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## Political Awareness Among Scheduled Castes: A Study On West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh

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### Introduction:

#### Political Awareness:

Robert C. Luskin (1990) defines political awareness as a result of three factors: the amount of exposure to political information, the cognitive ability to remember and organize that knowledge, and the drive to seek and understand political information. Educational attainment has been consistently demonstrated as the most reliable metric for assessing the amount of political awareness, according to numerous research. Political awareness is crucial for election participation. Citizens in a democratic nation need to possess a basic comprehension of the political system and its operations. This knowledge enables them to articulate their views and select representatives (Richard and Jane 1998). Converse (2000) has demonstrated that political knowledge is a crucial factor in understanding the differences in political engagement. According to Delli Carpini et al. (1996), there is a positive correlation between the level of political knowledge and the level of engagement in electoral activities. Having a certain level of political understanding is crucial to make informed decisions when voting. Electorates must stay well-informed about political matters, the operations of political establishments, and, most importantly, their rights and responsibilities.

Political awareness is more than just knowledge of the political system; it involves a practical comprehension of the daily operations of the political structure. Bhawna refers to the assessment of the political system, including its organisation, the procedures it follows, and the capacity for individuals to participate in it. Samiel Lerner classified traditional societies and modern societies based on the level of political consciousness and engagement among their members. Political activities serve as the primary method through which consent is given or taken away in a democracy, and they hold rulers responsible to the governed. Political awareness enhances the dignity of citizens and cultivates their political conduct, encompassing conventional activities such as engaging in political discussions, affiliating with a political party, participating in political campaigns, and assisting political candidates, among others. Expressing dissent or support through the act of sending messages to political leaders. Unorthodox political actions such as engaging in riots and participating in demonstrations.

#### Scheduled Castes and Political Awareness

Since the Round Table Conferences held in Britain, the Scheduled Castes have maintained their distinct identity. During the Round Table Conference, when Gandhi was representing the Indian National Congress, the depressed classes of Uttar Pradesh sent a telegraphic message to London stating that Ambedkar, not Gandhi, was their spokesman and leader. All the castes listed as Scheduled Castes share a common identity as they all belong to a distinct and marginalized segment of society. They are an integral component of the social fabric in post-independence India. Scheduled Castes demonstrate this societal influence. They constitute a significant portion of the population of India. This makes them a formidable entity. It is contributing valuable content to the political process. The organizations including scheduled castes have endeavoured to promote social advancement, foster

economic progress, and facilitate meaningful engagement in the political sphere. Caste associations have served as a means of communication, a foundation for leadership, and have facilitated the active involvement of individuals within the democratic system. The involvement of caste in political life has two aspects. The process of politicizing caste has resulted in a gradual weakening of its influence on individuals. The caste has exerted significant influence in the political sphere of the nation. The challenges and concerns related to caste are being transformed into political achievements.

'The caste system in India consists of numerous groupings with intricate interrelationships (Andre' Betteille, 1992). It has examined seven factors contributing to the increasing demand for awareness and participation in developing countries.

**1. Modernization:** The process of modernization has a direct impact on socialization, which subsequently influences political attitudes and behaviour. The developmental process of most developing countries has demonstrated that the expansion of urbanization, education, and industrialization leads to an augmented need for political authority.

**2. Social Stratification:** The process of modernization has resulted in the formation of new social groupings, altering the dynamics and interactions among pre-existing social groups. The direct consequence of social stratification in developing nations is the aspiration of the middle classes to attain a higher social standing. In pursuit of this goal, individuals engage in politics and strive to acquire political power and authority.

**3. Relative Deprivation:** This physiological component elucidates the correlation between rising wealth, improving living conditions, and the occurrence of social unrest, politicization, and increased engagement.

**4. Status Reversal:** In many developing cultures, new social groupings have developed seeking to improve their social status through enhanced education and adopting modern perspectives and lifestyles. The former factions are resorting to political means to regain their previous standing. This method has a detrimental impact on such communities.

**5. The Intelligentsia:** The intelligentsia refers to professionals such as lawyers, doctors, journalists, and teachers. They can incite the populace to actively engage in the political affairs of their nation. The intelligentsia is more actively engaged in this regard, particularly in colonial and modernizing nations.

