of their participation is predominantly at Panchayat level.

The inference from the table history of participation is nothing from their family of orientation and family of procreation. It is showing that only 29.69 percent of the respondents have political experience and 30.35 percent of the families of Procreation side Apart from the personal reasons, consideration of villages, other circumstances like political patron, family members’ political participation in the family of orientation and family of procreation is showing some role in the political emergence of SC and ST Sarpanches.

Every leader couldn’t born with the knowledge of their duties and responsibilities. To gain knowledge on their positions there must be experience or the support of others. Theresearcher has found and analyze district wise of Sarpanches’ responses regarding their knowledge and maintained various records at the Panchayat raj offices. It is clearly found that 20 respondents (Anantapuramu), 35 respondents (Chittoor), 12 (Kadapa) and 23 respondents (Kurnool) district were stated that they have maintained all records and books by herself.

Table-3: Distribution of the Sarpanches by Whose Help They Conduct and Record Minutes

S.No	Whose help	No. of Respondents				GT	Percentage
		Anantapuramu	Chittoor	Kadapa	Kurnool		
1	Self	20	35	12	23	90	19.96
2	Village secretary	59	74	38	58	229	50.78
3	Husband	19	22	9	16	66	14.63
4	Women and other members	15	19	14	18	66	14.63
	Total	113	150	73	115	451	100

Source: Field Survey

And some of the respondent were stated that they have taken help from the village secretary to maintain books and respective records and it can be found that 50.78 per cent of the Sarpanches availed the services of the Village secretary while 19.96 per cent said they did it by themselves, as they are educated; 14.63 per cent said they take the help of women or other members of the Panchayat. There was another 14.63 per cent who took the service of their husbands which is quite not in good taste.

Here Table further examined whether the SC and ST Sarpanches are aware of their role and duties, or whether were dependents on their family members.



The data presented in the table is showing that 50.78 percent of the Respondents depended on the village secretary means majority Sarpanches don't have knowledge on their role and duties. Only 19.96 per cent of respondents have the knowledge on their duties and role as a Sarpanch. 14.63 percent of the respondents depended on their husband and it is indicating that there would interference of husband in the duties of women Sarpanches. 14.63 percent depended on other members in Panchayati raj system like political dominant members, rivalries, factions etc.

However, responses given by the Sarpanches show that their husbands work as real representatives and women trust their husbands only. Majority of the Sarpanches depended on the village secretary to seek assistance which is a Healthy perception of the role and duties of Sarpanches. It is heartening to note that when they do not know how to do that they do not hesitate to take the assistance of others. It is generally observed among the Sarpanches of the present generation that they are discharging their duties with self - knowledge, assistance with secretary and sometimes collectively with all other members in a democratic way.

Table-4: Distribution of the Sarpanches by Whose Awareness of Various Income Sources of Panchayats

S. No	Taxes	No. of Respondents				GT	Percentage
		Anantapuramu	Chittoor	Kadapa	Kurnool		
1	Tree taxes & Cess	87	111	45	64	307	68.07
2	Donation of land and grass sales	18	29	16	35	98	21.73
3	Tree taxes, Cess & grass sales	5	11	8	9	26	5.76
4	Fisheries and Panchayat Forests	3	6	4	7	20	4.44
	Total	113	150	73	115	451	100

Source: Field Survey

Every Sarpanch needed to have the knowledge regarding the income sources of the village Panchayat along with the duties and responsibilities. The leader should be aware of the income and expenditure of the Panchayat and according that he should do development works, mobilize the funds from various sources and take various steps to raise the funds.

The data presented in Table 4 that majority of the respondents have stated that the revenue were generated from Tree taxes and Cess in all the four district like Anantapuramu (87), Chittoor (111), Kadapa (45) and Kurnool (64) altogether 307 respondents. Another source of revenue to the Panchayat raj by providing/donation of land and grass sales -according to this dimensions 18 respondents from Anantapuramu, 29 respondents from Chittoor district, 16 respondents from Kadapa district and 35 respondents from Kurnool district. Other sources were also generated by these four district with fisheries and Panchayat forest- expressed by the less respondents in the study area.

From the data presented in the table the overall inference is that 68.07 per cent of Sarpanches have awareness regarding the main income from the Tree taxes and Cess; 21.73 per cent of them expressed their opinion as having received the income from the donation of the land and grass sale; 5.76 per cent of the respondents have awarded on the income from Tree taxes, Cess and grass sales, 4.44 percent of the respondents are aware of the income from Fisheries and Panchayat forests.



It is inferred that majority of the Sarpanches have awareness that every village Panchayat has income from the Trees, Taxes and Cess. Success of every leader is depending upon the awareness of the income sources and the development works to be carried out in the Panchayat.

Table-5 Sarpanches Opinion on the Adequacy of Finances to Meet the Development of Panchayats

S. No	Response	No. of Respondents				GT	Percentage
		Anantapuramu	Chittoor	Kadapa	Kurnool		
1	Sufficient	60	81	39	63	243	53.88
2	Insufficient	53	69	34	52	208	46.12
	Total	113	150	73	115	451	100

Source: Field Survey

Sarpanches estimate the income sources and took up various developmental steps according to the income source. To take up various development works he should feel the income as sufficient or not sufficient to meet his expected development. The opinion of the Sarpanches presented in the table found that 60 sample respondents from Anantapuramu, 81 respondents from Chittoor, 39 respondents from Kadapa and 63 respondents from Kurnool district were expressed that the revenue/income of Panchayat were sufficient. It is further found that 53 respondents from Anantapuramu, 69 respondents from Chittoor, 34 respondents from Kadapa and 52 respondents from Kurnool district were stated that fund is insufficient in their respective Panchayat in the study area.

On the whole the data reveals that Table- 5 shown that 53.88 per cent of the respondents felt that the funds are sufficient, while 46.12 per cent of the respondents felt that the funds are not sufficient to take up the developmental activities in the Panchayat. Sarpanches are necessary to be aware of funds adequacy or inadequacy to a considerable extent.

It is a fact that the Panchayats have very little funds available and they are not able to do any new activity. Many schemes are directly funded by Governments both State and Central and most of the time they do not come in time or come in insufficient quantum corruption most of the times deprives Panchayats of their due share.

To get the real feeling of empowerment of the Scheduled castes and scheduled Tribe Sarpanches could be garnered only by the analysis of the self- appraisal given by the Sarpanches about the given term of their office. Self- appraisal on the achievements of the Sarpanches enlightens his or her political system and their performance. This study tried to bring self -evaluation of the performance of the Sarpanches, and perceptions of their term of office. This was identified so that whether the Sarpanches had the ability to discharge their duties, execute the various programs and schemes to their satisfaction.

Conclusion

This paper is concluded that responses given by the Sarpanches show that their husbands work as real representatives and women trust their husbands only. Majority of the Sarpanches depended on the village secretary to seek assistance which is a healthy perception of the role and duties of Sarpanches. It is heartening to note that when they do not know how to do that they do not hesitate to take the assistance of others. It is generally observed among the Sarpanches of the present generation that they are discharging their duties with self - knowledge, assistance with secretary and sometimes collectively



with all other members in a democratic way. It is inferred that majority of the Sarpanches have awareness that every village Panchayat has income from the Trees, Taxes and Cess. Success of every leader is depending upon the awareness of the income sources and the development works to be carried out in the Panchayat.

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