



Dynamics of caste associations in political mobilization: A perspective

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Abstract

The Present paper attempts to study the growth and dynamics of caste associations, the nature of relationship with political parties and their role in electoral politics in India especially in the case of Telangana. Further this study is to examine what extent these associations are successful as the agencies of interest articulation and in political mobilization of the particular caste. The present study is based on the primary and secondary sources. The secondary source is collected various published books and journals. A structured questionnaire is administered and information had been elicited through the interview method had also employed to Collected data from the backward caste associations in Warangal Urban district of Telangana State. The main objective of the study is to explore the social conditions of the selected respondents, to examine the interaction between caste and politics as well as significance of caste associations in study area. Finally this paper analyses the increasing ability of caste associations in mobilizing the masses and improve the status of political consciousness in study area.

Keywords: mobilization, caste, consciousness, dynamics

Introduction

In India, since ancient period the social system is driven with the phenomenon of caste line. When we look at the European and other Asiatic societies, one normally finds only racial or ethnic differences. But in case of India, in addition to racial or ethnic or linguistic dimensions, one also finds caste as a major dividing factor crucial role within the society. This division leads to differences and differences leads to socio-economic and political inequalities as well as for its practices of discriminations.

The caste associations are formed on the basis of occupation or by virtue of their caste lineage. Broadly, two types of caste associations can be divided. They are: (a) caste associations formed on the basis of one's (a) profession; and (b) non-professional caste associations which do not practice any occupation or profession. S.C. Dubey (1968) observes that the identification of caste as a professional group is common in Indian society. Traditionally, every caste is supposed to be associated with some occupation. The mobilization of the people by the caste associations has indirectly helped them in political participation and enhancing the political consciousness of the people. Therefore, the people have nurtured these caste associations realizing the importance of identifying themselves as a group which helped them in influencing both political parties and the government. The caste associations closely resemble the Varna system. The caste of an individual is determined by birth. One is born into a caste and continues to acquire the label of that particular caste. Ghanshyam Shah (1985) maintains that, the caste system has been governed by a concept of purity and pollution. The inter-personal relationship among the individuals is broadly categorized as pure and impure in terms

of blood food and occupation. The present study has focused the impact of the caste and caste associations on political mobilization in India in particular in Telangana.

Objective of study

1. To study the social conditions of the selected respondents.
2. To examine the interaction between caste and politics as well as significance of caste associations in study area.
3. To analyse the increasing ability of caste associations in mobilizing the masses and improve the status of political consciousness.

Methodology

The present study based on the primary source and secondary sources. The secondary source is collected various published books and journals. A structured questionnaire administered and information had been elicited through the interview method had also employed to Collected data from the backward caste associations in Warangal Urban district of Telangana State.

Results and Discussion

The respondent's age wise particulars are presented in Table-1. The researcher interviewed altogether 60 respondents in Warangal District of Telangana state, who belongs to different caste association and they are held in various position. It would be worthwhile to briefly portray the socio-economic background of these respondents so as to assess their influence on the caste association on the one hand and the efforts they had put into strengthen the organization and thereby accomplish its desired goals and objectives.

Table 1: Age particulars of the selected Respondents

Age particulars	Respondents	Percentage
18-30	13	21.67
31-40	24	40.00
41-50	13	21.67
Above 51	10	16.66
Total	60	100.0

Source: Field Study

It can be seen that the Table-1 describe that the age particulars

of the sample respondents.

Of the total respondents, 21.67 per cent belong to the youth who are of below 30 years. In the next age group of 31-40 years, we find the higher percent i.e. 40 per cent of the total respondents, while 21.67 per cent of the total sample units comes under 41-50 years age group. In the remaining groups Above 51 years, the percentages are 16.66 per cent. The leadership of the caste associations is confined to a small proportion of the old age group. While the lower middle and youth dominate the caste associations

Table 2: Educational status of the selected respondents

Educational Level	Respondents	Percentage
Illiterate	01	01.67
Primary	05	08.33
Secondary	14	23.33
Intermediate	19	31.67
Degree	16	26.67
PG and Professional	05	08.33
Total	60	100.0

Source: Field study.

The education particulars (Table- 2) show that a majority in the total sample, 31.67 per cent are under Intermediate level. Only one respondent is illiterate. We find people who are educated degree 19 respondents 26.67 percent of the sample. Thus in the sub-samples, we find relatively 05,14 respondents 8.33,23.33 percent account of primary and secondary level,

there are 05 respondents and those at the post-Graduate and Professional level in total respondents. It can be noticed that the elite with poor educational background do not have any place in the leadership the caste associations. It is significant to mention that those with degree and above are placed in substantial positions.

Table 3: Caste particulars of the selected Respondents

Caste	Respondents	Percentage
Padmashali	05	08.33
Gowda	08	13.33
Rajaka	03	05.00
Bestha	03	05.00
Nai-Brahman	02	03.33
Yadava	06	10.00
Mandula	03	5.00
Vaddera	02	03.33
Kummari	02	03.33
Peraka	03	05.00
Vishwa-Brahmin	03	05.00
Katika	02	03.33
Satani	03	05.00
Mudhiraj	05	08.33
Munnurukapu	07	11.67
Mera	03	05.00
Total	60	100.0

Source: Field Study.

Table-3 describe that the caste background of the respondents. We find the higher percentage of 5 caste associations in selected study area i.e. Gowda, Munnurukapu, Yadava, Mudhiraj, Padmashali respectively. The three members

constituting 5 percent of sample belongs to Rajaka, Bestha, Sathani, Mera, mandula, viswa-Brahmana community. The Nai-Brahmana, vaddera, Kummari, Katika are around 2 members who are in the range of 3.33 percent of the sample.

