



URBAN POLITICS IN INDIA : WITH SPECIAL REFERENCES TO PARVATHIPURAM MUNICIPALITY

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In the first place personalities play an unusually important role in municipal politics¹. In a local community it is not only possible to have face-to-face contact between the leading figures of public affairs, it is almost inevitable. In the politics of wider areas face-to-face meetings are necessarily less frequent². Moreover, the issues about which contests arise in a city or small town are often more personal in nature than those of higher levels of government. School and playground conditions and the control of noise, smog, crime, dirt, or disease are all matters that may arouse deeply personal concerns or even passionate antagonisms. Note that the street scenes outside schools undergoing integration are dominated by mothers whose faces express more of their emotions than words can convey.

The question of whether a block is to be zoned for industry, for commercial development, or for residences may spark bitter personal controversy. The threat of war or the adequacy of the state's conservation policy are important matters to be sure, but their seeming remoteness and complexity put them at arm's length in comparison with the question of traffic light for Johnny and Mary's 'safety on the way to school'³.

The immediacy of many of the problems of local government and the close personal contacts between the participants in local decisions give a special flavor to local politics.

Party Politics:

Generally, two theoretical models have been conceived in explaining the origin and development of political parties. One describes parties as the out growth of parliamentary institutions, the result of the establishment of adult suffrage, the product of ideological movements, or the consequences of modernization process itself. This view was favoured, among others, by Gunnar Heckscher, according to whom, Historically, parties mostly originated in the work of parliament, not in extra



parliamentary forces⁴. The second model assumes parties as creatures of political elites, i.e., they are the result of a deliberate human action just as bureaucracies, arises and educational institutions are created in a conscious and deliberative fashion.

In countries like India, where interest perception and political identification have not sufficiently developed among the voter population, “Political Parties”, observes D.L. Sethi, perform wide-range tasks of both modernising the society and effecting a consensus⁵. From the stand point of political development of the new nations, parties perform a variety of functions. These include the recruiting of new participants, the integrating of individuals and groups into society, the transmitting of political and social values from one generation to another, the harmonizing or containing of diverse interests and providing channels of communication within a society, and in many cases, the furthering of the development of a nation or state⁶.

Thus, in many of the new nations, the political party appeared to be almost coterminous with politics in inculcating participation and bringing into the threshold of political awareness the million who had been discontented or even alienated. Political parties have been hailed at once both as instruments of political education and means to build support for the governing as well as aspiring elite, political party is an instrument both to gain power and acquire legitimacy to govern.

Parties and their Local Units:

For the effective performance of their functions, political parties must depend ultimately upon their local units and more especially upon the personnel who operate them. “It is inconceivable”, observes Thomas Pantham, “how the national and state level organizations of a party can function, except on the basis of their local units which would recruit cadres, spread the party ideology, collect money and mobilize electoral support. It is for this reason that effective local units are of the essence of political parties which, without them, would be indismissible from cliques, clubs of notables, pressure groups or lobbies⁷.

The emergence Telugu Desam Party in the year 1983 under the leadership Sri N.T. Rama Rao paved the way for party politics in the Parvatipuram municipality. Till then castism, groupism, factionism and consequent topography ruled the political situation in the Parvatipuram. But from 1983 there was a drastic change in the attitude of the people in the political front, only because of charismatic presence of N.T. Rama



Rao in the state politics.

We cannot, however, say castism, groupism and factionism were not there, but political awareness put them aside and since then party politics are ruling the state. Till 1983 neither MLA nor MP was strong enough in the municipal elections. But now they have become king makers in the election of municipality. As a result of party politics some opponents of T.Rama Murthy came round as one unit under the guidance and advice of Telugu Desam Party.

In the municipal election of 1987 group politics once again came to fore bidding farewell to party politics. In order to see that Cheekati and his group should not come to power Jamma Jhoshi selected a candidate by name D.Parusuram as the head of the Congress Party in Parvatipuram constituency. Meanwhile Cheekati Parusunaidu expired and Dr. D.Parusuram continued to be leader of Congress Party, but much to their disappointment, Telugu Desam came to power. Sri Y.Krishnamurty Naidu elected as a MLA and B. Tirupati Rao became a Chairperson.

Thus, group and faction politics were put to an end and party politics became clear in the political scenario of the Parvatipuram Municipality. In 1995 there was some change in the party politics in the Congress Party. There were two groups headed by Cheekati Narahari S/o Cheekati Parusu Ram Naidu, and Doddi Parsuram. Miss Madhavilatha got the Congress Party ticket. In Telugu Desam Party also there were two groups one headed by M. Sannamma and another headed by Majji Rama Rao.

