



SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC WELFARE AND INITIATIVES

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Editor

Dr. D. Suresh



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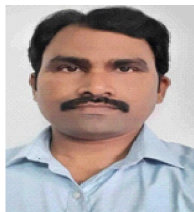
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CASTE, LEADERSHIP AND POLITICS IN TELANGANA STATE: A STUDY OF SCHEDULED CASTE



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Abstract: *This research delves into the historical underpinnings and contemporary ramifications of the caste system in Indian society, specifically examining its influence on politics in the state of Telangana. Grounded in Hinduism and fortified by Manusmriti, the caste system's enduring and hereditary nature continues to shape modern Indian politics, with both upper and lower castes leveraging it for political advantage. Given Telangana's formation in 2014 and subsequent transformations, this study is motivated by the need for a contemporary analysis of caste and politics in the region. It focuses on the representation of Scheduled Caste (SC) individuals in local bodies, seeking to unravel the relationship between caste and political leadership. Objectives encompass an exploration of the socio-economic profile of SC political leaders, an assessment of their awareness and commitment, an examination of factors influencing decision-making, and an evaluation of contributions to rural development. Hypotheses anticipate differences in backgrounds, commitment levels, decision-making factors, rural development efforts, and opportunities for improvement among SC political leaders. The study's significance lies in its potential to address vital questions concerning political inclusivity and equity, offering insights to guide policies for enhancing SC representation. The methodology considers the distribution of the SC population in Telangana and traces the historical study of SC political parties in the state. Findings from the study provide a comprehensive understanding of the political status of SC Sarpanches in Telangana. The demographic profiles, educational backgrounds, family structures, and political experiences of the sampled Sarpanches are scrutinized, accompanied by suggestions for improvement based on the study's limitations and findings. The research illuminates the representation of Scheduled Castes in local governance, pinpointing key areas for enhancement. Despite acknowledged limitations, the study contributes valuable insights into the political landscape through detailed data*

breakdowns and nuanced analyses of socio-economic factors. The study's recommendations encompass various realms, from encouraging youth participation to addressing awareness gaps on crucial policies, aligning with the broader goal of fostering inclusive governance. In conclusion, this study offers a meticulous exploration of the political participation of SC Sarpanches in Telangana. The findings and recommendations serve as a resource for policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders striving to augment the political representation and effectiveness of marginalized communities in local governance.

Keywords: *Caste, Leadership, Politics, Scheduled Caste, Telangana State.*

Introduction

Caste in Indian society denotes a social group whose affiliation is primarily determined by birth. This caste system became rigid and hereditary with the emergence of Hinduism. The Laws of Manu (Manusmitri) reinforced the notion of impurity and servitude among the outcastes while asserting the dominance and complete impunity of the upper castes. Those in the lowest caste were told that their place in the caste hierarchy was a consequence of their past life sins. Harsh punishments, including torture and death, were prescribed for offences such as acquiring literacy or insulting a member of a dominant caste. Manusmitri, a significant study in Hinduism, legitimized social exclusion and enshrined absolute inequality as the guiding principle of social interactions.

Caste continues to hold significant importance for Indian citizens in the modern world. However, it is important to note that different groups of citizens have varying motivations for upholding the caste system. The upper castes wish to maintain caste distinctions to suppress the lower castes and preserve their dominance. Interestingly, it is not uncommon to see that lower-caste groups, who are supposed to oppose the caste system, also use their caste identity to gain advantages in political and power corridors while simultaneously striving to end the caste-based oppression imposed on them by the upper castes. This creates an ironic and complex dynamic in modern Indian society.

The original intent behind the caste system was to establish a social order where the four classes operated together, like the different organs in a human body functioning in harmony. However, over time, the caste system has evolved into a structure that hinders individual growth in the name of caste and infringes on the fundamental rights of individuals to live and prosper, which is contrary to the principles of democracy.

Indian politics is heavily influenced by cultural diversity, social, ethnic, caste, community, and religious pluralism, as well as the nation's historical tradition of widespread movements with contrasting styles of party leadership and unique ideological perspectives. In the realm of political scholarship, India holds a special significance among newer countries in the so-called "third world." Given its extensive history, vast population, and present status, it stands out as a country of unique importance.

