



POLITICAL AWARENESS OF MUSLIM MINORITIES IN RAYALASEEMA REGION OF ANDHRA PRADESH: AN EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

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Abstract

Muslim population is the third largest community in the world. India is one of the countries having the most diverse indigenous populations. Belonging to many religions ns like Hinduism, Islamic, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikkism and Christianity live in this country since time immemorial. Muslims constitute the largest minority community with 14 per cent population of this country. They are not only the largest minority community, but their presence is visible in all the States and Union Territories. Nonetheless, discrimination, social and cultural stagnation, limited political awareness participation and educational marginalization have cumulatively resulted in growing economic backwardness of the Muslims in large parts of the country. Besides, this largest minority community has been relegated to the lowest socio-economic stratum among all the religious minorities during pre-independent and even post-independent period as well. Therefore, Muslims as a majority in minority community in India has been received a wider attention by the policy-makers at the national and state level, social philanthropists, religious leaders, academicians and researchers for their enlightenment, participation in all spheres of development today than ever before. Hence, there is a dire need to call for more scientific, empirical, contextual, micro level and comprehensive studies to have an in-depth understanding of and insight into the current status and developments of Muslim minorities as the process of economic transition and social changes that have been drastically taking place in the 21st century. All those developmental aspect have reached by the political empowerment of Muslim. In this context, this paper is focus on awareness levels of muslim minorities in Rayalaseema Region of Andhra Pradesh.

Key words: *Muslim, Political, and Awareness.*

Introduction

India is a caste-ridden, multi-religious country. Muslims in India constitute 14 per cent of the country's population and considered as the majority of the minority community. In an informative article published in the Hindu in 2004, Asha Krishna Kumar pointed out that socio-economic condition of a majority of Muslims is worse than those of Hindus. Some 59 per cent of Muslim women have not attended schools, 60 per cent are getting married at the age of 17 years and hardly 14 per cent have registered themselves in work participation. Overall, Muslims have literary rate of 59.1 per cent, 5.7 per cent lower than the national average. Looking into the plight of Muslims many constitutional safeguards are given, institutional initiatives have been taken up, many welfare programmes have been announced by the Governments at all levels since post-independence. However unfortunately the socio-economic development of these communities is not achieved to the desired extent both at national and even at the level of A.P. The reasons for this state of affair are many and varied because of their peculiar demographic, cultural and ethnic reasons and conditions. In the process of economic transition and developments of the society happened in the recent decades and the efforts of the Government have, indeed, witnessed tremendous developments in the life styles and living standards of all sections of people including Muslims. In the light of these developments it is high time and need of the hour to have an in-depth investigation touching upon the origin and historical perspectives of Muslims in terms



of their socio-economic, cultural, political, educational awareness, participation in developmental activities both at national and more specifically in the state of Andhra Pradesh. The proposed study is an explorative, historical and empirical attempt in this direction.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study include.

- To trace the origin and historical perspectives of Muslims in Andhra Pradesh.
- To analyse political awareness of Muslim minorities in the study area.

Methodology of the study

This study is based on primary and secondary data. The sources that are available for the study on the subject may be broadly divided into.....official reports, district Gazetteers, Madras presidency district Manuals, Backward class Commission reports, Sachar Commission reports, Newspapers, journals. A.P. State archives records, Administrative reports and census reports. The study will also make use of the district level data related to Muslims contained in revenue records and local board records. The study also looks into secondary sources such as published books and articles relevant to the topic, and other published and unpublished theses on Muslims and their status in Andhra Pradesh.

The primary data will be collected from the sample Muslim respondents by participant observation. The data will consist of the socio-economic setting, understanding and participation in developmental programmes, changes in lifecycle activities, and their traditional laws, which will be examined carefully from the selected Muslim households in one, district each region of Andhra Pradesh.

The selection of sample Muslim respondents will be possible only after careful examination of the social living and problems of the Muslims in the study area in each district. Participant observation and interview schedule will be administered for collecting correct and relevant information covering the households of Muslims. Informal discussions will also be made with Muslims and their community leaders at their respective houses and community halls. Purposive interviews will also be conducted for ensuring cross-checking of the data.

Analysis of the data

The collected data will be tabulated and analyzed by using the simple percentages and appropriate statistical techniques. The date will also be shown in the relevant graphs and diagrams.