M. Rama Rao was supported by sitting MLA Y.Krishnamurty Naidu. District level politicians like Ashok Gajapathi Raju, Kondapalli Pyditallinaidu also involved in the election of Parvathipuram Municipality. Kondapalli Pyditallinaidu encouraged M.Papa Babu and P. Ashok Gajapathi Raju supported M.Nagamani, W/o Sannemma. Cheekati Madhavi was the candidate for Congress Party and D.Parusuram had to support her. Thus, the Parvatipuram municipality election were touched by state leaders from this incident what we understand is groupism played a dominant role in party politics. Subsequently in the municipal elections of Parvatipuram neither groupism nor faction politics played any dominant role.

Party Affiliation of Municipal Councillors :

The Chairman was elected by people directly in 1995 and 2000 elections



whereas the 2005 elections were conducted indirectly among the elected councilors.

Political Affiliation of Municipal Councilors

Sl.No.	Political Party	Number of Councilors		
		1995	2000	2005
1	Cong.	10	7	23
2	T.D.P.	8	13	3
3	CPI(M)	1	2	1
4	BJP	1	2	-
5	Independents	4	2	3
Total		24	24	30

Electoral Politics in Urban Areas:

The amazing fervour and enthusiasm with which elections have been studied and analysed at macro and micro levels had not been witnessed at the municipal level for a long time. But of late, the study of the distinctive nature of electoral politics at the urban level has been taken up by many writers. However, while much concentration has been paid to big metropolitan cities and medium-sized municipal areas are left almost untouched. Lying between the small village and the modernized big city, the town has a definitive social, economic and political life of its own and the study of a town's electoral politics provides as key to understand the play of political forces in the municipal areas.¹ C.P. Brhambri says "It is, in fact, studies of local election that can serve as useful barometers for discerning short-term fluctuations in the political behaviour of the people which are more akin to and as such impinge more closely upon their life situation than the rather comparatively remote elections at state and national levels"²

Local elections imposingly reflect the social and political culture of the locality which is often unique in its own way. The style and behaviour of individual political leaders or parties are singularly different at the urban level electoral politics e.g. in their considerations during the selection of candidates for contests, in the manner of election campaign, etc. On the part of the voter, his proximity to and the familiarity with the urban area lead to distinguishable lines of political behaviour. Unlike in the national and even state level elections, issues and ideologies are given less attention and political preferences emerge from personal and primordial considerations. The points of interest are more mundane – like laying of roads, providing sanitation, building a school, etc. There is less talk of democracy at theoretical level. The behaviour of



the political aspirant as well as that of the voter varies in its spirit and substance in the context of local election.

1995 ELECTIONS

After the implementation of Andhra Pradesh Municipalities Act of 1994, the first elections for urban local bodies were held in 1995. The Parvatipuram chairperson office was reserved for Backward Class (Women) N.T. Rama Rao decided to give party B.Form to Majji Padma (Papa) who was supported by local M.L.A. Sri Y.Krishnamurthy Naidu. She belonged to Kapu caste. The Congress Party gave the ticket to another major community candidate namely Smt. Cheekati Madhavi. The rebel candidates from TDP and Congress contested as independents. The T.D.P. rebel had used techniques more widely and effectively during these elections and succeeded in the elections. The votes followed by the candidates are given in the following table.

Votes polled in 1995 Elections

S.No.	Name	Party	Votes Secured	Percentage
1.	Majji Padma (Papa)	TDP	4831	24.91
2	Chikati Kalavathidevi	Cong	6052	31.20
3	Majji Nagamani	Ind.	7088	36.54
4	Maradana Satyavathi	Ind.	804	4.15
5	A. Annamma	CPI	618	3.15

The TDP rebel candidate secured a clear victory by polling 36.54 per cent of the total valid votes polled. The Congress candidate lost the election even though she secured 31.2 percent of votes. The TDP official candidate secured only 24.91 per cent of votes compared to previous election i.e. 1987 when the TDP 47.99% votes. In this election, the CPI (M) candidate polled less votes compared to their vote in the 1987 election by securing 3.19 percent of valid votes polled.

