

Research Article

Leadership of Backward Classes Women after 2014- A Study of Erstwhile Warangal District

Thela Pavani

Research Scholar , Department of Political Science, Kakatiya University

Corresponding Author: **Thela Pavani**

Abstract

Leadership among women in socially and economically marginalized communities represents a critical area of study in gender, caste, and development discourse. Backward caste women often confront multiple layers of exclusion based on caste, gender, and class which shape their access to resources, decision-making spaces, and leadership opportunities. Backward Castes are most dominated Social Category in Telangana State which is consisting around 60% of Total Population in Telangana State. Out of that half of the population is women. Warangal is a district with high amount of socialization and revolt take place. Women's leadership has emerged as a crucial indicator for social development and democratic deepening in India. The current paper focused on Participation of Backward Castes Women in politics in erstwhile Warangal District in Zilla Parishath Elections and Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation elections after 2014.

Keywords: Leadership, Backward Castes, Women, Gender, Telangana, Development, Performance, Politics etc.

1. Introduction:

Leadership among women in socially and economically marginalized communities represents a critical area of study in gender, caste, and development discourse. Backward caste women often confront **multiple layers of exclusion** based on caste, gender, and class which shape their access to resources, decision-making spaces, and leadership opportunities. The erstwhile **Warangal** has a rich history of social movements, political mobilization, and community organizing that makes it a relevant field for studying backward caste women's leadership. Backward Castes are most dominated Social Category in Telangana State which is consisting around 60% of Total Population in Telangana State. Out of that half of the population is women. Warangal is a district with high amount of socialization and revolt take place. Women's leadership has emerged as a crucial indicator for social development and democratic deepening in India. However, leadership among backward caste women remains underexplored despite their growing participation in local governance, community organizations, and self-help movements.

Backward Classes:

Backward Classes refer to socially and educationally disadvantaged groups recognized by the Indian state. In Telangana, backward castes include a wide range of agrarian, artisan, and service communities that have historically faced exclusion from political power and economic resources.

The political landscape of Telangana, particularly since its formation in 2014, has been defined by a paradox: a history of radical grassroots mobilization contrasted with a slow ascent of marginalized groups into institutional power. For Backward Class (BC) women, this journey is shaped by the "triple burden" of gender, caste, and economic status.

Women in Politics after 2014 in Telangana:

After the formation of Telangana the women especially Backward Castes women getting better opportunities in Political Sphere. The enhancement of reservations in Panchayat Raj Institutions and Urban local bodies through Telangana Panchayat Raj Act-2018, and Telangana municipalities' act-2019 helpful for the women community. Many of the BC women came into electoral politics and some of them even won from General places. The leaders like Gadwala Vijaya Laxmi served as a Mayor for prestigious Greater Hyderabad municipal corporation from Munnuru Kapu Community. Despite their local success, the "winnability" of BC women does not yet translate to the State Assembly (MLA) or Parliament. In 2014 and 2018, women's representation in the Telangana Assembly hovered around 5–7%. While it rose slightly to 10 seats (8.4%) in 2023, BC women remain underrepresented compared to their demographic weight.

Women in Politics from Warangal

After the formation of Telangana as a separate state, majority of the women ministers are serving from this historical district Warangal. Satyavathi Rathod in BRS government, Konda Surekha and Danasari Anasuya Seethakka who are the minister in current government represents the Warangal District. The leaders like Gundu Sudharani served as first BC Women Mayor for Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation (GWMC), Gaddala Padma, Jakku Sriharshini, Gandra Jyothi Served as a Zilla Parishath Chairmans.

Socio-Economic Profile of Backward Class Women in Warangal

The erstwhile Warangal district was characterized by a predominantly rural population, with agriculture as the main source of livelihood. Backward caste women were largely engaged in agricultural labour, household work, and informal economic activities. Literacy rates among backward caste women were lower compared to men and upper-caste women, limiting their access to formal employment and leadership positions.

2. Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the socio-economic background of backward caste women leaders in the erstwhile Warangal district.
2. To analyze the role of institutional mechanisms such as Panchayat Raj Institutions in promoting women's leadership.
3. To identify the challenges faced by backward caste women in exercising leadership.
4. To Study about several Women Political leaders from Backward Castes in current politics.

3. Review of Literature:

1. Dr. M. Laxamn in his study "Women's Representation in Urban Local Bodies: A Case Study of Telangana" proved that Urban centers show a decline in proxyism. Leaders like Gundu Sudharani represent a new class of BC women who leverage their caste base and educational background to navigate complex party hierarchies independently. higher literacy rates and "cosmopolitan exposure" in urban local bodies as factors that help women corporators overcome the "Proxy Candidate" syndrome more effectively than their rural counterparts. He also highlighted that BC women in urban bodies often exhibited higher independent agency compared to their rural counterparts due to higher literacy rates and exposure to urban political movements.
2. Chandrakala and R. Limbadri in their study "A study of women's political participation in a gram panchayat: With special reference to Chowdoor, Mahabubnagar" stated that BC

women in Telangana faced a unique set of challenges characterized by the intersection of caste (BC status), gender, and economic marginalization. It is noted that while grassroots participation was high, the lack of financial autonomy hindered progress toward state-level politics.

Political Leadership among Women:

2014 Zilla Parsihadh Elections:

TOTAL ZPTCs	51
Reserved for Backward Castes	17
Backward Castes (General)	09
Backward Castes (Women)	08
Backward Castes (Women) Won	10

The above table presents the Picture of ZPP of erstwhile Warangal District in 2014. Out of total 51 ZPTCs, 17 are reserved for Backward Castes and in that 08 are exclusively reserved for the BC Women. A total number of 10 ZPTCs were won by the BC Women. During those elections ZP chairman position was reserved for BC (General Category), the Backward Castes Women Gadde Kannamba was elected as ZP Chairman.