**6. Intra Elite conflict:** A competitive political system is characterized by internal conflicts among the ruling class. Within a well-established and competitive political system, there exists a rather cohesive ruling class. The elite in many recently emancipated nations recognize that political organization, mass movements, and mass dissents are orchestrated by a small group of individuals, whose suppression would quell the unrest. Governing elites in poor nations are frequently tempted to utilize repressive instruments (Desai, A.R).

**7. Governmental Output:** The government can increase political awareness by implementing measures such as granting universal adult suffrage, allowing the formation of groups and unions, protecting the right to free expression, and ensuring a free press.

**Indicators of Political Awareness:** The important indications of political awareness are given below.

**(a) Voting:** Voting is the most universally acknowledged, significant, and influential form of engagement. It is an essential and unavoidable action carried out in nearly every political system. It wields influence over leaders by exerting pressure inside a democratic system. Regularly scheduled elections provide residents with the opportunity to cast their votes for candidates and political parties. The voter frequently encountered the predicament of deciding whether or not to cast their vote and determining the optimal timing for doing so.

**(b) Political Discussion:** Engaging in politics and engaging in discussions about political concerns is a means of fostering political awareness. While some individuals may refrain from engaging in political discussions, they actively stay updated on political affairs through several channels of communication, including radio, television, newspapers, and magazines.

**(c) Campaigning and Attending Public Meetings:** Campaigning is a highly prevalent kind of political engagement. The variation is contingent upon cultural differences. Television holds a large position in wealthy nations such as the United States, whereas its significance is modest in poorer ones. Public gatherings, on the other hand, serve as significant tools for political campaigning. It provides education and fosters socialisation among individuals. Election campaigning is crucial for voting to have significance. Voters get knowledge about the major issues, and alternative policies of political parties, as well as their competence and credibility solely through campaigns.

**(d) Contesting Election:** The highest level of awareness is characterised by active participation. An individual who runs for election typically engages in nearly all political activity. When it comes to candidates, the disparity between men and women is more pronounced. Most female candidates originate from affluent households, often belonging to ancient noble lineages.

### Levels of Political Awareness

To determine the level of political awareness the following dimensions have been studied. (a). Political Interest; (b). Political Responsibility; (c). Political Participation; (d). Political Efficacy.

**(a). Political Interest:** Political interest encompasses a citizen's cognitive and objective engagement with various aspects of politics, such as staying informed through news media, following parliamentary deliberations, participating in political discussions, and showing interest in election outcomes and the stability of governments at the national and regional levels.

**(b). Political Responsibility:** Political responsibility entails the cognitive process in which an individual citizen actively seeks to acquire knowledge about the many manifestos put out by competing political parties and national political events. The citizens are apprehensive about political accountability. In addition, it is important for them to actively encourage and engage their female community members to vote for the most suitable candidate based on political principles, rather than being influenced by factors such as caste, religion, financial resources, or physical strength.

**(c). Political Participation:** Political participation encompasses an individual's cognitive and objective actions related to politics. This includes engaging in political discussions, staying informed about political news, voting in elections, attending public meetings, attempting to influence political decisions, making financial contributions, and participating in political protests. Lester Milbrath notes that the notion of political involvement has been narrowly employed in Western societies. He has classified political actions into three distinct categories.

1. Gladiatorial-Direct party activities encompass tasks such as holding party offices, running as a party candidate in elections, soliciting party finances, participating in party meetings, and engaging in party campaigns.
2. Engaging in attending party meetings as supporters or attentive listeners, making financial contributions to party funds, and interacting with public authorities or party personnel.
3. Spectatorial voting refers to the act of influencing people to vote in a specific manner. This can be done by engaging in political discussions, exposing oneself to political stimuli, and displaying buttons or stickers. Nevertheless, it is indisputable that a significant majority of individuals, particularly women, adhere to the boundaries set by societal norms and refrain from exceeding them.

**(d). Political Efficacy:** Political efficacy refers to an individual's capacity to comprehend the workings of the government, its programmes, and politics, and to believe in their power to bring about change. Political effectiveness is the mental perception that an individual can influence the process of making decisions. Yogesh Atal suggests that individuals' dedication to the political system, which guarantees their involvement in politics, is influenced by their perception of their political efficacy (Atal Yogesh).

### Socio-Economic Factors for Political Awareness

An individual's socio-economic position can provide insights into the interrelationships between several factors such as age, economic situation, family structure, caste, religion, income, and occupation. These factors influence the degrees of political awareness and its dimensions among educated and employed individuals, including women.