Smt. Majji Nagamani was the first women chairperson of the Parvathipuram municipality. It is indeed a matter of surprise as the rebel candidate was elected while the ruling party candidate M.Papa got the third place in the election. Smt. Majji Nagamani, a candidate from Kapu community could bring about changes on the political situation in the Parvathipuram, whereas a lawyer by profession Sri T.Suryanaryana who belonged to the same caste could not get the post. During her rule new schemes like Totapalli pumping scheme to provide drinking water to Parvathipuram



town were started. Janmabhoomi programme introduced by N. Chandrababu Naidu, the then Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh was properly utilized by Majji Nagamani and lot of repair works was carried and all municipal schemes like drainage systems, etc were carried out.

2000 ELECTIONS:

In 2000 municipal elections the Parvathipuram Municipality was reserved to the S.C. (General). Sri Mukkala Jayanna, a teacher by profession was selected for contesting to the Parvathipuram Municipality as the T.D.P. candidate. Sri M.Jayanna used to maintained rapport with the people of all walks of life in Parvathipuram. Moreover he was very good, gentle and polite and his amicable relations to the public made him selected from the Telugu Desam Party. Luckily for him he was supported by the then Ex.MLA Smt. Yarra Annapurnamma and the dynamic young leader D.Jagadeeswara Rao. The Congress candidate to the 2000 election of Parvathipuram municipality was Mr. Sankela Lakshmaiah, also a teacher by profession and a resident of a neighboring village Balagudaba. He had many relatives in Parvathipuram. Hence the Congress Party took him into their fold and made him file nomination. The then sitting Congress MLA Sri Marisarla Sivunnaidu was behind him. The ruling party candidate Sri M. Jayanna got 13918 votes, where as the sitting MLA's candidate Sri P.Lakshmana got 11623 votes. The votes polled by the different candidates have been given in the following table

Votes polled by the candidates

S.No.	Name	Party	Votes Secured	Percentage
1.	Mukkala Jayanna	TDP	13518	52.72
2	S. Lakshamaiah	Congress	11623	45.32
3	S. Sambhaia	CPI (ML)	501	1.96

2005 ELECTIONS

In 2005 elections, Out of 30 wards, 5wards were reserved for general women ,4 wards for B.C(general) and 3 wards for B.C Women,5 wards were reserved for Schedule Castes included women and general category and only one ward was reserved for Scheduled Tribe details were given in table

Reservations of Wards

General	12
General women	5
B.C General	4
B.C women	3
S.C (General)	1
S.C (Women)	4
S.T	1



In 2005 elections 74 candidates of all parties contested from 30 wards. The Congress Party secured more than 50 percent of votes of polled votes. The remaining votes were secured by TDP (33.60 percent), BJP (1.08 percent), CPI(M) (3.17) and Independents (10.83 percent). The details of votes polled were given in the table. **Votes Polled in 2005 Elections**

Party Name	Votes secured	Percentage of votes	No. of wards secured in Municipality
INC	11574	51.32	23
TDP	7579	33.60	3
BJP	243	1.08	-
IND	2443	10.83	3
CPI(M)	715	3.17	1
TOTAL	22554	100.00	30

Congress party contested 28 Wards out of 30 wards and won the 23 wards. CPI (M) Party contested in two wards and won one ward. TDP which contested 29 wards won only 3 wards. BJP which contested 6 wards, did not win any seat. Three independents got elected in the election.

The Congress candidates elected as Municipal Councilors had unanimously chosen Smt. Narasimha Priya Tatraj as the Chairperson of the Parvathipuram Municipality.

She was elected as a councilor from 26th ward unanimously. Being a women and an ST candidate and having support of her brother Sri S. Vijayarama Raju., she was elected chairperson of Parvathipuram. Mrs. Marisada Tulasi the Daughter-in-Law of Mr. Late Mariserla Sivunnaidu, Ex. MLA and wife of Mariserla Simhachalam who is the DCCB Chairman, Vizianagaram, though Tulasi aspired the chairmanship with the help of the B. Satyanarayana, Minister for Housing, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, but she could not get it.

References

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3. Gunnar Heckscher, *The Study of Comparative Government and Politics*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1957, p.154.
4. D.C. Sethi, *Citizens and Parties: Aspects of Competitive Politics in India*, Allied Publishers, Bombay, 1975, p.134.



5. Angela S Berger, *Opposition in a Dominant – Party System : A study of the Jana Sangh, the Praja Socialist Party and the Socialist Party in Uttar Pradesh India*, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1969, p.4.
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