2019 Zilla Parishath Elections:

By 2019 the erstwhile Warangal District was reorganized into 6 Districts namely Warangal Urban, Warangal Rural, Mahaboobabad, Jayashankar Bhupalapally, Jangoan and Mulugu and the ZPTC constituencies are raised to 70. Out of 70, 28 are reserved for the Backward Castes and 14 seats are exclusively reserved for the BC women. In that 18 ZPTCs are elected from the Backward Castes. However they didn't get any of the ZP chairman position in these 6 districts, they played significant role in electing the Chairman's.

TOTAL ZPTCs	70
Reserved for Backward Castes	28
Backward Castes (General)	14
Backward Castes (Women)	14
Backward Castes (Women) Won	18

2016 Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation Elections:

TOTAL Divisions	58
Reserved for Backward Castes	19
Backward Castes (General)	10
Backward Castes (Women)	09
Backward Castes (Women) Won	14

The 2016 Greater Warangal municipal corporation elections show the power of backward castes women. Out of 58 Divisions, 09 Divisions are reserved for the women from backward castes. Along with these 09, 02 Women have won contesting from BC (General) reservation Divisions and another 03 BC Women won from General (Women) reserved Divisions. And they played significant role in the election of Chairman and Deputy Chairman for the Council.

2021 Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation Elections:

TOTAL Divisions	66
Reserved for Backward Castes	22
Backward Castes (General)	11
Backward Castes (Women)	11
Backward Castes (Women) Won	20

By 2021 Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation Elections, the leadership of BC Women was even more strengthened. The number of Divisions rose to 66 from 56. 11 seats are

exclusively reserved for the Backward Castes Women. Apart from this 11, another 09 divisions are swept by the Backward Castes Women. And the Mayor Position is also reserved for the Women and Gundu Sudharani elected as Mayor and other women from BC-E (Minority) elected as Deputy Mayor.

Konda Surekha:

Konda Surekha is a noteworthy women political leader belonging to Backward Castes Padmashali Community from erstwhile Warangal District who known as fire brand within the Telangana political circles. Her political Journey is inspiring to the women leadership as she initially served as MPP of Parvathagiri Mandal, later on elected as MLA from Parkal Constituency for twice in 2004, 2009 and Warangal East Constituency for twice i.e., 2014, 2023 from Congress and TRS parties. In 2009 when the Telangana hesitation was in peaks she served as a Minister of Andhra Pradesh Cabinete and look after the ministry of Women Development and Child Welfare, However her Journey as minister in 2009 was brief due to unfortunate demise of YS. Rajashekar Reddy and internal politics of Congress party she lost her Position. However she fights back very strongly and stayed in politics with the same intent. She again took the charge as Minister in Revanth Reddy cabinate from 2023 December Onwards.

Gundu Sudharani

Gundu Sudharani is a prominent Indian politician belonging to Backward Class Padmashali who has served as the Mayor of Grater Warangal municipal Corporation since May 2021. Her political career began with the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), where she served as a board member of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (2002–2004) and the floor leader in the Warangal Municipal Corporation (2005–2010). She rose to national prominence as a Member of Parliament in the Rajya Sabha (2010–2016). During her tenure, she was active on committees for Petroleum and Natural Gas and adopted Neerukulla village under the Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana. In 2016, she joined the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS, formerly TRS) and was later elected as a corporator from Division 29, leading to her appointment as Mayor. In 2024, she shifted her affiliation to the Indian National Congress.

Gandra Jyothi:

Gandra Jyothi is a prominent Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leader and a central figure in the politics of the erstwhile Warangal district. She was belonging to BC(Munnuru Kapu) Community a dominate caste in Telangana and Warangal. She served as Zilla Parishad (ZP) Chairperson of Warangal Rural (2019–2024).

4. Conclusion:

Caste is a dominated social factor in India society. The women are being neglected based on Gender. In Politics earlier the participation of women is very less, but due to 72nd and 73rd Constitutional amendments and Telangana Panchayat act and Municipalities act, the women are able to access better opportunities politically. The women from BC communities are able to access political opportunities at Gross roots level. But, this is also confined to few dominated backward communities. the proxy leadership and male dominance is still continued in villages but it is disappeared from Urban bodies. However, the BC women gets better opportunities in Panchayat Institutions and municipalities, their participation in Parliament and Assembly is very less. The backward Community Women gets high potentiality in politics. That potentiality must be utilized for the people welfare and Development.

References:

1. Laxman, M. (2019). *Women's Representation in Urban Local Bodies: A Case Study of Telangana*. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention.
2. Chandrakala, A. & Limbadri, R. (2022). A study of women's political participation in a gram panchasyat: With special reference to Chowdoor, Mahabubnagar.

3. Subudhi, C. & Pathak, K. (2021). "Political Movements and Forgotten Women of Telangana." *Antyajaa: Indian Journal of Women and Social Change*.
4. Balabramha Chary, S. (2019). "Women Empowerment through PRIs in Ranga Reddy District: Challenges and Prospects." *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences*
5. Bhavnani, R. R. (2023 Update). "Do Electoral Quotas Work after They Are Withdrawn? Long-term Evidence from India." *American Political Science Review*.

Citation: Thela Pavani 2025. "Leadership of Backward Classes Women after 2014- A Study of Erstwhile Warangal District". *International Journal of Academic Research*, 12(1): 65-69.

Copyright: ©2025 Thela Pavani. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.