Chapter - VII

Conclusion

At the outset, the historical perspective to analyze the genesis of the caste system in India is necessary. Also, prime importance of caste in Indian politics, changing attitude of caste associations, and participation in politics from independence to present day, is essential to explain the status of backward communities in democratic contemporary Indian politics. The practice and influence of the caste system still exists in India. Thus people are divided into classes, races and religious groups besides being divided on caste lines. Munnurukapus majority of them still depend upon agriculture as their main occupation is with limited land at their disposal. Land re-distribution, improved use of modern methods and provision for subsidies and marketing facilities need to be strengthened. Education plays an important role in political behavior and participation. Most of the political leaders of the Munnurukapu are from educational category, especially majority of them belong to secondary education. Munnurukapus occupied various political positions from Panchayatraj to state level politics.

Similar is the case with OBC who are actively participating in political process like Yadavas, Gouds etc. Therefore higher the education higher the participation of Munnurukapus in the political system, It is also interesting to note that those who are already in the political system are interested in penetrating into the system and preventing the entry of new members resulting in the elite system within Munnurukapus. This is evident when one observes four decades electoral process in Andhra Pradesh. We find only 15 to 20 same members emerging into political system through various
political parties. These elite groups develop vested interest and hold stakes in the system itself by their economic power. It is very interesting to observe the role of BCs in state politics.

All BC communities together constitute around 50 percent of electorate but they never had decisive role in the state politics and government. There are 138 BC communities in Andhra Pradesh that are heterogeneous. Each community feels different from other BCs. It is a complex problem for all BC communities to come to one platform the recherché establishes the fact that Munnurukapus, Yadavas, Gouds, Mudiraj and Padmashalis are represented in the Assembly. Because of their economic power and existence of their organisation with considerable numerical strength unlike Battraj, Rajaka, Vamsharaj and Nai-Brahaman etc. They are not represented since they lack economic resources and Organising capabilities.

The research is on Munnurukapu community and their political participation. When we look in to the members of this community elected to state Assembly from Telangana region. In eight elections during 1983-2014, reveals the position of this community continuously in all these elections, on the whole 48 members are elected that is in the period of 24 years. The data reveals that most of the MLAs so far 22 are elected from Congress followed by 12 each from TDP and TRS. In this elected leadership most of them are repeatedly elected to Assembly not giving scope for new members from the community. This has led to concentration of power in the hands of a few political leaders to establish this fact. They include D.Srinvas, P.Laximaiah,
D. Nagender, K. Sureka and B. Govardhan from Congress and K. Laxman and Laxminarayana from BJP, Yellareddy, S. Rajeswar and G. Kamalaker from TDP. Still there is a continuous struggle and movement from community to have more shares. They claim that they are not given adequate space in proportionate to their population.

Political observers have been saying that dominant communities of all the states play significant role in politics. It is also true with the state of Andhra Pradesh. The research establishes that a few dominant castes play significant role. The data reveals that Reddy, Kamma and Velma communities play this significant role in almost all elections held to Assembly. The data reveals 387 Reddy community members elected to assembly from 1962-2009, elections followed by Velmas with 79, Kammas with 55 and Brahmans 49. When one observes the data from the angle of BC community its only 4 communities that have some place such as Munnurukapus, Gouds, Mudiraj, Yadavas and Padmashalis. Around 100 communities from the BCs have not been represented in Assembly. Only 13 BC communities are represented in Assembly so far in Telangana region. Whereas, around 100 communities are never represented there is division among BCs because some communities alienated from the masses of the people. Dominant communities never allowed emergence of any BC leader as powerful within the party. There is no chief minister from BCs, in AP so far, who are numerically less and not well organised. It may take very long period these communities to enter in to the political process. The fundamental question is whether these communities come on their own or with the patronage of dominant communities. It needs further research on this question.
Munnurukapus are fairly represented in Assembly when compared to OBCs as per the facts revealed in the study. Yet Munnurukapu organisation claim that their representation in policy making bodes are not in proportion to their existing population. They claim that they deserve a minimum of 25 seats in Telangana region according to their population. Interesting fact is that they had to depend on the dominant communities to have their due share.

The fundamental question here is whether Munnurukapu are still in receiving position in the political system, if yes is it possible for their community to have due share in the political cake? It is a million dollar question. Here also further comprehensive research is to be done to find out whether they can raise their position in political process being dominated by dominant communities.

