

Socio-Political Activity of Vokkaliga Community: With Special Reference to Shimoga District of Karnataka State

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Abstract:

The subject area delivers a vast reach in terms of interpreting the nature and status of Okkaliga political participation. In a caste dominated society, the political participation of Okkaliga, problems, process, awareness and pros and cons have been analysed for the benefit of the expanse and development of the society and Okkaliga community. The purpose of the study is to explore socio-political activity of okkaliga Community: With Special Reference to Shimoga District. Since, the study is ex-post facto research, the descriptive, analytical, conceptual and empirical methods are used. The study engaged and used both primary and secondary sources of data. Researcher Selected 250 respondents from Shimoga District. Researcher Selected 62% of male respondents and 38% of Female respondents. 16.8% of the males were very often attend political meetings or rallies, 25.9% of the males were oftenly attend political meetings or rallies, 31.5% of the males were attend political meetings or rallies, 4.2% of the males were seldom attend political meetings or rallies

Introduction:

Caste is a social phenomenon of Indian society. By participating in the modern political system, caste is now exposed to divisive influences and a new form of integration resulting from a new scheme of universalist-particularistic relationships. Caste has gained an influential position in Indian politics. On the one hand, a structure of divisions and

accommodations, caste provides to politics and on the other hand, a cohesive element which absorbs tensions and frustrations. It becomes divisive when the question arises of national integrity. But regarding a locality or group matter, it gives a cohesive force by uniting people of a caste.

The formation role of caste association is also playing an important part in influencing voting patterns. Even political parties are considering caste as a vote bank. This enabled the lower castes to be politically influential on the basis of numerical preponderance. In selecting candidates for elections, political parties often consider the caste composition of constituencies. Sometimes, several castes are using politics in their effort to ameliorate their conditions or to achieve their goal. Reservation policy is another facial expression where we can understand that caste system also influences Indian politics. In contemporary Indian scenario, caste mobilisation has become an important factor in determining Indian politics. According to Risley "Caste is a collection of families bearing a common name, claiming a common descent from a mythical ancestor, divine or human and professing to follow same hereditary calling and regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogenous community".¹ It is described caste as localized group having a traditional association based on one's birth in a caste, though at times associated with particular occupation. Caste, through a joint effort of its members to assert themselves, has presently intervened in both politics and administration mainly through franchise and institutions like Panchayati Raj. Whether, it is the factionalism of Indian political parties or the nomination of candidates and the mode of election campaign, most things can be explained through caste interests and caste balance (Deshpande and Satish, 2003).

Signification of the study:

Democracy is based on the notion that all citizens have the right to participate in the managing of political affairs and that every citizens input is of equal importance. This basic assumption clearly places emphasis on public participation in maintaining a stable democracy. The level of public participation, however, is highly contested, with many theorists arguing that too much public participation would overwhelm and ultimately cripple democratic systems. On the other hand, others who favour high levels of participation argue that more citizen involvement leads to greater representation. Regardless of these disagreements over the utopian level of participation, there is widespread agreement amongst scholars that, at the very least, some participation is necessary to maintain democratic systems. The ways in which citizens participate vary greatly and depending on the method used, influence political decision making at varying levels. The method of political participation is key in controlling public influence over political affairs, and therefore is also an integral part of maintaining democracy, whether it be 'thin' (low level of participation) or 'robust' (high level of participation). High level of participation or 'robust' democracy is argued by some theorists to enhance democracy through providing the opportunity for more issues to be represented during decision making.

The subject area delivers a vast reach in terms of interpreting the nature and status of Okkaliga political participation. In a caste dominated society, the political participation of Okkaliga, problems, process, awareness and pros and cons have been analysed for the benefit of the expanse and development of the society and Okkaliga community. The field

has its important in seeing the impact of Okkaliga political participation in expanding the constitutional safeguards to the people belonging to Okkaliga Caste. Aside from this, it also aims of the field to make analysis on the socioeconomic and political status of Okkaliga community and the nature of Okkaliga political participation in the development of Okkaligas in the subject region.

Statement of the problem:

The purpose of the study is to explore the political participation of Okkaligacommunity. The topic of the study is “socio-political activity of Vokkaliga Community: With Special Reference to Shimoga District”

Objective:

- To understand the current socio-political activity of Vokkaliga Community of Shimoga District in Karnataka State.

