



## Socio-economic background of the women political participants in West Godavari District

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**Abstract:** It is found that the majority of 33.84 % of the respondents are recorded under the 56-65 years of age. The age group of 46-55 is seen 31.55 per cent to the total sample, followed by the age group 36-55 years by 23.41% and 11.20% are in the age group of 20-35 years. It is comparatively, the respondents with the age group of 56-65 years are more and notably about 11.20% % of the respondents are found in the age group of below 35 years. Out of the 393 respondents, about 86.01% of the women representatives are married and 13.99% are unmarried. Among the communities, 84.34% (BCs) to 86.90% (SCs) are married.

**Key Words:** economic dependence, society's attitude, institutional structure

### Introduction

Women's participation in politics is mainly influenced by the attitude of women towards politics, attitude of family and the society's attitude. Illiteracy, economic dependence and backwardness of the majority of women staying in rural areas are responsible for the paucity of women in politics<sup>1</sup>. Almond and Verba also observed that effective participation depends upon opportunities to participate in other spheres like family, school, voluntary organization and work place. A participatory polity rests upon a participatory society<sup>2</sup>. Verba and Nie found that political participation depends on one's social circumstances as his 'life space' where he lives, what he does for a living, his education etc. These social circumstances generate sets of attitudes conducive to political participation. The participation in politics also is affected by the institutional structure within which a person finds himself. The other factors include organizational membership, party

membership, the nature of community in which he lives and his political beliefs<sup>3</sup>.

**Objective of the Study :** The present study is an effort on the part of the researcher to explore these issues with a focus on the political participation of women in West Godavari district, Andhra Pradesh. The broad objective of the study is to ascertain the status of women representatives in the Urban Local Bodies of Andhra Pradesh and to examine their role along with the efficacy and gaps in implementation and implications of the laws enacted for the reservation of a woman candidate as well as record the perception and problems faced by them at the workplace. To examine the socio-economic background of the respondents is objective of the present study.

### Methodology

The researcher has used convenient/ stratified sampling method to select the study area. The present study



is conducted in West Godavari district as a whole. MP, MLAs and ZPTCs are selected from the District as a whole. Meanwhile, MPTC and Gram Panchayat have also taken as individual unit at mandal and Village level.

Utmost case is taken while selecting the respondents. Around 50 per cent of the women to their total representative from the political cadre is taken for the study. In cases of limited members like Member of Parliament and MLAs, Zilla Parishad Chairpersons (if any) Municipal chairpersons, all the individuals are considered for the study.

Table 1 gives information regarding number selected women representatives by cadre. At present, two MP seats including one Rajya Sabha nominee of women from Narsapuram parliament and one MLA from Gopalapuram constituency is representing by the women. Out of the total 22 women ZPTC representatives 45.45% are selected for the study. All the eight Municipal chairpersons, 50.52% of municipal ward members, 49.84% of the MPTCs, 50% of the mandal Parishad chairpersons and 56.55% are Gram Sarpanches are selected for the study.

Table 1: Number selected women representatives by cadre

Cadre	Total	Women representatives	No. of Selected representatives
MP	02	01(50.0)	01(100.0)
MLA	16	01(6.25)	01(100.0)
ZPTC Chairmen/ Chairperson	01	00	00(00.0)
ZPTC members	46	22(47.83)	10(45.45)
Municipal chairperson	15	08(53.33)	08(100.0)
Municipal ward members	248	97(39.11)	49(50.52)
MPTCs	834	305(36.57)	152(49.84)
Mandal Parishad chairperson	46	20(43.48)	10(50.00)
Gram Sarpanches	621	324(52.17)	162(50.00)
Total	1613	695(43.09)	393(56.55)

Source: Field Survey

**Primary data** is collected from the women representatives with help of pre-designed schedule. The researcher filled the specified information with face to face interview by the respondents. The researcher finalized the schedule after completion of pilot survey conducted to tolerability of the schedule. Primary sources of the data were collected from the respondents with translated regional

language Telugu to get accurate information from the lower educate.

### Results of the study

Table 2 presents distribution of respondents by social status. About 172 of the 393 respondents, (43.77%) belong to Forward Castes followed by 116(29.51%) of Backward castes, 21.37% are Scheduled Castes and Scheduled



Tribes are 5.34% respectively. Respondents are selected from various political designations. Out of the total, about 41.22% are Gram Panchayat Sarpanches followed by MPTCs (38.68%),

Municipal ward members (12.47%), about 2.54% each are Mandal Parishad chairperson and ZPTC members, 0.25% are MPs and MLAs.

Table 2: Community and Political Cadre wise classification of the women in West Godavari District

Cadre	SC	ST	BC	OC	Total
MP	0	0	0	01	01 (0.25)
MLA	01 (1.19)	0	0	0	01 (0.25)
ZPTC Chair person	0	0	0	0	00
ZPTC members	03 (3.57)	0	02 (1.72)	05 (2.91)	10 (2.54)
Municipal Chair person	01 (1.19)	0	02 (1.72)	05 (2.91)	08 (2.04)
Municipal ward members	08 (9.52)	0	17 (14.66)	24 (13.95)	49 (12.47)
Mandal Parishad chair person	02 (2.38)	02 (9.52)	03 (2.59)	03 (1.74)	10 (2.54)
MPTCs	36 (42.86)	07 (33.33)	43 (37.07)	65 (37.79)	152 (38.68)
Sarpanches	33 (36.29)	12 (57.14)	49 (42.24)	69 (40.12)	162 (41.22)
Total	84 (21.37)	21 (5.34)	116 (29.51)	172 (43.77)	393 (100.00) (100.00)

Source: Field survey

Table 3 reveals the classification of selected respondents by their age. From the table it is found that the majority of 33.84 % of the respondents are recorded under the 56-65 years of age. The age group of 46-55 is seen 31.55 per cent to the total sample, followed by

the age group 36-55 years by 23.41% and 11.20% are in the age group of 20-35 years. Comparatively, the respondents with the age group of 56-65 years are more and notably about 11.20% of the respondents are found in the age group of below 35 years.