Further, data also reveals perspectives of respondents about the role of caste in elections. A majority of respondents (76.2 percent) agreed that caste play significant role in elections. The research also reveals the fact that caste association help its members to enter into the politics these facts are opinion of BC caste leading to form their own caste association to consolidate their strength and they claim to share the political and economic benefits. But this is not possible for all Backward classes (communities) in the state to influence the system because they are numerically less and lack economic resources. For Munnurukapus, Gouds, Yadavas, and Padmashalies are in advantageous in positions due to their organisational skills and financial resources. Still, these communities claim that they are not given political share in
proportionate to their population. In spite of these factors no one became chief minister from the BC communities. Thus, the political leadership and governmental power is totally vested in the hands of upper castes and despite having more than 50 percent of population. BCs could not ‘get power’ in proportion to their population. Since political parties are under the control of upper castes, they invariably allot party tickets to upper castes and tend to ignore the interests of BCs and other depressed castes, while monopolizing the entire political power. Inspite of these factors no one became Chief Minister from Backward classes communities. Thus, the BCs in India have been demanding 50% reservations for them in Assemblies and Parliament. This movement has surfaced significantly after Mandal commission. This commission recommended reservations in the education and employment in the Union government. Most of the Munnurukapu members that is 90% supported political reservations whereas only 10% did not (table 6.3) as far as quantum of reservations are concerned. Most of the respondents opted for 50 percent followed by 40 percent in reservation in the elections.

Further, the research reveals that Congress party gave more space to Munnurukapu leaders. Most of the respondents identified themselves with the Congress party (table.6.6 and 6.11). The source of inspiration to enter electoral politics is influence of community leaders and family members that is entry into politics is confined to families who are already in politics and those who are active in caste associations. This study reveals that politics are confined to a few families of Munnurukapus in Telangana region.
Empowerment of the broad category of other backward classes in India refers to the process of emancipation from a historically stratified state of multi-dimensional caste disabilities traceable to socio-political and economic opportunities in the pre and post independence régimes. It also refers to the interaction and interplay of efforts and struggles of the differently disabled deprived categories, strategies and techniques of the privileged segment to continue their privileged hold and decisive role in society as long and as much as possible, in the journey from an unequal caste society to the goal of equality and equal society, as defined in our democratic Constitution.

To conclude the study it was possible to examine the electoral participation that got a very positive response presenting a rosy picture with percentage of voters and their turnout to the polling stations being encouraging phenomena in the state. The real political participation can be expected, which is a primary condition for transformation of the socio-economic conditions of the community towards a better system, if the community as such emerges active in the state politics in the state.

Following such process of development, there came into existence several caste groups scattered over a limited geographical region. They maintain a sense of identity as well as its linkage with other similar groups. All the members of this group pursue a common occupation and as such this group has been recognized as the unit of the social and ritual life the members of this group share food and a common culture and they are generally governed by the same caste panchayats.
India presents a unique spectacle of unity and diversity. It is because it has not only a few dominant religious groups on the horizontal plane, but also an array of caste groups on a vertical dimension. Similar to castes among Hindus, several castes among other religious groups are also found. These caste groups are placed on a hierarchical plane exhibiting a pyramidal structure and closely knit together. On an exhaustive discussion in the preceding pages, it may be pointed out that the caste system is traced from ancient Indian tradition in terms of *Chaturvarna* falling into four groups’ viz., Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vysya and Sudra on functional basis.

This division was given greater sanctity in the ancient times for making a state self-sufficient. With the passage of time, this caste system became rigidified though it lost its functional basis and got replaced by ascriptive character. Among the Western countries, religious groupings and religious division played a pre-dominant role and even several wars took place on the basis of religion. Reference may be made to One Hundred Years War, War of Roses, and War of Flanders and so on. With the industrialization and modernization, the religious division of society gradually got receded to background and the class Polarization had taken place in Europe. India has been experiencing such large scale industrialization, urbanization as well as modernization after Independence, but it is ironical enough that the caste as a social formation is penetrating very deep instead of paving way for the class formation.

India has been identified with thousands of such Backward Castes mostly found in the middle and lower rungs of caste hierarchy but above the SCs and STs. In every
village there used to be ‘community feeling’ for a long and every BC/SC is involved in one or the other ‘productive operation or exclusive service’ to society and everyone needs such service to maintain their life. The nature of deprivation in respect of broadly signifies caste disabilities they suffered over centuries. Caste disabilities could broadly be in the nature of social discrimination, economic exploitations and political marginalization.

