

# Caste politics assignment

Sociology



Ramy Mostafa 111313 Political Science gr. 2 The Political System in India  
Caste Politics Introduction India is a multicultural and multilingual country. Indian society is broadly divided into four groups. Forward communities (FC) are communities from caste and religion who do not qualify government of India reservation benefits; Backward Communities (BC), Scheduled Castes (SC), and Scheduled Tribes (ST) were the underprivileged groups. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar introduced the reservation and preferential quota which guarantees seats in the government for the BC, SC and ST. India has a multi party system ruled by small regional parties.

In Andhra Pradesh (AP) exist a conflict between the two caste, the Reddy's and the kamma's. Presently two political parties Congress and Telugu Desam Party constitute A. P politics. The central questions investigated are twofold: (1) is caste being perpetuated by politics in Andhra Pradesh, India? (2) Does the selection of leaders on the basis of caste hinder the economic, social, political development of a state? To answer these questions we use questionnaires and interview data from the ruling party officials, and also a focus group of people from the districts that I will use in my case study.

Literature review This section reviews the relevant literature that would help me gathering information on the political system in India. This section begins by providing past issues concerning casteism in Indian politics and then describes the economic, social and political development of a state. With regard to this literature, division of human beings based on a hierarchical system of caste can be first seen in the ancient Indian text, Manusmriti written by Manu in 200 BCE. In India Hindu is a dominating religion. There is a division of the society based on Manusmriti dividing the Hindu caste into

four different principal categories. The Brahmins representing the intellectuals and priest, kshatriyas ??? rulers and warriors, vaishyas ??? agriculturists and business class persons and finally the shudras are the other workers. Over the past years it has been noted that Caste is used “ as an instrument for social change. Caste is not disappearing, nor is ‘ casteism’ ??? the political use of caste ??? for what is emerging in India is a social and political system which institutionalizes and transforms but does not abolish caste” (Weiner 2001: 196).

This indicates that the political parties in India depend upon caste, tribes and religion for votes. As the political parties in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra get maximum number of votes from Reddy’s, Lingayat’s and Marathas respectively. It has been observed that caste influenced the voting behavior of people especially in the rural India. M. N. Srinivas a renowned Indian sociologist has called the dominant classes such as the Reddy’s and Kammas “ numerically the strongest in the village or local area, and economically and politically exercise a preponderating influence. The previous research done on this topic also portrays that the rise of caste and politics had an impact on the earning inequality. Sumon Bhaumik centre of economic development and institution Brunel University based research during the 1987-99 periods and suggest that earning differences between upper class and ST/SC have declined over the stated period. Caste, society and politics in the Indian from the eighteenth century to the modern age by Susan Bayly will help me understanding the past and the present role of caste in politics of India especially A. P.

I will research to what extent is it true that the earning differences has been declined. What is the shape of politics now in Andhra Pradesh? Political analyst believe that Congress which is pre denominated by Reddy's is the only rival for all political parties. They believe that if a Congress wins against Telugu Desam Party (dominated by the Kamma community) it might completely loose its identity. The TDP leader Sitaram Yechuri criticized CM Y. Rajasekhar Reddy for encouraging a particular community based on caste consideration. The opposition claim only a particular caste is nominated for the top posts.

There are political parties apart from the main opposition like the Lok Satta and the CPI whose leaders belong to Kamma caste. State politics is revolving around these two castes while people from other communities are ignored. In my research I will primarily focus on whether the selection of leaders based on caste hinders the political, social and economic growth of the states. Secondly, the distribution of wealth among schedule castes, schedule tribe and non-schedule castes in Indian states, and finally distribution of real earnings of various castes and religion.

The case study of caste politics in districts of AP, Guntur and Nizamabad will form the base of my study. What I will do over here, what my plans are? Are Nizamabad and Guntur a representative of entire India, Can we extrapolate the findings to other districts in the country. However there are few researches done on this issue so far. Research Question Considering the present condition of India the main research question of this investigation will be: Is caste still being perpetuated by politics in India?

In order to answer the main research question I will be looking into the following subsidiary question: Does the selection of leaders on the basis of caste hinder the economic, social, political development of a state?

**Methodology** In my research project I will use local Parts in India as case studies. That would be Hyderabad, Guntur and Nizamabad. The reason behind choosing these three districts of Andhra Pradesh is because it is both geographical and financially convenient. To investigate my research questions qualitative research methods are used.

These are semi structured interviews, questionnaire, and focus groups.

Interviews with the villagers of different caste will be beneficial as it will be prepared from the structure of other research. Depending on the responses I get from the people living in the districts which come under my case study.

**Hypothesis** It is predicted that a) the dominant caste will continue to rule.

There will be no change in the pattern of the voting behavior b) low caste leaders might not rise to the position of leadership in such a caste based politics where caste is given more importance than to the development of a state.

A list of questions to be used in interviews for politicians: 1. Does the caste play a very important role in politics? 2. On one side India is developing with regard to the IT sector and on the other hand it is stuck between the caste system. How can this change? 3. Do you think it is fair enough to choose leaders on the basis of caste rather than their personality traits? A list of questions to be used to interview voters: 1. Why do people vote? 2. On what basis do they choose their candidate? 3.

On what basis do you vote and why? A list of questions to be used in questionnaires: 1. What is your age? 2. How long have you lived in this locality? 3. What is your qualification? 4. What is your occupation? 5. Do you vote regularly? (if not why) 6. Does your family vote for the same candidate? 7. Do you vote for a party or a person? A list of questions to be used in focus groups 1. What are the important issues in A. P politics. 2. Are you satisfied with the work of the earlier elected candidate? 3. What were your expectations? 4.

Do you think the person of your caste if elected will benefit you more?

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