

# The Role of Caste Dynamics in Shaping Andhra Pradesh's Political Landscape Post-2024 Elections

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## Abstract

This study examines the influence of caste dynamics on the political landscape of Andhra Pradesh following the 2024 elections. Utilizing primary data collected from a sample of 921 respondents across diverse caste groups, the research investigates how caste affiliations shape voter behavior, candidate selection, and political party strategies. Statistical tools, including chi-square tests, logistic regression, and cluster analysis, were employed to analyze the data. Findings reveal that caste remains a significant determinant of electoral outcomes, with dominant castes like Kammas and Reddys continuing to hold substantial influence, despite efforts to mobilize Backward Classes (BCs) and Scheduled Castes (SCs). The study highlights the interplay of caste with regional and economic factors, offering insights into the persistence of caste-based politics in Andhra Pradesh. These findings contribute to understanding the evolving role of caste in Indian democracy and its implications for inclusive governance.

**Keywords:** *Reddys, Kammas, Kapus, Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribe, TDP, YSRCP, JSP, BJP.*

## Introduction

Caste has long been a defining feature of Indian politics, shaping electoral strategies, voter preferences, and power dynamics (1). In Andhra Pradesh, caste dynamics have historically influenced political outcomes, with dominant castes like Kammas, Reddys, and Kapus wielding significant control (3). The 2024 elections, marked by intense competition between the Yuva Jana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), comprising Telugu Desam Party (TDP), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and Jana Sena Party (JSP), provide a critical case to examine these dynamics. This study explores how caste affiliations influenced voter behavior, candidate selection, and party strategies post-2024, using primary data and advanced statistical methods.

## Objectives

The primary objectives of this study are:

1. To analyze the role of caste in shaping voter preferences in the 2024 Andhra Pradesh elections.
2. To examine the influence of caste on candidate selection and political party strategies.
3. To assess the interplay of caste with regional and economic factors in electoral outcomes.

## Methodology

### Data Collection

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 921 respondents across five regions of Andhra Pradesh (Coastal Andhra, Rayalaseema, North Andhra, South Andhra, and Central Andhra). The sample was stratified to ensure representation of major caste groups.

## Sample Characteristics

The sample comprised 52% male and 48% female respondents, with an age range of 18–65 years (mean age = 34.7, SD = 12.3). Educational attainment varied, with 30% holding a bachelor's degree or higher, 40% with secondary education, and 30% with primary or no formal education. Rural and urban respondents were balanced (55% rural, 45% urban).

## Statistical Tools

The data were analyzed using:

- Chi-square tests to examine associations between caste and voting behavior.
- Logistic regression to predict the likelihood of voting for specific parties based on caste and socio-economic variables.
- Cluster analysis to identify patterns in voter preferences across caste and regional groups.

Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 26.0.

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the distribution of votes by caste group for major parties in the 2024 elections.

### Chi-Square Analysis

A chi-square test revealed a significant association between caste and party preference ( $\chi^2(12, N = 921) = 78.45, p < 0.001$ ). FCs showed a strong preference for TDP, while SCs and STs leaned toward YSRCP, reflecting historical caste-party alignments<sup>2</sup>.

Table 1: Voting Patterns by Caste Group in 2024 Andhra Pradesh Elections

Caste Group	YSRCP (%)	TDP (%)	JSP (%)	Others (%)
Forward Castes (FCs)	25	55	15	5
Other Backward Classes (OBCs)	40	35	20	5
Scheduled Castes (SCs)	50	30	10	10
Scheduled Tribes (STs)	45	25	15	15
Others	35	40	15	10

### Logistic Regression

Logistic regression was used to predict the likelihood of voting for YSRCP versus TDP, with caste, region, education, and income as predictors. The model was significant ( $\chi^2(8) = 65.32, p < 0.001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = 0.29$ ). Key findings include:

- FC respondents were 2.3 times more likely to vote for TDP than YSRCP ( $OR = 2.31, p = 0.002$ ).
- SC respondents were 1.8 times more likely to vote for YSRCP ( $OR = 1.84, p = 0.015$ ).
- Urban respondents were less likely to vote for YSRCP ( $OR = 0.67, p = 0.031$ ).

### Cluster Analysis

K-means cluster analysis identified three voter clusters:

1. Caste-Driven Voters (40%): Primarily FCs and OBCs, strongly aligned with TDP or JSP based on caste affiliations.
2. Welfare-Oriented Voters (35%): SCs and STs, favoring YSRCP due to welfare schemes.

3. swing Voters (25%): Mixed caste groups, influenced by local issues and economic factors.

### **Discussion**

The results confirm that caste remains a pivotal factor in Andhra Pradesh's political landscape. The dominance of Kammass and Reddys, who constitute only 13% of the population but control significant political power, aligns with prior studies<sup>2</sup>. YSRCP's focus on welfare schemes attracted SC and ST voters, while TDP's historical Kamma base and JSP's Kapu alignment shaped their electoral success. However, the emergence of swing voters suggests that economic and regional issues are gaining prominence, potentially challenging caste-based dominance<sup>3</sup>.

The interplay of caste with media ownership and regional power dynamics further complicates the political landscape. Media houses, often controlled by dominant castes, amplify caste-based narratives, influencing public perception<sup>4</sup>. The logistic regression findings underscore the need for parties to balance caste-based mobilization with broader policy appeals to capture swing voters.

### **Conclusion**

This study highlights the enduring role of caste in shaping Andhra Pradesh's political landscape post-2024 elections. While dominant castes continue to wield significant influence, the rise of swing voters indicates a potential shift toward issue-based politics. Political parties must navigate these dynamics to ensure inclusive representation and address the aspirations of marginalized groups.

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