Hypothesis:

On the basis of above objective, following Hypothesis have been set:

- In Karnataka politics, Okkaliga community is highly engaged in Socio-political activities.

Methodology:

Since, the study is ex-post facto research, the descriptive, analytical, conceptual and empirical methods are used. The study engaged and used both primary and secondary

sources of data. The required primary data were gathered directly from the sample under study through the usage of a well-structured questionnaire. The secondary data, on the other hand, are gathered from government gazettes, bulletin, magazines, journals, newspapers, articles, and relevant textbooks, materials from the internet, term papers and archival documents on the subject area. Consequently, the population for the study was taken from the Okkaliga who reside in Shimoga District of Karnataka State at the time of carrying out this area work. Purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents for the administration of the questionnaire. The questionnaire contained both closed and open-ended questions and was divided into two main sections. Each of the sections addressed a specific segment of the study. The beginning part of the questionnaire solicited information on the socio-economic position or personal background of the answers. The second section dwells on the electoral behaviour, party membership/partisanship attachment, membership of volunteer organization, membership of religion group, access to sources of information such as radio, TV and the cyberspace. Hence, the study is partly based on historical, descriptive, analytical and empirical methods. For this, scheduled questionnaire is prepared and information is collected from the identified respondents.

Scope and limitations of the study:

The present study has certain limitations, which must be considered for the purpose of specific study and limited nature of research to be undertaken. The present study has been conducted in Shimoga District. It is going to be focused only on the political participation of Okkaligas in political institutions in the state of Karnataka. The study has to focus on the impact of political participation on the development of Okkaliga Community.

Sample of the study:

Researcher Selected 250 respondents from Shimoga District. Researcher Selected 62% of male respondents and 38% of Female respondents. out of the total 250 respondents, 5% are from presidents and vice presidents of panchayat raj institutions belonging to Okkaliga community, 3% are presidents and mandal pachayaths and taluk pachayats, 10% of respondents are chairpersons/presidents of Gram Panchayats 15% respondents are ZP members, 15% respondents are from MPTC/Taluk pachayat members, 30% are from ward members of gram panchayats, 22% are general public belonging to Okkaliga community.

Source of Data

To meet the aims of the subject field, primary as well as secondary sources of data, were gathered for the cogitation. The primary source data were gathered directly from the elected representatives of the types of Panchayats and peoples belongs to Okkaliga community. The secondary information was collected from reference books, thesis abstracts, conference proceedings, articles published in the refereed journals, reports of the Ministry of Panchayat Raj and Rural Development, working papers, Gazetteers, Human Development Reports, unpublished papers and monographs of the research institutions operating on democratic decentralisation. The books of the District Statistical Offices, Gram Panchayats, Taluka Panchayats, and Zilla Panchayats also served as sources of secondary information. The websites of the State and Central government departments, National and

International organisations working on democratic decentralisation were reviewed periodically.

Data Processing

The empirical data collected according to the above methodology from the study was subjected to editing with reference to semi-structured interview schedules. Errors like blank entries, incomplete entries, wrong entries, and logical errors were set in the field itself after completion. The qualitative data was measured by assigning numerical values and were subjected to coding. It was served by developing a coding key. By adverting to the coding key, the data from the 250 semi-structured interview schedules was transferred to the master chart. The data from the master chart was then keyed into the computer in a Statistical Package for Social Sciences. The frequency distribution tables, percentage, pie diagram, bar charts, and bi-variant tables, Mean, Standard Deviation and Chi-square, and Rank-correlation tests were computed utilizing the same software. Consequently, analysis and interpretation were made with inferences.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Table-1: Did you vote in the last election?

			Yes	No	Total
Gender	Male	N	128	15	143
		%	89.5%	10.5%	100.0%
	Female	N	96	11	107
		%	89.7%	10.3%	100.0%

Total	N	224	26	250
	%	89.6%	10.4%	100.0%

Source: Compiled from the data collected from field work

The above table reveals that 89.5% of the males were voted in the last election, 10.5% of the males were not voted in the last election. Similarly, 89.7% of the females voted in the last election, 10.3% of the females were not voted in the last election. In total 89.6% of the individuals were voted in the last election 10.4% of the individuals were not voted in the last election.