In any developing political system, two types of politics are discernible: the politics of ideology and the politics of action. Analysing the interplay between these two can

reveal key aspects of the nature and direction of political change within such a system. During the Vedic period, the Varna system served as the foundation for social stratification, consisting of four Varnas: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Sudra, each with its designated role. However, as time passed, the caste system evolved into an inherited status that is now a divisive element in contemporary Indian society.

Caste and politics in India share a close and intricate relationship, with both influencing each other significantly. Caste is an integral component of the Indian social structure and has secured a distinctive place within the Indian political system at various levels. Caste-based discrimination, or “casteism,” poses a significant challenge to Indian democracy, as it runs counter to the democratic principles of equality, freedom, and justice.

Caste loyalties and other ethnic factors often divide Indian political parties, although ideological differences may be less prominent. Election campaigns are frequently conducted along caste lines, and violence in politics is often tied to caste-based factors. Politics has become deeply intertwined with caste affiliations, as various caste groups use political platforms to secure their interests.

The process of democratization in India is expected to usher in new leaders from marginalized communities, as people seek development and a more responsive political system. To fulfil these expectations, political leaders must undergo a process of democratization themselves and work towards addressing the basic needs of the common citizen.

Caste politics in India has, in some ways, reduced the divisions among castes and brought about political inclusivity among members of different castes. However, it remains a complex issue with deep-rooted implications for society and politics. To promote a just and equal political system, the government should ensure that political practices and systems are equitable for all groups, regions, and communities. This requires fostering values of equality and fraternity in the education system, an essential element of nation-building.

Significance of The Study

The research topic, “Caste, Leadership, and Politics in Telangana State: A Study of Scheduled Caste,” carries significant significance due to several compelling reasons. Firstly, it addresses the pressing need for a contemporary analysis of the intricate relationship between caste and politics in India. While most existing works on this subject are dated, focusing on Telangana allows for an up-to-date examination, offering insights into how this relationship has evolved, particularly in the study of the state’s formation in 2014 and the significant political changes it brought about.

Furthermore, the regional specificity of the study is invaluable, providing an in-depth understanding of the unique dynamics and complexities within Telangana. The state’s history, including the Telangana Movement and its newfound status, offers a

distinctive study that merits exploration. Investigating the impact of socioeconomic changes, technological advancements, and evolving political ideologies within Telangana provides valuable insights into the role of caste in the state's politics.

Additionally, the research topic's focus on gender representation, particularly the underrepresentation of SC women in leadership roles, is of utmost relevance, offering a platform to explore the reasons behind this underrepresentation and propose strategies to rectify it. The study can also delve into the effectiveness of decentralization, considering Telangana's active efforts in implementing PR and local governance reforms, contributing to a broader understanding of the decentralization process.

Finally, the study's exploration of the empowerment of marginalized groups in Telangana aligns with the state's commitment to social justice and welfare schemes for these groups. It presents an opportunity to assess how such initiatives have contributed to the empowerment of SCs in the state. The research can also delve into the complex interplay between caste and politics, considering factors like religion, region, and language, thus providing a holistic understanding of the political landscape in Telangana.

In conclusion, this research topic is pivotal in addressing existing research gaps and offering fresh insights into the multifaceted relationship between caste and politics, not only within Telangana but with implications for broader Indian politics and policy-making.

In 2019, the first general elections for rural local bodies were conducted in the newly formed Telangana State. Out of a total of 12,018 Sarpanch seats, 18.51% were occupied by Backward Classes, 16.69% by Scheduled Castes, 24.21% by Scheduled Tribes, and 40.58% by others, representing the unreserved category. Among the elected SC reserved category positions, the highest number of SC Sarpanches were found in Sanga Reddy, constituting 6.43%, followed by Nalgonda (6.33%), Khammam (5.88%), Ranga Reddy (5.48%), and Nizamabad (4.98%). The remaining districts had less than 4% representation in terms of total elected Sarpanches (see Table 1.2).

Traditional and informal leaders hold significant importance, sometimes even more than formal leaders. While formally elected Panchayat leaders wield legal and formal authority in Panchayat Raj (PR) and are expected to effectively manage village administration, it is crucial to recognize the roles of traditional and informal leaders.

