

**Executive Summary of the Minor Research Project Sanctioned by
University Grants Commission**

**Title: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ELECTORAL POLITICS
IN ANDHRA PRADESH AND MAHARASHTRA**

File No. 23-3187/11 (WRO)

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Brief objective of the project

The purpose of this research project is to analyze and compare the similarities and differences in the electoral politics of Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra with reference to the following:

- a) The present research project will analyze and compare the factors responsible for the dominance of Congress Party and whether there is difference in the pattern of dominance in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra.
- b) This will be related with the analysis and comparison of social bases of the Congress party in these two states.
- c) The research project will analyze and compare the emergence and electoral victory of regional parties i.e. Shivsena in Maharashtra and Telugu Desam in Andhra Pradesh.
- d) The research will also analyze the role of OBCs and other backward castes in the arena of electoral politics of Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra.

Review of Research and Development in the Subject:

The research in the area of Comparative state politics in India can be traced back to 1960s. In this decade the dominance of the Congress party was challenged in many states. As a result researchers started focusing on the state level studies. Iqbal Narain and Myron Weiner , who are the editors of the work on state politics, emphasize the study of individual states. Weiner made an argument for the study comparative state politics but his edited volume is not prepared in the comparative framework. The contribution of John Wood 3 refers to the same framework of individual state description. The work of Francine Frankel and M.S.A. Rao is an edited book with the common framework of description-analysis of the states. But the chapters are again limited to the single state studies. All these above mentioned studies primarily focus on individual states. We can find the reference of comparison of states in the introduction or concluding chapter.

The contribution of Atul Kohli can be considered as pioneering work in the field of comparative state politics in India. His books compare the theme of poverty and governability across Indian states. After the works of Kohli the work of John Harriss offers comparative framework for studying regime differences in various Indian states. Yogendra Yadav and Suhas Palshikar gives us the comparative frame for the study of party system in India's states. Rob Jenkins, in his edited volume, has selected four themes to compare two states in India. Aseema Sinha has compared West Bengal, Gujarat and Tamilnadu with reference to the political economy of developmental governance.

The essay by Yogendra Yadav and Suhas Palshikar has given the outline for the comparative state politics research. In this essay they have described various themes / theses for the study. This in-depth study is very significant contribution in the area of comparative state politics in India.

Significance of the Study

The present study is related to the field of comparative state politics in India, which is still evolving. It will be useful to understand the similarities and differences in the electoral politics of the states under comparison i.e. Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. The study may prove as a tool to understand the national level electoral politics of India.

Inter-disciplinary Relevance

Electoral politics involves the interaction of society and politics. The present study is related with the socio-political factors involved in electoral politics of Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. Particularly the relationship of caste and politics is important in the analysis of electoral politics in India.

Methodology

The research will be based on primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include the election results from the election commission of India. The secondary sources include research articles in journals and books and internet resources. The descriptive-analytical approach will be used.

Summary of the findings

Comparative state politics is the new area in the study of politics. The project under study refers to the comparison of electoral politics in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra state.

The dominance of Congress party is the common feature of both the states. The legacy of independence movement was the basic reason for achieving the status of ruling party for the Congress. Both the states have this common history. Andhra Pradesh was the first linguistic state and following this trend Maharashtra was also carved out as a separate state based on language. Congress in Andhra used Panchayati Raj institutions to widen their political base in the state and same is true about Maharashtra. The three tier Panchayati Raj system helped many aspiring people to take the membership of Congress party. The only difference between these two states is the cooperative movement in Maharashtra. Through cooperative institutions Congress in Maharashtra was able to accommodate more aspirants , political activists, by giving the positions of power.

The dominance of Congress in Andhra was during 1957 to 1982 and in Maharashtra it remained from 1960 to 1995 with the short lived rule of Progressive Democratic Front. It was the prolonged dominance which produced difficulties for Congress in both states. As the party won successive elections, there was literally no scope to accommodate young aspirants into Congress. The factionalism as a result of prolonged dominance increased in both states. Therefore the young aspirants were trying to enter into the electoral arena. Telugu Desam in Andhra and Shivsena in Maharashtra emerged as regional parties. It was also the result of the intervention of central leadership of Congress which often imposed chief ministers in both the states. It was converted as election propaganda and the regional parties invoked the issue of regional pride.

Both Telugu Desam and Shivsena used populist policies for attracting the voters. N.T. Rama Rao used popular and pro-poor, pro-women policies. Shivsena also used the regional pride as an issue to popularize the party. Both these regional parties made an alliance with Bhartiya Janata Party on the issue of Hindutva.

The caste equation is an important factor in the victory of Congress as well as regional parties. In Andhra Kamma and Reddy castes are dominant in the electoral politics. Congress was attached with Reddy caste with the combination of Scheduled castes. Congress offered them power positions and thereby this dominance continued. Rama Rao made a change in this caste equation by offering combination of Kamma caste and Other Backward Castes. In Maharashtra Maratha caste is numerically as well as politically influential. Shivsena tried to capture the attraction of Maratha youth and combined it with Other Backward Castes. This formula along with the alliance of BJP helped Sena to capture power and influence in the state politics. The demand for separate state of Telangana was another distinct feature of Andhra which was implemented recently. The politics of Andhra revolved around this question to some extent. Congress under the leadership of YSR Reddy used the populist tactics. It was the reversal of the roles of Congress and TDP. Dominance of one party in both states resulted in populist politics.
