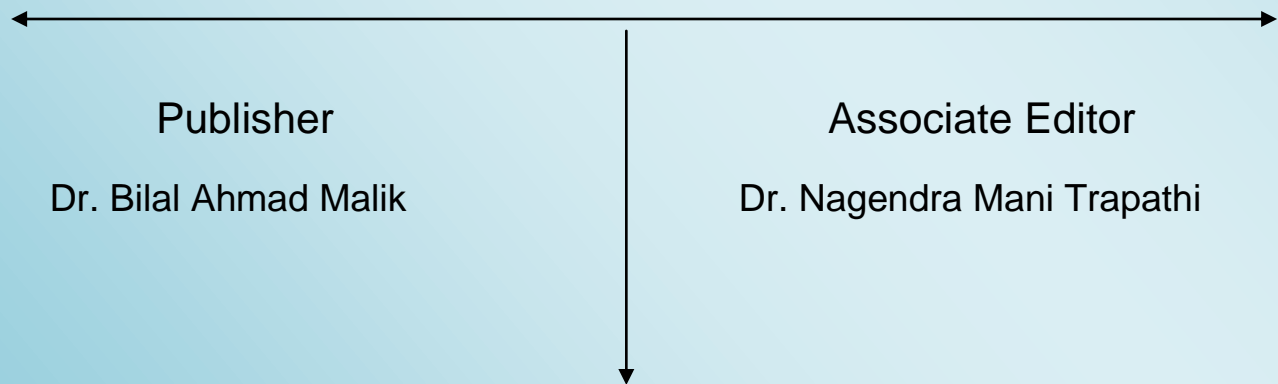


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AN ANALYSIS OF ELECTORAL TRENDS IN ANANTHAPURAMU DISTRICT IN 2014 STATE GENERAL ELECTIONS

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ABSTRACT

It is evidently known that the role of Ananthapuramu district in freedom movement and in the political history of Independent India is dominant under the leadership of dedicated freedom fighters and eminent statesmen. During the freedom struggle, it played a pivotal role and even now continues to play a significant role in the politics of nation in general, and State politics in particular. Several prominent leaders actively participated in India's struggle for Independence. As well, since the formation of the state of Andhra Pradesh and even before, the Ananthapuramu District has its predominant role in the politics of Andhra Pradesh which could change the face of governments as many prominent politicians hail from the district. In this paper an attempt is made to study the people's participation and voting trends in 2014 general elections in Ananthapuramu district of Andhra Pradesh.

Key Words: Citizens, Electronic Voting Machines 'NOTA', Electors, Winner, Runner

INTRODUCTION

The Theory of Elections has assumed considerable significance and importance for it envisages into the real crux of politics and the role of the individuals in General Elections. In a democracy, elections occupy a place of importance and primacy because the citizens clearly and directly through electoral process, indirectly through their complex process influence the established governments in many ways. Thus, the General Elections and voting is regarded as the most obvious means of influence because it enables the general public to select political leaders / elite who represent their opinions, and continue to decide the destiny of the people or the government for the next stipulated term. Therefore, democracy is regarded as another form of 'vox populi'. The citizens also control the government officials, correspond through the media, engage themselves in various forms of political participation, and thereby the general public involve themselves in a variety of formal and informal methods of political discussions and articulating their points of view on the manner and method of functioning of the government. The voting choice and preference of the general voters in regard to parties and the individual

preferences of the electorate in selecting political leadership may be viewed as the conversion of the public opinion into specific political decisions.

The elections are quite important because the electorate makes crucial decisions affecting the nation. The electoral outcome, in reality, determines as to who will manage the affairs of the government and makes suitable public policies. The selection of leaders could be regarded as a political process through which the people with their ability are made to assume political power. It is equally true that the political elite may not always act as they promise, but the choice of elite provides a form of popular control of policy outcomes.

The study of elections assumes a great relevance for the general understanding of the wider political system. It may be regarded as a barometer of a political temperature of a country and an in-depth analysis of general elections, both at micro and macro levels, could be significant in order to understand the nature of politics, the issues on which the electoral contest takes place, strategy adopted and the campaign techniques put into operation by the political parties as well as the elite, political alignments that operate among parties for electoral adjustments, role played by formal and informal leadership of varied interest groups and finally the perceptive, behavioural and motivational pattern exhibited by the adult citizen population in choosing their political decision-makers for a specific system.