The Constitution of India contains specific provisions and reservations to ensure the representation of SC individuals within the legal and administrative framework of Panchayat Raj. However, this study primarily focuses on examining the nature of formal institutional leadership among SCs. It specifically includes the elected members of the SC community at the Panchayat level across various Panchayats in the study.

The study has been carried out on a sample of 234 SC Sarpanches out of a total of 584 in the districts of Sanga Reddy, Nalgonda, Khammam, Ranga Reddy, and

Nizamabad. The selection of this sample size follows the principles of “Small Sample Techniques” as outlined by Krejcie and Morgan

Therefore, a systematic study is necessary to fill in some of the missing data. The present study is a modest attempt to analyse rural leadership among the SCs in Sanga Reddy, Ranga Reddy, Khammam, Nalgonda, and Nizamabad Districts.

Need of the Study

In Telangana State, the population is primarily composed of backward classes, SCs, and STs. Among the total population of the State, SCs make up 15.45%. These SC communities exhibit diversity in terms of their social and economic standings, cultural backgrounds, and levels of involvement in development initiatives. Historically, SCs have faced discrimination and subjugation rooted in caste and social hierarchies. Both SCs and STs have experienced various forms of disadvantage due to their backward status in society.

Political representation, particularly in substantial numbers, plays a crucial role in facilitating power-sharing and ensuring equality within the political system. It also signifies a degree of political modernization and serves as an indicator of political development. Effective political representation can contribute to social transformation and is intrinsically connected to the socio-economic status of citizens in any society.

Notably, classical philosophers stressed the importance of citizen participation in political decision-making processes, as it promotes the equitable distribution of benefits and responsibilities. To ensure meaningful political representation, citizens need access to education, political equality, and the capacity to engage actively in political discussions and, most importantly, in the decision-making processes at national, state, and local levels. Additionally, holding elections based on the principle of universal suffrage is crucial for enabling extensive political representation.

Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the socio-economic profile of the SC Political Leaders.
2. To assess the awareness and commitment of SC leaders to their responsibilities and duties towards the people they represent.
3. To explore the factors influencing SC leaders in decision-making, including the role of political party leaders and family members.
4. To examine the contributions and efforts of SC political leaders in advancing the welfare and progress of rural development.
5. To provide suitable suggestions to improve the political participation of the SC community.

Hypothesis

1. Some SC political leaders might have different backgrounds in education, income, or jobs compared to others.

2. SC leaders might show varying levels of understanding and dedication in their responsibilities due to their education and experience.
3. The decisions made by SC leaders might be influenced by factors like their political party leaders and family members.
4. SC political leaders may differ in their efforts to improve rural areas due to their experience and the resources available to them.
5. There are opportunities to improve how the SC community participates in politics, and implementing suitable suggestions can make a difference.

Justification of the Study

This study's objectives, which involve investigating the socio-economic profile, awareness, commitment, decision-making factors, and contributions of SC Political Leaders in India, are justified due to their potential to shed light on the representation and effectiveness of SC leaders. Additionally, the hypotheses that relate to socio-economic differences, education's impact on commitment, external influences on decision-making, disparities in rural development efforts, and opportunities for improving SC community participation in politics all address critical questions concerning political inclusivity and equity. The findings from this research can guide policies and initiatives aimed at enhancing the political representation and overall development of the SC community, contributing to a more equitable and democratic political landscape

Research Methodology

Telangana State is comprised of 30 districts, with Mancherial (24.72%), Nagarkurnool (21.32%), Jangaon (21.15%), and Nagarkurnool (21.32%) having the highest proportion of SCs within their populations (as per Table 1). It is worth noting that the Telangana Rashtra Samithi, a major SC political party, originated in Telangana, and one of its prominent SC leaders, Kalvakuntla Chandrashekhar Rao, became the Chief Minister of the State following the reorganization of the former Andhra Pradesh State.