The term backward class was first used in the 1870s by the Madras administration in the framework of an affirmative action policy favoring under-educated.

The colonial sense undereducated means not from the historical marginalization, deprivation, and exclusion from the basic rights such as education, property and power, but it was to serve the needs of the colonial administration in the light of education system which was advocated by Macaulay.

The genesis of the constitutional identity of OBCs can be traced back to the rise of caste associations and social movements in 19th century protests against the then existing oppressive, suppressive, iniquitous social order of Chaturvarna system identity politics is the central tendency of modern liberal democratic political systems. The post-independent state in India, in order to continue the historical legacy of traditional upper caste and newly emerging dominant landed communities, set aside a new numerically predominant occupation, artisan, service, and agricultural labor communities from mainstream democracy and development process. The process of traditional upper castes and newly emerged dominant castes hegemony is being reinforced in various
forms such as the instrument of caste-ideology, cornering of the resources, capturing of the governance institutions, incremental policies etc.

Karl Marx, the father of scientific socialism, predicted that a country witnessing industrialization, urbanisation and modernization would tend to provide for a class consciousness that is economic class of rich and poor, employers and employees, management and the labour which eventually paves way for a class war and later establishment of proletarian hegemony. But, such a thesis is unfounded in Indian context wherein the caste has been operating on a dialectical process from that of its traditional posture to its modern orientation. Simultaneously, the caste, a traditional symbol, is also getting more and more reinforced with the passage of time.

Prof Rajni Kothari, in his Politics in India observes that caste and politics representing tradition and modernity respectively have tended to interact with each other. In such a process, the caste is politicized and politics has become casteist, thereby both are gradually losing their individual identities. This assertion is quite appropriate in the light of the changing contours of caste and politics in contemporary India.

Free India created the right atmosphere for this mobilization. Sudra and ati-sudra castes related against their oppressive conditions by forming an association based on caste identity first in Telangana in 1930 and coastal Andhra in 1940.
The British rule and the modernization it entailed aggravated that status differences between the various castes, particularly the Brahmins, Kshatriyas on the one hand, and the landed gentry castes on the other. Secondly the British rule, the egalitarian system of justice and the liberal education injected into the system, new ideas of equality, equality of opportunity etc.

The study also analyses Non–Brahmin movement and JotiRao Phule’s and other social reformers contribution in India. These social reformers instilled a sense of pride in things Indian and helped in India stand of to the British supremacists. They also strove to ride Indian society of the evils and outmoded supremacists. They reinterpreted social practices and gave new direction to India. Many of them kept aloof from politics and struggle against the British. But, they helped the cause of freedom in an indirect manner.

The backward class movement in India originated in Maharashtra and Tamilnadu. Jotirao phule was the ideologue of the non-Brahmin movement in maharashtra. He is acknowledged as the father of non-Brahmin movement in India. He founded the Satya Shodak samaj to unite all the backward castes on a common platform. He advocated the principle of adequate representation for members of all castes in public services. In the process of struggling against iniquitous social order and for reservation in the government services, the backward castes acquired the state power in Tamilnadu, The non-Brahmin movement of the 1910s and 1920s and much more violent ‘radical’ Dravidian or anti-Aryan movement launched by E.V.Ramaswamy
Naicker in the 1930s are the important phases in the history of Tamilnadu backward castes movement.

The Justice party in 1916, after coming to power in 1920, the 1927 GO represented a victory for the Villella caste, particularly the Modaliars. They had provided the leadership to the justice party, although there were leaders from other non-Brahman castes as well. The party leaders were drawn from the landed classes and were not much keen on broadening their base by including the landless castes. The social movements, wherever they have taken place, have uplifted the lower castes and put the pressure on the state to introduce the affirmative action policy, as result of which a new class is emerged within the lower castes. Most of the times this new class did not try to mobilise below castes but diverted the movements in order to continue their domination for instance Vellalas, Mudaliars, Kammas and Reddys etc. Due to lack of support from the lower backward castes to the mainstream backward castes movements, still they are lagging behind in the capturing the power.