Table 1, Level of importance given to the select Muslim by the Political parties

S.No	Level of importance	Anantapuramu	Chittoor	Kurnool	YSR Kadapa
1	Highly	17 (14.00)	22 (18.00)	25 (21.00)	29 (24.00)
2	Moderately	69 (58.00)	50 (42.00)	60 (50.00)	47 (39.00)
3	Less	34 (28.00)	48 (40.00)	35 (29.00)	44 (37.00)
	Total	120 (100)	120 (100)	120 (100)	120 (100)

Source: Compiled data from field survey

Note : Figures in brackets indicate percentage to Colum total



The present table ----- discloses that the level of importance given to the select Muslim households by the political parties at the election time in drought prone are of Andhra Pradesh state. It can be clearly found that 14 per cent of the of sample households have expressed their opinion that the political parties were given most importance to our community, 58 per cent of the respondents have expressed that they are moderately given importance, and lees importance was given to our community at election time by the political parties in Anantapuramu district. It another found that 18 per cent of the Chittoor district and 21 per cent of the Kurnool district and 24 per cent of the YSR Kadapa district sample Muslim students have expressed that the political parties were given most priority to out community, moderate concentrate by the political parties on Muslim minority households and it is noticed that 42 per cent (Chittoor), 50 per cent (Kurnool) and 39 per cent (YSR Kadapa) respectively.

It is quite interestingly found that there is no concern about the Muslim minority households by the political parties at local, state and national level is statistically proved that 40 per cent of the Anantapuramu district, 29 per cent of the Kurnool district and 37 per cent of the YSR Kadapa district Muslim household were expressed that the political parties are less focus on the minority vote banks in the study area.

Table 2,Level awareness about reservation seats to MP and MLA

S.No	Opinion	Anantapuramu	Chittoor	Kurnool	YSR Kadapa
1	Aware	74 (62.00)	62 (52.00)	68 (56.00)	59 (49.00)
2	Vague Idea	28 (23.00)	19 (16.00)	38 (32.00)	47 (39.00)
3	Not aware	18 (15.00)	38 (32.00)	14 (12.00)	14 (12.00)
	Total	120 (100)	120 (100)	120 (100)	120 (100)

Source: Compiled data from field survey

Note : Figures in brackets indicate percentage to Colum total

The Indian constitution given to the rules and regulation and also provided reservation policies for various sections of the Indian peoples. Why because, the development of the weaker section people, empowering, and equality of total population in this society. According to the various welfare and development schemes were provided by the state and central government through the constitutions. In this context, the researcher has to know the understanding of the level of awareness about the Muslim minorities regarding reservation system in the Member of Parliament and Member of Assembly position in India. According to their responses, the researcher has analysed, and presented here under. The table 2 found that 62 per cent of the respondents from Anantapuramu district, 52 per cent of the of the Chittoor district respondents, 56 per cent of the respondents from Kurnool district, and 49 per cent of the selected muslim students were discloses their opinion that they have fully aware about the reservation system in Member of Parliament and Member of Assembly.

It is another found that 23 per cent (28 respondents) of the muslim households form Anantapuramu, 16 per cent (19) from the Chittoor district, 32 per cent (38) from the Kurnool district and 39 per cent (47) from YSR Kadapa district were stated that they have vague idea about reservation in state and central election in the Indian society.



Even information world, some of the respondents did not aware about this reservation system in state and central election and their express were discloses like 15 per cent, 32 per cent, 12 per cent and 12 per cent by the Anantapuramu, Chittoor, Kurnool and YSR Kadapa district accordingly.

Table 3, Awareness levels of selected muslim on reservation in Municipalities, gram panchayat, and ward levels

S.No	Opinion	Anantapuramu	Chittoor	Kurnool	YSR Kadapa
1	Aware	42 (35.00)	50 (42.00)	73 (61.00)	64 (53.00)
2	Vague Idea	59 (49.00)	55 (46.00)	26 (22.00)	23 (19.00)
3	Not aware	19 (16.00)	15 (12.00)	21 (17.00)	33 (28.00)
	Total	120 (100)	120 (100)	120 (100)	120 (100)

Source: Compiled data from field survey

Note : Figures in brackets indicate percentage to Colum total

The present table 3 demonstrated that the opinion of the respondents on awareness levels of selected muslim reservation in Municipalities, gram panchayat and ward levels in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh. It is found from the study that 35 per cent of the Anantapuramu sample respondents, 42 per cent of the Chittoor district muslim households, 61 per cent of the Kurnool district Muslim households, and 53 per cent of the respondents shows came from YSR Kadapa district have aware about reservation in Municipalities, gram panchyats and ward levels also in the study area. While other responses from the sample respondents, i.e., vegue idea about same dimensions. According to above context, 49 per cent represent 59 sample respondents, 46 per cent represent 55 sample respondents, 22 per cent represent 26 sample muslim respondents and 19 per cent represents 23 sample muslim respondents have vague idea about the reservation in Municipalities, gram panchayats and ward level.