The study of election is quite significant because it helps for a clear comprehension of political manifestos and the priorities laid down by the political parties. In a democracy, parties formulate their programmes through the process which Gabriel Almond mentions as “interest aggregation”. These manifestos project the objectives, programmes as well as priorities they lay on national and state issues and thereby attract the electorate in their favour. In fact, a political manifesto has a great significance for it explains the thrust of parties on varied issues and policies, making an effort to meet the divergent needs of the general public coming from different strata of the society. Unlike interest groups, the parties will have to cut across all regions, religious groups, ethnic groups, communities, castes and sub-castes, and secure their political support to win the elections. Therefore, a party will have to represent varied sections of the society and thereby formulate a comprehensive political manifesto to meet their aspirations as well as Divergent demands. Sir Anthony Downs, in his “Economic Interpretation of democracy”, compares political parties with that of producers of varied commodities and the electorate as the consumers. The parties will have to produce such commodities which are liked by the consumer. This is the process through which the parties manufacture commodities in the form of political manifesto and present before

the electorate and the latter choose the party which produces best commodity at a price they are capable to pay. Election manifesto, in reality, explains the aims and objectives of political parties and the strategies through which they aim to accomplish them. Therefore, the General Elections could be regarded as an appropriate mechanism to study the objectives of the parties.

ANALYSIS OF ELECTIONS IN ANANTHAPURAMU DISTRICT

Ananthapuramu district, forming part of Rayalaseema region, has an important place in the politics of Andhra Pradesh. It is economically backward and drought ridden district. Under these conditions people are generally swayed by the promises made by political parties during elections.

Registered Electors and Voters

Everyone above 18 years of old can register as electors in a particular constituency. The voter is one who participates in particular elections. The details with regard to registered electors and voters participated in 2014 elections in Ananthapuramu District is given in table 1.

Table 1
Registered Electors and Voters casted vote in 2014 Elections in Ananthapuramu District

Electors	Men	Women	Third Gender	Total
General(Other Than Overseas)	1406133	1472765	212	2981906
Service	1251	233	0	1484
Total	1510180	1472998	212	2983390
Voters	Men	Women	Third Gender	Total
General	1212050	1164938	1	2376989
Postal	0	0	0	18733
Total	0	0	0	2395722

Source: Statistical Report on General Election, 2014 to the Legislative Assembly of Andhra Pradesh, Election Commission of India, New Delhi.

It may be perused from table 1 that there are 29, 83,390 registered electors in the Ananthapuramu district. Among them 14, 72,998 electors constituting 49.37 per cent of total electors were women. There are only 1484 service electors in the district and most of these electors are men. Only 15.70 per cent of total registered electors

were women. Among the general electors 212 electors belong to third gender. So 99.95 per cent of electors in the district were general voters and there are no overseas voters in the district.

With regard to participation of electors in 2014 election reveals the dominance of men voters. Among the registered men electors in the district 86.20 per cent exercised their franchise in 2014 elections. In case of women the participation in 2014 elections is constrained to 79.10 per cent. It is conspicuous to note that only 1 out of 212 third gender elector casted their vote in 2014 elections in the district. Among the total voters who cast their vote in 2014 elections 99.22 per cent are general voters and 0.78 per cent was postal voters.

Postal and EVM Votes

The particulars with regard to total postal and EVM Votes registered, deducted and counted in 2014 Assembly Elections in Ananthapuramu District is presented in table 2.

Table 2
Total Postal and EVM Votes Counted in 2014 Assembly Elections in Ananthapuramu District

Votes	Total
Total Votes Polled On EVM	2376989
Total Deducted Votes From EVM (Test Votes + Votes Not Retrieved + Votes Rejected Due To Other Reasons + 'Nota')	13866
Total valid Votes Polled On EVM	2363123
Postal Votes Counted	18733
Postal Votes Deducted (Rejected Postal Votes + Postal Votes Polled For 'Nota')	4811
Valid Postal Votes	13922
Total Valid Votes Polled	2377045
Test Votes Polled On EVM	0
Votes Polled For 'Nota' (Including Postal)	13137
Tendered Votes	1

Source: Statistical Report on General Election, 2014 to the Legislative Assembly of Andhra Pradesh, Election Commission of India, New Delhi.

It can be inferred from table 2 that around 0.58 per cent of total votes polled on Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) was deducted from counting due to various reasons. On the other hand around 25.68 per cent of postal votes were also deducted from counting. In all 0.78 per cent of votes i.e. 13866 EVM votes and 4811 postal votes were not taken in to account for final counting in the district. It seems that the 'NOTA' (None of the

above) votes polled in the Ananthapuramu district in 2014 elections is less than 1 per cent i.e. 0.55 per cent. Only one tender vote is registered in the district.

Contested Candidates

The details with regard to gender wise number of nominations filed, nominations rejected, nominations rejected, number of candidates in fray and number of candidates forfeited their deposits were presented in table 3.