Table 3: Distribution of women political representatives by Age

S.No	Age group	Community				Total
		SC	ST	BC	OC	
1	20-35	10 (11.90)	03 (14.29)	14 (12.07)	17 (9.88)	44 (11.20)
2	36-45	21	02	21	48	92



		(25.0)	(9.52)	(18.10)	(27.91)	(23.41)
3	46-55	30 (35.71)	07 (33.33)	36 (31.03)	51 (29.65)	124 (31.55)
4	56-65 above	23 (27.38)	9 (42.86)	45 (38.79)	56 (32.56)	133 (33.84)
5	Total	84 (100.00)	21 (100.00)	116 (100.00)	172 (100.00)	393 (100.00)

Source: Field survey

Marital status of the respondents is presented in table 4. Out of the 393 respondents, about 86.01% of the women representatives are married and 13.99% are unmarried. Among the communities, 84.34% (BCs) to 86.90% (SCs) are married.

Table 4: Distribution of women political representatives by marital status

S.No	Age group	Community				Total
		SC	ST	BC	OC	
1	Married	86.90	85.71	84.48	86.63	86.01
2	Un-married	11.90	14.29	15.52	13.37	13.99
3	Others	-	-	-	-	-
4	Total	100.0 (84)	100.0 (21)	100.0 (116)	100.0 (172)	100.0 (393)

Source: Field survey

Majority of respondents, 44.78% are housewives. Around 10.94 percent were occupied in small scale sector. Around 17.05 percent were agricultural, and 9.41 percent were petty cash business. Therefore, the research results showed that majority are housewives without any income earnings. The foregoing analysis may be relevant and useful to analyze the other important variables of this study like motivation, perceptions, and performance aspects and so on.

Table 5: Distribution of women political representatives by occupation

Occupation	SC	ST	BC	OC	Total
Housewife	45.24	14.29	45.69	47.67	44.78
Petty business	19.05	14.29	5.17	6.98	9.41
Self-employment	1.19	19.05	6.03	6.40	5.85
Small scale industry/cottage	4.76	4.76	7.76	16.86	10.94
Agriculture	20.24	28.56	22.41	11.05	17.05



Others	9.52	19.05	12.94	11.04	11.97
<b>Total</b>	100.0 (84)	100.0 (21)	100.0 (116)	100.0 (172)	100.0 (393)

Source: Field survey

It is observed that more than half (54.8%) of the respondents reported secondary level of education. Only 8 percent reported primary level of education. 23.2 percent were graduates, while 14 percent were post-graduates.

None of the ST group and only 20 percent of SC group reported higher education. Research study reflects that considerable percentage of members at Local Government is economically and educationally low.

Table 6: Distribution of women political representatives by education level

S.No	Cadre	Community				
		Primary	Secondary	Graduate	Post-graduate	Illiterate
1	MPs (N=1)	-	-	0.85	-	-
2	MLAs(N=1)	-	-	0.85	-	-
3	ZPTC Chairperson (0)	-	-	0.00	-	-
4	ZPTC members (N=10)	-	2.17	5.08	2.13	-
5	Municipal chairpersons (8)	-	0.72	4.24	4.26	-
6	Municipal ward members(49)	-	4.35	22.03	36.17	-
7	Mandal Parishad Chair Persons (10)	-	1.45	4.24	6.38	-
8	MPTC Members(152)	51.19	30.43	43.22	34.04	-
9	Gram Panchayats' Sarpanches (162)	48.81	60.87	19.49	17.02	100.0
	Total	100.0 (84)	100.0 (138)	100.0 (118)	100.0 (47)	100.0 (6)

Source: Field survey

It is observed from the table that except MPTC Members (51.19%) and Gram Panchayats' Sarpanches (48.91%), remaining women of various categories have post primary education. About 35.11% of the women political

representatives have secondary education. Of which, 60.87% are Gram Panchayats' Sarpanches, 30.43% are MPTC Members, 4.35% Municipal ward members, 2.17% ZPTC members and 0.72% are Municipal chair persons.



About 30.03% of the respondents are graduates. Of which, 19.49% are Gram Panchayats' Sarpanches, 43.22% are MPTC Members, 22.03% Municipal ward members, 5.08% ZPTC members and 6.38% are Municipal chair persons. MPs and MLAs possessed graduation.

Meanwhile, 11.96% of the respondents have Post-graduation. Of the total, 17.02% are Gram Panchayats' Sarpanches, 34.04% are MPTC Members, and 36.17% Municipal ward members, 2.13% ZPTC members and 4.26% are Municipal chair persons. Only 1.53% of the respondents (Gram Panchayats' Sarpanches) are illiterates.

### **Conclusion**

An attempt is made in this chapter to study the political participation of women in West Godavari District. The study considered the respondents perception towards participation in various dimensions. The socio-economic family background is closely associated to women political participation

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<sup>1</sup> Renu Sethi, "Department of Women's Active Political Participation," *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 49, No. 4, Oct-Dec 1988, p. 573

<sup>2</sup> Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963).

<sup>3</sup> Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nie, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 14-19.