Table 1: Scheduled Caste Population in Telangana State

| Sl. No | Districts | % SC Population | SC Males | SC Females | SC Sex Ratio | SC Sarpanches in 2019 elections |
|--------|-------------|-----------------|----------|------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Adilabad | 14.02 | 49242 | 50180 | 1019 | 25 |
| 2 | Bhadradi | 13.42 | 71281 | 72201 | 1013 | 5 |
| 3 | Hyderabad | 6.29 | 124313 | 123614 | 994 | 00 |
| 4 | Jagtial | 16.7 | 80254 | 84342 | 1051 | 82 |
| 5 | Jangaon | 21.15 | 60141 | 59655 | 992 | 61 |
| 6 | Jayashankar | 19.47 | 69312 | 69178 | 998 | 48 |

| | | | | | | |
|----|--------------|-------|--------|--------|------|-----|
| 7 | Jogulamba | 19.78 | 61673 | 58966 | 956 | 58 |
| 8 | Kamareddy | 15.76 | 74133 | 79169 | 1068 | 80 |
| 9 | Karimnagar | 18.56 | 93792 | 92856 | 990 | 78 |
| 10 | Khammam | 19.93 | 138820 | 140499 | 1012 | 118 |
| 11 | Komarambheem | 15.82 | 41132 | 40464 | 984 | 27 |
| 12 | Mahabubabad | 13.49 | 51961 | 52547 | 1011 | 41 |
| 13 | Mahabubnagar | 14.63 | 107085 | 110380 | 1031 | 59 |
| 14 | Mancherial | 24.72 | 100792 | 98701 | 979 | 66 |
| 15 | Medak | 16.68 | 61673 | 66297 | 1075 | 66 |
| 16 | Medchal | 9.39 | 115811 | 113377 | 979 | 11 |
| 17 | Nagarkurnool | 21.32 | 92814 | 90955 | 980 | 83 |
| 18 | Nalgonda | 18.1 | 145964 | 146987 | 1007 | 127 |
| 19 | Nirmal | 15.24 | 51678 | 56407 | 1092 | 54 |
| 20 | Nizamabad | 13.83 | 104403 | 112864 | 1081 | 100 |
| 21 | Peddapalli | 19.47 | 77311 | 77544 | 1003 | 55 |
| 22 | Rajanna | 18.5 | 50290 | 51820 | 1030 | 51 |
| 23 | Rangareddy | 13.78 | 171194 | 165829 | 969 | 110 |
| 24 | Sangareddy | 18.13 | 139358 | 137613 | 987 | 129 |
| 25 | Siddipet | 18.53 | 93100 | 94408 | 1014 | 92 |
| 26 | Suryapet | 18.95 | 103437 | 104889 | 1014 | 83 |
| 27 | Vikarabad | 19.39 | 88383 | 91347 | 1034 | 92 |
| 28 | Wanaparthy | 16.13 | 47150 | 46032 | 976 | 46 |
| 29 | Warangal (R) | 17.89 | 64033 | 64535 | 1008 | 57 |
| 30 | Hanmakonda | 18.14 | 97433 | 98613 | 1012 | 40 |
| 31 | Yadadri | 17.39 | 65164 | 63404 | 973 | 62 |

Source: <https://tsec.gov.in/dashboardresults.se> & <https://data.telangana.gov.in/dataset/st-sc-population>