Table 6.13: Respondents opinion towards socio-political activity

		Gender			
		Male		Female	
		N	%	N	%
How often do you read about politics in the newspaper?	Very often	23	16.1%	13	12.1%
	Often	48	33.6%	25	23.4%
	Sometimes	59	41.3%	59	55.1%
	Seldom	9	6.3%	2	1.9%
	Never	4	2.8%	8	7.5%
	Subtotal	143	100.0%	107	100.0%
How often do you discuss politics with other people?	Very often	25	17.5%	21	19.6%
	Often	22	15.4%	25	23.4%
	Sometimes	76	53.1%	51	47.7%
	Seldom	14	9.8%	0	0.0%
	Never	6	4.2%	10	9.3%
	Subtotal	143	100.0%	107	100.0%
How often do you try to convince friends to	Very often	44	30.8%	22	20.6%
	Often	33	23.1%	38	35.5%

vote the same as you?	Sometimes	32	22.4%	40	37.4%
	Seldom	6	4.2%	3	2.8%
	Never	28	19.6%	4	3.7%
	Subtotal	143	100.0%	107	100.0%
How often do you attend political meetings or rallies?	Very often	24	16.8%	3	2.8%
	Often	37	25.9%	26	24.3%
	Sometimes	45	31.5%	58	54.2%
	Seldom	6	4.2%	16	15.0%
	Never	31	21.7%	4	3.7%
	Subtotal	143	100.0%	107	100.0%
How often do you spend time working for a political party or a candidate?	Very often	29	20.3%	11	10.3%
	Often	46	32.2%	21	19.6%
	Sometimes	51	35.7%	49	45.8%
	Seldom	11	7.7%	16	15.0%
	Never	6	4.2%	10	9.3%
	Subtotal	143	100.0%	107	100.0%

Source: Compiled from the data collected from field work

Findings:

- 16.1% of the males were very oftenly read about politics in the newspaper, 33.6% of the males were oftenly read about politics in the newspaper, 41.3% of the males were sometimes read about politics in the newspaper, 6.3% of the males were seldomly read about politics in the newspaper and 2.8% of the males were never read about politics in the newspaper.
- 12.1% of the females were very oftenly read about politics in the newspaper, 23.4% of the females were oftenly read about politics in the newspaper, 55.1% of the females were sometimes read about politics in the newspaper, 1.9% of the females

were seldomly read about politics in the newspaper and 7.5% of the females were never read about politics in the newspaper.

- 17.5% of the males were very oftenly discuss politics with other people, 15.4% of the males were oftenly discuss politics with other people, 53.1% of the males were discuss politics with other people, 9.8% of the males were seldomly discuss politics with other people and 4.2% of the males were discuss politics with other people. Similarly, 19.6% of the females were very oftenly discuss politics with other people, 23.4% of the females were oftenly discuss politics with other people, 47.7% of the females were discuss politics with other people, 0.0% of the females were seldomly discuss politics with other people and 9.3% of the females were discuss politics with other people.
- 30.8% of the males were very oftenly try to convince friends to vote, 23.1% of the males were oftenly try to convince friends to vote, 22.4% of the males were try to convince friends to vote, 4.2% of the males were seldomly try to convince friends to vote and 19.6% of the males were try to convince friends to vote. Similarly, 20.6% of the females were very oftenly try to convince friends to vote, 35.5% of the females were oftenly try to convince friends to vote, 37.4% of the females were try to convince friends to vote, 2.8% of the females were seldomly try to convince friends to vote and 3.7% of the females were try to convince friends to vote.
- 16.8% of the males were very oftenly attend political meetings or rallies, 25.9% of the males were oftenly attend political meetings or rallies, 31.5% of the males were attend political meetings or rallies, 4.2% of the males were seldomly attend political meetings or rallies and 21.7% of the males were attend political meetings or rallies.

Similarly, 2.8% of the females were very oftenly attend political meetings or rallies, 24.3% of the females were oftenly attend political meetings or rallies, 54.2% of the females were attend political meetings or rallies, 15.0% of the females were seldomly attend political meetings or rallies and 3.7% of the females were attend political meetings or rallies.

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