As far as the backward classes at the national level are concerned it was during The Janata party and Janata Dal only favorable policy output is seen. During the Congress rule, at the center, the backward classes were set aside to the principle of social justice and democracy by rejecting the Kaka Kalelkar commission. It is at the time of Janata Dal Government implemented the 27 percent reservations in the Central government recruitments. It reveals that it is essential to have non-Congress government with a non-Brahman prime minister to do justice for the backward classes.
The movement in Andhra Pradesh is studied and the findings indicate that the backward class community being heterogeneous in character has striking inequalities thereby preventing the community to act as a politically cohesive group. It also brings out a fact that the social, educational and economic distance among the elites of these castes also encourages factionalism and infighting. At this point, the ruling elite tend to play politics of accommodation.

The OBCs movement in Andhra Pradesh emerged only after independence during national movement OBCs organized in south India. Justice party of Tamilnadu organized all BCs own platform and struggle for self-respect of BCs and due place in political process this has not taken place in Andhra Pradesh because national Movement Although inspired by the Justice Party and Dravida Kazhagam, as said earlier, the non-Brahmin movement in Andhra remained essentially a cultural movement. It could not become a mass political movement. Secondly, it could not generate strident anti-Brahmanism like in Tamilnadu, as the leaders of freedom struggle movement in Andhra were famous Brahmins like Tanguturi Prakasam, Balusu Samba Moorthy, Ayyadevara Kaleshware Rao, Duggirala Gopala Krishnaiah etc. All BCs communities are with these Leaders.

They were not conscious of their communities at the time because of these charismatic leaders. It is only after independence BC communities in the congress parties and other parties realize that they are ignored by dominant communities like Reddy, Velma and Kamma in getting their due share. Hence OBCs in Andhra Pradesh
started organizing themselves in community associations. In this process, Munnurukapus, Yadava, Gouds and Padmashalies started asserting in the system. Munnurukapu community play significant role in this movement but the community leaders feel that they are not getting due share in proportions to their population like Reddy, Kamma and Velama communities.

Andhra Pradesh like any other large Indian State is heterogeneous in its socio-cultural make-up with diversity of castes, tribes, linguistic and religious communities. It is the state has the same distribution of SC and ST populations as the rest of the country. In the State together these groups account for 22.8 percent of the population. The Backward caste groups - same as OBCs elsewhere in the country - constitute almost half of the population of the State at a little more than 45 percent. The upper caste constitutes about 22 percent of the population although their importance and influence remained disproportionate to their share of population. With a significant population of religious minorities (Muslims and others) at about 11 percent social groups as political constituencies are thus fairly well defined and organized. Data for OBC community for gathered by the NSS only since the 1999 /2000 survey here.

The parentage change for OBCs in youth literacy in Telangana between 1999/2000 and 2007/08 at 29 percent was marginally lower than the State average of 31 percent thus over all there have been good improvements in literacy and years of education for the OBCs. The BCs as they are popularly known in the south constitute nearly half the population of the state at 44.5 percent. Andhra Pradesh had introduced
the reservations for backward classes as early as in 1961. The earlier Lists of BCs in 1970, comprising 142 and 112 communities prepared by the AP Government, were struck down by the AP High court and the Supreme court respectively in Sukhdev Vs Government of AP and State of AP Vs P Sagar, being based solely on caste criteria and on the ground that no inquiry or investigation had been made by the Government in preparing the list of BC communities. K.N. Anatharaman commissions identified 93 BC communities and were listed as socially and educationally backward classes and divided them into four Groups; namely, Group A, B, C & D. Subsequently, the BC reservations were extended to public employment. The commission with a view to give equal opportunities for all backward classes of people, recommended for reservation 30% of seats in all educational institutions, distributed in four groups 7 percent to Group A (43 communities), 10 percent to Group B (23 communities), One percent to Group C (one social category), 7 percent to Group D (31 communities), The last category is the most recent addition, affording 4 percent to Group E (14 Castes), reservation to OBC Muslims.

Regionally, the OBC percentage is highest in Telangana at 53 percent. The OBC category is extremely heterogeneous with numerous caste groups having varied position in the socio-economic hierarchy. Some of these are Munnurukapu, Gollakuruma, Goud/ SettiBalija, Padmasali, Mudiraju etc. occupying the middle rungs of the caste hierarchy (between upper castes such as Brahmins, Reddys, Velamas, Kamma\s etc. and lower castes such as Malas and Madigas). They are generally occupation groups or traditional service Castes such as toddy-tappers, weavers and
small agriculturists. Some of the OBC castes are becoming economically, socially and politically more influential with economic growth taking place while other remained quite backward. The OBCs, especially in Telangana, were brought into the political ambit by N.T. Rama Rao (N.T.R) to cultivate a wider base for the TDP equally as a result of the restructuring of the administrative system with the insertion of Mandal level (also a TDP initiative) better placed OBC caste have begun to play an increasingly influential role in local and state level economies and politics.