Table 2: Elected Sarpanches in 2019 Ordinary General Elections

| Sl.No | District | Total Reserved | BC | SC | ST | UR |
|-------|----------------------------|----------------|------|------|------|------|
| 1 | Adilabad | 463 | 47 | 25 | 288 | 103 |
| 2 | Komaram Bheem | 331 | 33 | 27 | 189 | 82 |
| 3 | Mancherial | 303 | 49 | 66 | 54 | 134 |
| 4 | Nirmal | 396 | 90 | 54 | 71 | 181 |
| 5 | Nizamabad | 518 | 95 | 100 | 98 | 225 |
| 6 | Jagtial | 379 | 90 | 82 | 29 | 178 |
| 7 | Peddapalli | 263 | 70 | 55 | 8 | 130 |
| 8 | Jayashankar Bhupalpally | 230 | 48 | 48 | 23 | 111 |
| 9 | Bhadradi | 477 | 0 | 5 | 461 | 11 |
| 10 | Mahabubabad | 457 | 21 | 41 | 273 | 122 |
| 11 | Warangal Rural | 386 | 67 | 57 | 114 | 148 |
| 12 | Warangal Urban | 127 | 18 | 40 | 7 | 62 |
| 13 | Karimnagar | 311 | 73 | 78 | 4 | 156 |
| 14 | Rajanna Sircilla | 252 | 56 | 51 | 30 | 115 |
| 15 | Kamareddy | 523 | 131 | 80 | 83 | 229 |
| 16 | Sangareddy | 647 | 138 | 129 | 93 | 287 |
| 17 | Medak | 469 | 120 | 66 | 80 | 203 |
| 18 | Siddipet | 489 | 141 | 92 | 18 | 238 |
| 19 | Jangaon | 280 | 39 | 61 | 58 | 122 |
| 20 | YadadriBhongiri | 400 | 107 | 62 | 47 | 184 |
| 21 | Medchal-Malkajiri | 48 | 9 | 11 | 3 | 25 |
| 22 | Rangareddy | 556 | 108 | 110 | 92 | 246 |
| 23 | Vikarabad | 560 | 125 | 92 | 104 | 239 |
| 24 | Mahabubnagar | 438 | 97 | 59 | 100 | 182 |
| 25 | Jogulamba Gadwal | 255 | 65 | 58 | 6 | 126 |
| 26 | Wanaparthy | 255 | 55 | 46 | 43 | 111 |
| 27 | Nagarkurnool | 446 | 66 | 83 | 126 | 171 |
| 28 | Nalgonda | 773 | 156 | 127 | 149 | 341 |
| 29 | Suryapet | 407 | 53 | 83 | 92 | 179 |
| 30 | Khammam | 579 | 58 | 118 | 167 | 236 |
| | Total | 12018 | 2225 | 2006 | 2910 | 4877 |

Source: <https://tsec.gov.in/dashboardresults.se> & <https://data.telangana.gov.in/dataset/st-sc-population>

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Source of Data Collection

The primary respondents for the current study are the general population and the leaders of the SCs in the districts of Sanga Reddy, Nalgonda, Khammam, Ranga Reddy, and Nizamabad. The primary sources of data collection for this study encompass both primary sources and secondary sources.

Primary Sources

Data from the primary source was gathered through fieldwork conducted for the study. Information was collected using structured, closed-ended questionnaires during interview sessions with the sampled respondents. These interviews aimed to extract data for analysis, facilitating the formulation of objective conclusions. Additionally, the study engaged in oral discussions with the respondents, which proved valuable during the data analysis process and for framing the conclusions accurately.

Interview Method

The current investigation was designed as an empirical study focusing on rural leadership within the SCs community. An interview schedule was used to collect information from the respondents on various aspects of their socio-economic status, views, and issues. The schedule consisted of two parts: the first part included questions

to gather information about family, economic status, occupation, and similar factors, while the second part contained questions related to the respondents' attitudes, opinions, views, and interactions with others.

The interview schedule was initially prepared in English but administered to the respondents in the regional language, Telugu. Ambiguous questions were eliminated, and only questions that could elicit clear and relevant information were retained. The schedule was further refined based on the insights gained during a pilot study. It was then copied and personally administered during face-to-face interactions with the respondents. Counterquestions were posed when necessary, and observations were recorded on the reverse side of the schedule. In addition to the structured interview schedule, a significant amount of information was gathered through informal discussions with the villagers.

Secondary Sources

Secondary data for this study was collected from various sources, including libraries and statistical departments. These sources encompassed data from census reports, district census handbooks, district gazetteers, journals, books, and various reports. This secondary data was utilized to provide additional study and insights into the subject under investigation.

Data Analysis

The study employed straightforward tabulation and simple percentage methods to analyze the available data.

Selection of respondents

All the SC-elected respondents chosen for the study encompass both male and female members. Additionally, among the respondents, there are two sub-caste groups, namely Mala and Madiga.

Limitation of the Study

While the present study is well-organized and features substantial effort and analysis, it does have certain limitations that should be acknowledged:

1. The study is based on the limited political experiences of a selection of SC political functionaries. This narrow scope may restrict the generalizability of the study's findings to a broader population.
2. The study primarily relies on the perceptions of SC political leaders at the Gram Panchayat level. If there are any errors or biases in these perceptions, they could potentially affect the validity of the results obtained through this study.
3. The study focuses solely on one aspect of governance, namely political participation. As a result, the findings may not provide a comprehensive view of the broader governance landscape.