The some of the respondents in the study area do not have any aware about reservation in various dimensions and it is evidence that 16 per cent of the respondents from the Anantapuramu district, 12 per cent of the respondents from Chittoor district, 17 per cent of the respondents from Kurnool district and 28 per cent of the respondents from YSR Kadapa district in the study area.

Table 4, Level of awareness on state and national political parties

S.No	Opinion	Anantapuramu	Chittoor	Kurnool	YSR Kadapa
1	Aware	54 (45.00)	38 (32.00)	62 (52.00)	53 (44.00)
2	Vague Idea	38 (32.00)	47 (39.00)	41 (34.00)	28 (23.00)
3	Not aware	28 (23.00)	35 (29.00)	17 (14.00)	39 (33.00)
	Total	120 (100)	120 (100)	120 (100)	120 (100)

Source: Compiled data from field survey

Note : Figures in brackets indicate percentage to Colum total



Knowledge about reservation in policy making bodies

Reservation of seats for Muslim in the local bodies like Village Panchayats, Mandal, District levels, Legislative Assemblies of the State and in Parliament have been provided in the constitution and not less than one –third of the total number of seats are reserved for women even among the seats served for Muslim since Independence. In order to know whether the selected muslim respondents have the knowledge about such provisions, a question was set and asked them to elicit their knowledge. The responses are shown in the Table 4 above. It is clear from Table that 207 respondents out of 480 representing 59 per cent have stated that they have the knowledge, 29.67 per cent have elicited that they have the vague knowledge and 11.33 per cent of the respondents have said that don't have any knowledge. On the whole, it can be concluded that majority of the respondents in the study have the knowledge about the national political parties in the study area.

After assessing the knowledge about constitutional provisions provided to Muslim at Local, Mandal, District, State and National levels, a question was also addressed to the ST respondents to express how effectively they are participating in such public positions and their responses are depicted in Table 5. It is found that 51.66 per cent of the select ST respondents under the study have said that they are not participating in public positions effectively. More than one –third of the total respondents have actively been participating and 16.66 per cent, however, stated that they are participation in public positions but by force. Thus, it can be inferred that though the political awareness is there, their participation is found less.

Table 5, Opinion of the select Muslim minorities on holding public positions

S.No	Opinion	Anantapuramu	Chittoor	Kurnool	YSR Kadapa
1	Actively participated	50 (42.00)	23 (19.00)	61 (51.00)	41 (34.00)
2	Some what	59 (49.00)	67 (56.00)	26 (22.00)	35 (29.00)
3	Not at all	11 (09.00)	30 (25.00)	33 (27.00)	44 (37.00)
	Total	120 (100)	120 (100)	120 (100)	120 (100)

Source: Compiled data from field survey

Note : Figures in brackets indicate percentage to Colum total

Scheduled Tribes voter as vote bank

There is a general opinion among the weaker sections especially Muslim that the people belonging to Muslim are being looked down by the upper caste people and consider them as a mere vote bank. Table 6 shows that 36.33 per cent have stated that they listen by the words of upper caste people not because of love and respect but because of coercion or domination, while 35 per cent have said that the upper caste people have treated them as vote bank at the time of elections, 28.67 per cent have told that Muslim nod their heads without questioning them. In brief, the responses imply that the respondents belonging to Muslim don't have the positive opinion about upper caste people, especially at the time of elections.



Table 6, How treated political parties to see the Minority people at election period

S.No	Opinion	Anantapuramu	Chittoor	Kurnool	YSR Kadapa
1	As a vote banker	83 (69.00)	91 (76.00)	77 (64.00)	56 (47.00)
2	Only followers	30 (25.00)	25 (21.00)	38 (32.00)	49 (41.00)
3	General public	7 (06.00)	04 (03.00)	05 (04.00)	15 (12.00)
	Total	120 (100)	120 (100)	120 (100)	120 (100)

Source: Compiled data from field survey

Note : Figures in brackets indicate percentage to Colum total

Conclusions

Even technological and informatics world, the people have low aware on various development oriented programme and also they not effectively participated in various position in political aspects. Hence, the present study humble attempt that the awareness levels of Muslim minorities on political aspects in drought prone area of Rayalaseema Region of Andhra Pradesh. It can be found from the study that there is less awareness about political aspects and concluded that majority of the muslim respondents have stated that there is less aware on political parties and political leaders due to ineffective participation in political and political parties were also treated as a vote banker at time of election period. Above all, the researcher has concluded that there is dire need to empowering muslim minorities through educate and political dimensions. Otherwise there is no upliftment of weaker section of the people in the society.

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