The Munnurukapu means ‘guardian’ which is interpreted in the sense of ‘food producer in as much as members of this caste cultivate land and grow corn, thus contributing to the maintenance of animal life. They rear milk, cattle and bullocks, which are employed in agricultural operations. The congregation of community members is spread over the entire Telangana region and Maharashtra, Mostly engaged in menial and low jobs and this community is unreasonably kept in group D – 20 of BCs list. The vast majority of Munnurukapu community people (above 75%) reside in the villages. These villagers don’t have primary education both men and women are illiterates engaged as agricultural coolies / household servant’s labours, factory labourers living in most pitiable conditions. Regarding the origin of Munnurukapu community different opinions have been expressed. In Telugu speaking areas due to the multiplicity of Kingdoms sub-names of places come into existence depending on those kingdoms, viz., Pala Nadu, Kamma Nadu, Munnuru Nadu, Panta Nadu, Pe Nadu, Palle Nadu, Vengi Nadu, Motati Nadu, Vala Nadu and probably Kapus names were originated from these kingdoms. That is why Pakaneti Kapu, Kommonati Kapu, Munneti Kapu, Gone
Kapu, Renati Kapu and other groups were formed. One of the important activities of the Munnurukapu leaders is to locate their caste from mythology. They want to give a respectful status and identity to respect the community. One of the theories is that this farmer community who were followers of Janaka Maharaj, the ruler of Mithila.

It may be pointed out that the Munnurukapu community is not found in any other State except Andhra Pradesh. If we open the chronology of the Munnurukapu community, we find the growth of the community on the soils of Telangana. In this region, the fathers of the community made a great struggle to find the traces of water. In this endeavour, they had cultivated lands and constructed tanks. Munneru, Munneti, Munneruwad and Munnurukapu are synonyms widely diffused cultivating castes in Telangana.

Munnurukapu, the chief land cultivating caste of Telangana, whose physical characteristics although difficult of accurate description are decided by a Dravidian type. The Kapu means ‘guardian’ which is interpreted in the sense of ‘food producer’, as many as members of this caste cultivate land and grow corn, to maintain their civil life. They rear milk cattle and bullocks, which are employed in agricultural operations.

In due course, the Munnurukapus have had conjugal relations with their counterpart of Seemandra regions where there are different castes of this group namely Kapus, Ontary, Telaga, Balijas and so on. Thus, the Munnurukapus have become an important community in Andhra Pradesh. Syed Sirajulul Hassan, who worked as the
minister of finance in the Nizam’s Government provides an account of the Munnurukapus in the Nizam’s dominion. In his book, Hassan further says that Munnurukapus of Hyderabad State had main occupation of cultivation.

In order to get the required benefits, it is necessary for all the backward communities to get reservations on the basis of their proportion in the state-population. Then only, it is possible for them to have a casteless society and able to fulfill the dreams of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, the champion of the Backward communities in India. The natural resources and the fruits of development must be judiciously distributed to all the backward classes. Since the recommendations of Mandal Commission, various steps have been taken. The Backward classes are not able to get real benefits which, the preamble of the Indian Constitution reflects on.

Munnurukapu community did have a great role to play in the various social, economic, political and cultural aspect of the Telangana Region till the 19th century, it has not enjoyed much economic and political rights. It is only after India's independence, they started realizing importance of mobilizing themselves. They started getting into a steady decline except for a few sections of the community who adopted to modern education and economic transition. The decline peaked during the 1970s and 1980s of late with economic liberalization and with the removal of license raj and monopoly of various Government Sectors the community is slowly but steadily rebuilding itself. But is still a long way away to go in the direction of progress of community in the state.
Munnurukapu farmers are basically small and marginal farmers and are listed now in the backward classes, consisting a major section of the population in Telangana. Their presence in the remaining other two regions is almost nil. According the Census of 1910 in the Nizam State their population was 1,83,356. At a time when the people's level of consciousness was at its lowest ebb on account of the regimentation of the monarchic-cum-feudal order, a set up dedicated leaders worked strenuously for the cause of toiling masses in general and Munnurukapu in particular. This included Bojjam Narasimhulu, Tunga Sambhaiah and Erram Satyanarayana who responded to the contemporary conditions and movements. In fact, Bojjam Narasimhulu could really be regarded as one of the most distinguished founding fathers of the Munnurukapu movement in backward classes in general and particularly in the State of Hyderabad. He joined the Congress party in 1920 to fight against the Nizam rule and also worked throughout his life for the social, economic and political advancement of the Munnurukapus.