Table 4: Occupation of the selected Respondents

Occupation	Respondents	Percentage
Agriculture	04	06.67
Business	14	23.33
Government Services	13	21.67

Private Services	06	10.00
Caste Profession	16	26.67
Political Leadership	05	08.33
Social Service	02	03.33
Total	60	100.0

Source: Field Study.

The occupation particulars of the respondents as shown in Table- 4 indicates that of the total number of respondents, 6.67 per cent belongs to agriculture, 23.33 per cent to business and the remaining, 26.67, 21.67,10.0 are in government services, private services and caste profession respectively. While other occupations have lesser percentages such as 8.33

and 3.33 per cent in the case of political leadership and social services. It is evident that, the elite coming from the professional castes are numerically quite strong. It is natural that the caste being a professional organization, it is befitting that the members coming from such castes take up the leadership of the caste associations.

Table 5: Position held in the organization

Position	Respondents	Percentage
President	12	20.00
Vice-President	06	10.00
Secretary	09	15.00
Joint-Secretary	05	08.33
Treasurer	03	05.00
Member	25	41.67
Total	60	100.0

Source: Field study

The various organizational positions held by the members in the samples respondents are noticed in Table-5. It is found that in a total of 60 members, there are 25 representatives who are members of the different caste associations. They account for 41.67 per cent of the total sample. In the case of president of

caste association hold in 20 per cent respectively. Those holding the position of secretary are 9, aggregating to 15 percent, while joint secretary position hold very less percent i.e.5 per cent only.

Table 6: Evaluation of Caste Association Mobilization

1	What issues and problems generally does your caste association strive		
	Social	27	45.00
	Economic	22	36.67
	Political	06	10.00
	Values of traditions	05	08.33
	Total	60	100.00
2	Achievements of the caste associations		
	Unity	46	76.07
	Reservation	04	06.67
	Financial Assistance	05	08.33
	Election Pressure	03	05.00
	Don't Know	02	03.33
	Total	60	100.0
3	All parties advocated abolition of caste, Do you agree		
	Yes	28	46.67
	Not possible	15	25.00
	Some extent	11	18.33
	DK	06	10.00
	Total	60	100.0
4	Is your caste association capable of influencing public policies		
	Yes	18	30.00
	No	10	16.67
	Some extent	27	45.00
	Dk	05	08.33
	Total	60	100.0

Source: Field Study

Table-6 indicates that the evaluation of caste association mobilization in selected area. In the case of first question has

been administered "what issues and problems does generally our caste association strive for", of the total respondents 27

constituting 45 percent maintain that the caste association strives for social activities, while 36.67 percent maintain economic activities, a meager of 10 per cent on political proportion of 8.33 percent on conventional issues of the caste. In the case of another question administered “achievements of your caste association, it is found that 46 respondents have indicated unity among caste members which accounts for 76.07 per cent. While 6.67, 8.33, percent to reservations and financial uplift, while just 5 percent indicate influencing the elections and similar proportion have expressed ignorance. It is also found 28 respondents constituting 25 percent have categorically stated that it is not possible to abolish the caste, while 30 per cent have contended that to some extent it is possible. A majority 46.67 per cent respondent have affirmed with the view that the caste system India can be abolished. Further noticed that another question is “is your caste association capable of influencing public policies” administered from the above table, for that, of the total 18 respondents aggregating 30 percent have confirmed with the view, while 16.67 per cent have negated it. A substantial proportion of 45 percent have indicated that to a great extent the caste associations influence public policy issues. A meager of 8.33 percent has expressed ignorance on this dimension. Therefore, pertinent to say that of 75 per cent of the respondents has affirmed with the view that caste associations do influence policy measures in study area.

Findings of the study

The empirical analysis reveals that the various matters concerning the caste associations in Warangal District, has to be concluded it may be pointed out that there are a few contradictions in the response. The other significant issue concern with the dissolution of caste in Indian social system context. It is found that a majority of respondents in the sample had the experience and family lineage in rendering service to the caste associations. Even considering the age as a variable, the elite coming from all age groups have confirmed the view that their family members had experience of participating in the activities caste associations. It is also observed that the caste associations take independent divisions in regard with problems of their caste without intervention of political parties and the role of caste associations are quite capable of influencing public policies. It illustrates that the caste elite have a role in contemporary politics of India and the way they have been politicized and continue to influence the present day politics. /the abolition of caste, the view point in reality, the very formation of the association is to strengthen the thrust on caste and make it take deep roots in the present day society.

Conclusion

Caste based mobilization in India, like ethnic quotas rest of the world, have been seen as an important tool for redressing persistent imposed inequalities (parikh, 1997, Wilkinson, 2003) [5, 6].

The emergence of caste association in early 80's shown a great impact on political mobilizations in India as well as in the state of Telangana. These caste associations were formed and registered such associations with the government as legitimate groups to accord legitimacy and continued to

demand various concessions. The protective discrimination was initially accorded to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and later such facility was extending to the backward castes in some of the southern states. Among such caste associations, more so, with that of Shepherds, weavers, gowdas, Rajaka, Nai-Brahmins and other artisan castes. Further, the field survey conducted several questions illustrates a few insights o caste associations. The field survey data mainly reiterates the notion that caste associations absolutely strive to promote the cause of unity, economic and social and all-round development of the caste.

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