Difficulties Encountered in the Field

Obtaining data from SC village leaders through interviews in their residences, workplaces, and whenever they are available is a valuable approach. However, it is essential to recognize that there may be challenges when asking certain questions. Some leaders may be hesitant to provide answers, particularly on topics such as the reasons for non-cooperation from high-caste individuals, their income levels, and the factors influencing their ability to make independent decisions during critical periods. These sensitive areas might require a more cautious and nuanced approach during data collection to encourage candid responses and address any reservations or concerns.

Findings of the Study

The study provides detailed information about Sarpanches in sample districts of Telangana, with a focus on their demographics, educational backgrounds, family structures, housing, landholdings, and income levels. Here is a summary of the key findings with percentages:

1. SC Reserved Seats:

- A. Nalgonda has 127 SC reserved seats, constituting approximately 23.6% of its total seats.
- B. Sanga Reddy follows closely with 129 SC reserved seats, making up about 23.2% of its total seats.
- C. Across all listed districts, the 538 SC reserved seats represent roughly 18.6% of the overall total seats.
- D. In the entire state of Telangana, the 2,006 SC reserved seats constitute about 16.7% of the total seats.

2. Sub-Caste Breakdown:

- A. Madiga sub-caste accounts for 63% of the SC Sarpanches.
- B. Mala sub-caste makes up 31%.
- C. Other sub-castes contribute 14%.

3. Gender Distribution:

- A. Approximately 66% of Sarpanches are male, with the remaining 34% being female.

4. Age Groups:

- A. 50% of Sarpanches fall within the age group of 21-35 years.
- B. 33% are aged 51 and above.
- C. 17% belong to the 36-50 age group.

5. Education Levels:

- A. 43% of Sarpanches have education up to the Intermediate level.
- B. 18% have education up to high school.

- C. 15% are graduates.
 - D. 13% have post-graduation.
 - E. 11% have education at the primary level.
- 6. Marital Status:**
- A. 91% of Sarpanches are married.
 - B. 4% are unmarried, 3% are divorced, and 2% are widowed.
- 7. Occupational Background:**
- A. 42% of Sarpanches have a background in politics.
 - B. 29% have experience in agriculture.
 - C. 14% are self-employed.
 - D. 9% are homemakers.
 - E. 4% have experience in private service.
 - F. 1% are exclusively engaged in panchayat-related work.
- 8. Family Structure:**
- A. 88% of Sarpanches have nuclear families.
 - B. 12% are part of joint families.
- 9. Housing:**
- A. 93% of Sarpanches own their own houses.
 - B. 7% reside in rented accommodations.
- 10. House Type:**
- A. 72% reside in RCC houses.
 - B. 25.6% live in Tiled houses.
 - C. 2.5% live in Thatched houses.
- 11. Landholdings:**
- A. 43% have marginal landholdings (up to 2.47 Acres).
 - B. 40% have small landholdings (2.47 to 4.94 Acres).
 - C. 14% fall into the semi-medium category (4.94 to 9.88 Acres).
 - D. 4% have medium landholdings (9.88 to 24.71 Acres).
- 12. Income Levels:**
- A. 45% of Sarpanches have an annual income exceeding 5 Lakhs.
 - B. 35% earn below 1.5 Lakh.
 - C. 15% earn between 1.5 and 2 Lakhs.
 - D. 5% earn between 2 and 5 Lakhs.

13. Entry into Politics by Age Group:

- A. The majority (55.5%) entered politics between 41-50 years.
- B. 51 and above: 31%
- C. 31-40 years: 21.8%
- D. 21-30 years: 14.5%
- E. 20 years or below: 8%

14. Marital Status of Sarpanches:

- A. 92% were married when entering politics.
- B. 8% were never married.

15. Family Background in Politics:

- A. 75% have a family history in politics.
- B. Father's side: 27%
- C. Mother's side: 7%
- D. Husband's side: 42%
- E. In-law family: 24%
- F. 25% have no political family background.

16. Motivation to Enter Politics:

- A. 69% were prompted to enter politics.
- B. Family encouragement: 77%
- C. Party influence: 15%
- D. Reservation policies: 8%
- E. 31% voluntarily joined politics.

17. Political Experience:

- A. 82% have previous political experience.
- B. 2 to 4 years of experience: 76%
- C. Less than 2 years: 13%
- D. 4 years or more: 9%
- E. 18% have no previous political experience.