In response to formation of Andhra Pradesh and Neelam Sanjeeva Reedy's then Chief Minister of the State, attitude of intolerance and looking down the weaker sections in general and backward castes in specific led to the merging of the four backward classes associations paving the way for emergence of the Andhra Pradesh Backward Classes Association (APBCA) after the formation of Andhra Pradesh with Andhra, Rayalaseema and Telangana as the united states. Four of the Backward Classes Associations, were Andhra Backward Class Association, (A. Bhagavantha Rao was president and Gouth Lachhanna was the secretary) Andhra Congress Backward
Class Association (Pragada Kotaiah was the president), Hyderabad Backward Classes Association (Bojjam Narasimhulu was the president) and Telangana Backward Classes Association (Konda Lakshman Bapuji). The Andhra Pradesh Backward Classes Association was formed in 1957 with the initiative taken by Annam Viswanatham irrespective of political parties.

Due to the efforts of the Munnurukapu association social reform, education facilities training camps spreading ideas through media and continuous motivation, a large section of them entered the politics, business and real estate, finance bureaucracy, academics etc. in the post – independent period. In politics, the Munnurukapus occupied modern position among the backward castes in Telangana region holding such as village Sarpanchs, Manadal Presidents other position. Shiva shankar to the level of Union Minister, Governor and ex–president of the All India Congress committee other Backward Classes Cell and Hanumantha Rao is the secretary of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) and D.Srinivas, former President of Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC).

The available research also indicates that lower levels of political knowledge found in the general electorate do tell the whole political–awareness story. Data consistently isolates specific population sub–groups which are often more politically knowledgeable such as party leaders and educated elite. Research in this study shows a number of variables which may tend to affect political awareness levels. Educational attainment is probably the most important factor in determining a person’s political
knowledge. Further, it shows that a higher level of political awareness is more often found in men rather than women.

Political culture being an amalgamation of the attitudes, mannerism, value orientations of a given community towards a political system does shape the obtaining political participation as its main components. Political socialization and political participation influence and help in shaping political culture. An enquiry into the attitudes, orientations of people towards a political system is necessary to gain an acceptable idea about the political culture of any given people. Of course, it is difficult to know whether the political culture is traditional or democratic in the absence of such an enquiry. Thus, an analysis of the attitudes, perceptions and value of society and polity in which they are members, is attempted.

The success and efficiency of political leadership, by and large depend upon the social and political awareness. The leaders of any community, group or nation-state carry over their role responsibilities and express social and political judgment only when they are aware of the political institutions, processes and the specific political events that had influenced the progress of a nation. Political awareness does not only help to understand the intricacies of diverse political problems but also reflect the intellectual and ideological aspects of their personality.

From the ideological point of view, majority of the respondents within the sample have identified their faith in democratic system, which in turn gave a fillip to their political
awareness and political behavior. The survey findings suggest that majority community leaders are presently engaged in supporting the Congress party. Therefore it may also be assumed that for majority of Munnurukapu community leaders, Congress party represents democratic ideology in the state. In this study, main concern has been to find out the degree political participation of Munnurukapu community leaders in Telangana. The percentage of community respondents who participated in voting is very high. At the same time their participation in election campaigns and contesting and other political activities are average. Certain factors like political corruption, Charisma of leaders like N T Ramarao appears to have had influence on political participation of Munnurukapu community.

Besides, the backward classes in Andhra Pradesh are found to be an extremely heterogeneous group with a wide variation in social, economic and cultural aspects. The composition of Backward Classes as designated by various commissions show an exclusive categorization such as A, B, C, D, their total being 148 castes Each category is explained and it is found that the total backward classes constitute a very large proportion in the total population. A detailed discussion is made on various facets of backward class movement. Backward Classes organized as a community themselves into a movement in order to highlight their problems and protect their identity. The reservation percentage for BCs should be enhanced to 50 percent as for the population percentage of various caste categories in education and employment sectors. There has to be 50 percent reservation to the BCs to all positions in Panchayat Raj system, Municipalities, Corporations and their committees.
The study pinpoints that there was a tremendous upsurge of political consciousness of the Munnurukapu community to forge the available community force to share political power structure. It is found that the Backward Classes movement, however modest it may appear, it has succeeded in socializing the masses. Further, a review of backward classes’ commissions shows that in spite of various commissions, recommendations in regard to criteria to designate the backward classes, we do not have any clear cut, common features to determine who the other backward classes are.