Table 3
Particulars of Candidates Contested in 2014 Assembly Elections in Ananthapuramu District

S. No	Particulars	Men	Women	Women%	Third Gender	Total
1	Nomination Filed	247	19	7.14	0	266
2	Nomination Rejected	26	7	21.21	0	33
3	Withdrawn	43	2	4.44	0	45
4	Contested	178	10	5.32	0	188
5	Forfeited Deposit	153	7	4.38	0	160

Source: Statistical Report on General Election, 2014 to the Legislative Assembly of Andhra Pradesh, Election Commission of India, New Delhi.

As per table 3 the participation of women in the general elections is not encouraging in 2014 Assembly elections in Ananthapuramu district. The women constitute 7.14 per cent of total candidates who field their nominations. The share of women further deteriorated to 5.32 per cent when it comes to the candidates in fray. In all 266 candidates contested in the elections for 14 Assembly seats in the district. Around 12.41 per cent of candidates who filed nominations lost the opportunity to be in fray due to faults in their nomination papers. The candidates who have withdrawn from fray constitute 16.92 per cent of total candidates filed nomination papers. So, the remaining 70.68 per cent of candidates faced the elections in 2014 in Ananthapuramu district. With regard to women only 52.63 per cent of candidates remained in fray. Around 85.96 per cent of women and 70 per cent of women candidates forfeited their deposits in the elections.

Table 4

Constituency Wise Polling Stations and Average Electors per Polling Station in Ananthapuramu District

S. No	Name of the Constituency	Polling Stations Number	Average Electors per Polling Station
1	Rayadurg	245	922
2	Uravakonda	226	856
3	Guntakal	242	959
4	Tadipatri	246	917
5	Singanamala (SC)	254	832
6	Anantapur (urban)	229	1104
7	Kalyandurg	229	854
8	Raptadu	222	960
9	Madakasira (SC)	221	852
10	Hindupur	230	906
11	Penukonda	248	813
12	Puttaparthi	217	858
13	Dharmavaram	261	864
14	Kadiri	264	847
Total		3334	713

Source: Statistical Report on General Election, 2014 to the Legislative Assembly of Andhra Pradesh, Election Commission of India, New Delhi.

It is evident from table 4 that the total number of polling stations in Kadiri Assembly segment is highest (264) and lowest in Puttaparthi (217) constituencies. The average number of polling stations per constituency stood at 238. In Anantapur (Urban) constituency the average electors per polling stations is as high as 1104 and it is followed by Raptadu (960) and Guntakal (959) constituencies.

Winners and Runners

Table 5 provides the Constituency Wise Party Wise details of winners and runners and margin of votes secured by winner.

Table 5
Constituency Wise Party Wise Winner and Runner and Margin of Votes Secured by Winner

S. No	Name of the Constituency	Winner	Party	Runner	Party	Margin	% of Margin
1	Rayadurg	92344	TDP	90517	YSRCP	1827	0.95%
2	Uravakonda	81042	YSRCP	78767	TDP	2275	1.38%
3	Guntakal	81655	TDP	76561	YSRCP	5094	2.96%
4	Tadipatri	96740	TDP	74568	YSRCP	22172	12.41%
5	Singanamala (SC)	86679	TDP	82095	YSRCP	4584	2.60%
6	Anantapur (urban)	74704	TDP	65370	YSRCP	9334	6.05%
7	Kalyandurg	91981	TDP	69662	YSRCP	22319	13.35%
8	Raptadu	91394	TDP	83620	YSRCP	7774	4.34%
9	Madakasira (SC)	76741	TDP	62029	YSRCP	14712	9.36%
10	Hindupur	81543	TDP	65347	YSRCP	16196	10.20%
11	Penukonda	79793	TDP	62378	YSRCP	17415	10.44%
12	Puttaparthi	76910	TDP	69946	YSRCP	6964	4.58%
13	Dharmavaram	99246	TDP	85035	YSRCP	14211	7.50%
14	Kadiri	81639	YSRCP	80671	TDP	968	0.58%

Source: Statistical Report on General Election, 2014 to the Legislative Assembly of Andhra Pradesh, Election Commission of India, New Delhi.

It is clear from table 5 that the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) bagged 12 out of 14 seats in the district. In two constituencies namely Uravakonda and Kadiri the Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party candidates emerged victorious with 1.38 per cent and 0.58 per cent of vote margin. The highest margin of votes between ruling TDP and main opposition YSRCP party is registered in Kalyandurg (13.35 per cent) and Tadipatri (12.41 per cent) constituencies. From the two reserved constituencies the TDP candidates declared elected. It means it enjoying the support of unprivileged sections of the society.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the study that the Telugu Desam Party has proved its strength in 2014 general elections in the district, which is a citadel for that party since its formation in the state in 1982. It shows strong

hold of the party among backward class and downward sections of the society.

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