18. Political Affiliations:

- A. 74.35% align with TRS.
- B. Congress: 18.37%
- C. BJP: 3.84%
- D. TDP: 2.13%
- E. Others: 1.28%

19. Number of Terms Elected:

- A. First-time Sarpanches: 46%
- B. Second-time: 33%
- C. Third time or more: 21%

20. Awareness of CAA:

- A. 34% of Sarpanches are aware of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).
- B. Not aware: 66%

21. Confidence in Decision-Making:

- A. 57% are confident in making independent decisions.
- B. 43% rely on the guidance of senior members and family.

22. Attendance at Party Meetings:

- A. 91% regularly attend party meetings.
- B. 9% do not attend for undisclosed reasons.

23. Perception of Upper-Caste Influence:

- A. 75% believe upper-caste political leaders' influence has decreased.
- B. 25% believe it remains intact.

24. Gender Dynamics:

- A. 75% of female Sarpanches believe male domination is decreasing.
- B. 25% believe it persists.

25. Discrimination in Politics:

- A. 10% of Sarpanches experience discrimination.
- B. It is often due to factors like lack of education and limited awareness.

26. Relations with Local Leaders:

- A. Positive relations with local leaders are common.

27. Relations with Higher Cadre Leaders:

- A. Sarpanches maintain positive relations with higher cadre political leaders.

28. Relations with Government Officials:

- A. Positive relations with government officials are common.

29. Support from Family Members:

- A. Most Sarpanches receive support from family members in their political duties.

30. Desire for Training:

- A. 75% of Sarpanches express the need for training, especially to keep up with policy changes.

31. Awareness of Rural Development Programs:

- A. 75% are aware of rural development programs.
- B. 25% lack knowledge due to factors like limited education.

32. Awareness of SC Welfare Programs:

- A. 82% are aware of SC Welfare Programs.

33. Initiatives in Rural Development:

- A. Sarpanches initiate various development programs, including infrastructure and welfare schemes.

34. Impact on Social and Economic Status:

- A. Social status improved for many, but economic status did not change for most.

35. Future Political Intentions:

- A. 57% plan to continue in politics.
- B. 43% expressed disinterest, citing reservation policies and economic status as factors.

36. Impact of 73rd CAA:

- A. 75% believe political participation improved after the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act.
- B. 25% disagree, citing economic empowerment challenges.

Suggestions

Based on the above findings the study has drawn the following suggestion to improve the political status of SC in Telangana State.

1. Many Sarpanches enter politics between the ages of 41-50, suggesting a need for programs to encourage younger individuals to participate.
2. Sanga Reddy and Nalgonda districts have a significant number of Sarpanches. Analyzing the reasons behind this concentration and similar patterns in other areas is worthwhile.
3. Understanding the correlation between marital status and political involvement can provide insights into family dynamics' role in a person's political career.
4. The fact that 75% of Sarpanches have a family history of political involvement suggests a need to examine political dynasties' influence on local governance.
5. Studying the reasons for entering politics, such as family encouragement, party influence, or personal choice, can reveal Sarpanches' motivations.
6. The strong presence of the Telangana Rastra Samithi (TRS) among Sarpanches indicates the need to investigate the party's appeal and its impact on local governance.

7. The majority of Sarpanches being elected for the first time suggests a relatively young political landscape. Researching their experiences and challenges can be valuable.
8. The lack of awareness about the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) among Sarpanches could be addressed through educational initiatives to ensure they are informed about important policies.
9. Sarpanches' confidence in making independent decisions or relying on senior members and family influences their effectiveness in governance. Strategies to empower them with decision-making skills can be considered.
10. Explore the factors contributing to non-attendance at party meetings to determine if there are issues within the party structure that need attention.
11. Investigate the factors contributing to the perception of upper-caste political leaders' dominance to address concerns and promote more inclusive governance.
12. The views of female Sarpanches on male domination and their involvement in politics shed light on the challenges they face. These challenges could be addressed to ensure gender equality in local governance.
13. The 10% of Sarpanches who reported experiencing discrimination need support and measures to address the issues they face.
14. Recognizing the demand for training among Sarpanches, the government could organize training programs to enhance their knowledge about rural development and governance.
15. Understanding the types of rural development programs initiated by Sarpanches and their impact on communities can guide future policies and projects.
16. The economic challenges faced by Sarpanches should be considered when designing policies and support systems for them.
17. The intentions of Sarpanches regarding their future political activities are crucial for planning and governance. Policies should be designed to retain capable individuals in the political system.
18. Differing perspectives on the impact of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act can inform efforts to make local governance more effective and inclusive.
19. Promote education and awareness programs targeting SC communities to increase political literacy and understanding of their rights and opportunities.
20. Ensure effective implementation of reservation policies at all levels of government, including local bodies, to provide adequate representation for SC communities.