The data sources that though the relative advantage of the Upper castes and forward castes had been declining, representation of the backward classes has been increasing. However, this increase of backward class representation in the overall political power structure of Andhra Pradesh is not commensurate with that of the total population. Further, the study focuses on the Munnurukapu Community leaders and their socio–economic profile in order to indicate whether democratic politics has opened up to the hitherto exploited and oppressed groups in the society so as to obtain a position of economic, social and political influence in society. The study shows that the backward classes’ leadership was largely a male-dominated and the composition of leadership is in favor of old-age groups.

The study empirically captures backward class leaders perception on important social and political issues. Interestingly, significant data is generated and it throws light on the political culture of backward classes. A majority of the backward classes’ leaders feel that there was a definite need for modification in backward classes groups. A
majority did not favor the inclusion of Andhra Kapus in the backward classes list, for they spent that the Kapus are economically sound and their demands are politically motivated. Significantly, legislators were vocal in opposition to Kapus inclusion in backward classes list.

Political identification of the leaders shows that a majority of them identified with Congress, followed by Telugu Desam Party. Almost all the backward classes' leaders opined that there was a need for political reservations and a majority feels that 50% reservation should be the criterion. Most of them said that Congress gives representation to backward classes, but a sizeable percentage of leaders felt that Telugu Desam Party also gives representation to the backward classes.

Further, the data shows that most of them felt that P.V. Narasiimha Rao’s cabinet in Andhra Pradesh gave due representation to the backward classes community in the cabinet, whereas some felt that N.T. Rama Rao also provided accommodation to the backward classes in his cabinet. However, a majority of them felt that no Chief Minister provided backward classes with their due share in the cabinet. Most of the leaders feel paucity of resources to be the main reason for backward classes not getting their due share in the political power structure. A sizeable number also feel that lack of unity among the backward classes was the main reason for their not getting a due share in political power structure. Interestingly, half of the leaders felt that land ownership was not a source of political power.
Further, as majority of respondents actively participated in politics an open ended question was put to them to know their opinion on the steps that should be taken to increase their participation in politics. As per the sample, Munnurukapu community politicians gave a variety of answers, a few of which are given below as an example. According to them, the BCs should have better educational opportunities and political awareness. Development policies are not accessible to the community. Lack of opportunities in employment also makes their community backward. Based on the field survey, the study is hypothesized that political participation was one of the main indicators for enhancing political consciousness. It may be assumed that possessing it and active participation in mere voting in election is not a sufficient indicator of active participation in politics.

Munnurukapus majority of them still depend upon agriculture as their main occupation with limited land at their disposal. Land re-distribution, improved use of modern methods and provision for subsidies and marketing facilities need to be strengthened. Educations plays an important role in political behavior and participation. Most of the political leaders of the Munnurukapu are from educational category especially majority of the belongs to secondary education in this category. Munnurukapu occupied various political positions from Panchayatraj to state level politics.
Further, certain suggestions that emerge from the research are as follows.

Comprehensive census of all BCs have to be conducted which gives a clear picture of the socio-economic status of 138 communities. This also helps to assess status of individual communities and further re-grouping. Political power is a key, foundation and fountain for every social opportunity. The OBCs have been all these decades denied this key role. The population proportion of BCs and their sub-caste categories justify that there should be political reservations to BCs in Parliament and state Assemblies elections since their movement by federation of BCs communities. The BCs in rural areas must be given agriculture land and encourage modern cultivation since land is an important variable of social-economic status. Instead of frequent appointing National commission for backward classes with powers and functions similar to those accorded to National commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under Article 338 with similar objectives is essential. There must be policies which encourage the BC students with financial help in their studies and research. In the case of Munnurukapu community there is also criticism from the other BCs that they were getting larger share in education and politics. But, the study reveals that the benefits are not in proportion to their population as large sections of Munnurukapus are still below poverty line as data reveals. The research establishes the fact that Munnurukapu association played a significant role in sharing many political leaders from the community, as caste became significant in elections.