21. Offer training and capacity-building programs for aspiring SC leaders, focusing on leadership skills, policy knowledge, and governance.
22. Promote financial inclusion and economic empowerment by providing access to credit, entrepreneurial opportunities, and skill development programs.
23. Conduct sensitization programs to reduce social stigma and discrimination against SC community members, fostering a more inclusive society.
24. Encourage collaboration between SC organizations and civil society groups to amplify the voices of SC communities in the political sphere.
25. Establish mentorship programs where experienced SC leaders guide emerging leaders, providing valuable insights and support.
26. Offer legal assistance and resources to protect SC community members from discrimination and to ensure their political rights are upheld.
27. Run public awareness campaigns to highlight the importance of SC political participation and the impact it can have on communities and society.
28. Ensure that SC community members have access to information regarding elections, government policies, and political processes.
29. Encourage young members of SC communities to actively participate in politics by creating platforms and opportunities for them to engage.
30. Implement systems for monitoring the effectiveness of policies and initiatives aimed at improving SC political participation and holding responsible parties accountable.
31. Advocate for and support social justice initiatives that address broader societal inequalities that impact SC communities.
32. Encourage political parties to include SC candidates in elections and actively engage with SC communities in their policy development.
33. Conduct research and data collection to assess the impact of political participation initiatives and make evidence-based adjustments as needed.

The study deemed these suggestions will serve as starting points for further research, policy development, or support initiatives for Sarpanches and local governance.

Conclusion

The study presents a comprehensive examination of the socio-economic profiles and political engagement of Scheduled Caste (SC) Sarpanches in Telangana, focusing on districts such as Nalgonda and Sanga Reddy. Notably, the commitment to social inclusion is evident, with approximately 23.6% and 23.2% of SC reserved seats in Nalgonda and Sanga Reddy, respectively. Across the listed districts, the 538 SC reserved seats constitute roughly 18.6% of the total, emphasizing a collective effort to foster

representation and diversity. Delving into demographic characteristics, a majority of Sarpanches fall within the age group of 21-35 years (50%), with 33% aged 36 and above and 17% in the 36-50 age group. Education-wise, 43% have education up to the Intermediate level, and 15% are graduates. Marital status reveals that 91% of Sarpanches are married. Occupationally, 42% have backgrounds in politics, and 29% have experience in agriculture. Family-wise, 88% have nuclear families, and 93% own their houses. Concerning landholdings, 43% have marginal land, and 40% have small land. Income distribution shows that 45% of Sarpanches earn above 5 Lakhs annually, while 35% earn below 1.5 Lakhs. The study also highlights the political entry and experience of Sarpanches, with most entering politics between the ages of 41-50 (55.5%) and 92% being married when they entered politics. Family backgrounds in politics are prevalent, with 75% having some form of political connection, primarily through their fathers, husbands, or in-law family members. Awareness of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) varies, with 34% being aware and 66% lacking knowledge. Confidence in decision-making shows that 57% are self-assured, while 43% rely on guidance from senior members and family. The majority of Sarpanches (91%) attend party meetings regularly. In terms of perceptions, 75% believe the sway of upper-caste political leaders has diminished, while 25% think their dominance remains. Discrimination is reported by 10% of Sarpanches during political meetings, while 90% do not face discrimination. Positive relationships with local, higher cadre political leaders, government officials, and family support are common across all districts. The study concludes by emphasizing the positive impact on social status due to political involvement, limited economic status improvements, and the varying awareness of key policies. It identifies challenges faced by SC leaders, including discrimination, limited awareness, and economic constraints, offering recommendations to address these challenges. The research significantly contributes to understanding the complex interplay between caste and politics, calling for evidence-based policy adjustments to enhance SC political participation and representation in the specific context of Telangana and India at large.

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