**Size and Structure of Family:** The family serves as the fundamental unit for the socialisation of children in India. This has a significant impact on the economic and living circumstances of the family, including aspects such as housing, education, nutrition, and health. In a nuclear family, parents serve as socialising agents, whereas in a joint family, this responsibility is divided among other members. In joint families, the parents' involvement in socialisation is not as crucial, as these families rely on strong ties between their members (Abraham M.F).

**Educational Status:** Educational status significantly influences career opportunities, housing conditions, diet, health habits, child rearing, child care, and social and political attitudes. It profoundly influences an individual's political thoughts and actions. Educational attainment significantly influences socio-political attitudes and behaviour. Numerous studies and authors have shown the significant impact of schooling on political consciousness. Milbrath asserts that those with higher levels of education possess distinct qualities as political participants compared to those with less or no education. Almond and Verba concluded that education is the most crucial and efficient means to establish a contemporary culture.

**1. Occupational Status:** Occupation has a crucial role in influencing and forming our attitudes, perceptions, thoughts, and judgements in our overall conduct. Occupation serves as both a source of livelihood and a determinant of social standing and reputation in society and is intricately linked to one's economic positions. Education, economic development, urbanisation, and legal backing have facilitated women in attaining new professional opportunities and upward social mobility. Occupation has the greatest likelihood of influencing political awareness and involvement.

**2. Age:** Age plays a significant role in shaping the level of political consciousness among women. An individual's age represents their social standing, social status, social exposure, and level of experience. The process of ageing is characterised by a clear inclination towards inflexibility and vulnerability in embracing or dismissing social and political beliefs. An individual's level of political knowledge is heavily contingent upon their age. Research has revealed that awareness and engagement tend to rise as individuals grow older, but subsequently decline during old age.

**3. Income:** Income significantly influences an individual's level of political interest. According to this survey, those with higher income levels show a greater level of interest in politics. They are interested in all forms of election news and the outcomes. Similarly, employed women are similarly inclined towards politics. They share the sentiment that the political system is corrupt and in need of reform, believing that the masses possess the ability to effect change inside the system. Furthermore, research has revealed that the middle-income group bears the greatest political burden, as it consistently experiences hardship and becomes the primary target in any given system.

**4. Religion:** Religion has exerted a significant influence on Indian politics. The socialisation pattern and political attitude in India are significantly influenced by religious background. Even in contemporary India, there exist political parties that seek support from the public by emphasising religious affiliations. Political awareness among women is most prevalent among the upper castes of all religions, and the impact of quota policies is seen in the voting behaviour of educated women.

**5. Caste:** Caste is a fundamental institution in Indian society. In India, it appears that politics revolves around caste, both at the state and national levels.

The influence of the caste factor can largely explain the selection of candidates, the methods used in election campaigns within political parties, and the significance of leadership. An analysis of the correlation between castes and political efficacy reveals that all three castes (General, Other Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes) have a sense of political efficacy.

**6. Marital Status:** Marital status is a significant socio-economic aspect that is intimately linked to the concept of family. Marital status is indicative of a distinct level of emotional and psychological development as well as a particular outlook on life. The marital status of women has a substantial impact on their social status. Additionally, it results in alterations in attitudes, responsibilities, and behaviour patterns.

**7. Political Background:** The influence of one's family background on politics is undeniable. However, within the realm of politics, several family members may hold divergent viewpoints. However, when it comes to female responders, their selection is not influenced by their political background.

**8. Extra-Curricular Activities:** Higher education offers individuals exceptional opportunities to cultivate political interest and attitudes through various activities such as lectures, seminars, group discussions, and simulated parliamentary sessions. At times, student union activities related to elections, movements, and protests bring forth a significant number of women activists into the broader political sphere.

## **9. Political Awareness among Women**

Evaluating the efficacy of women's political participation is crucial. These rights are not the officially recognised rights established by the constitution and current laws of a specific country. According to Duverger, the various manifestations of political engagement encompass:

1. Election-related activities encompass the involvement of women in the electoral campaign process, as well as the allocation of women's votes during the election.
2. The role of women in government and assemblies encompasses several aspects, including the representation of women in parliament, their participation in plenary discussions, committees, and commissions, the number of women elected to state assemblies and local governments, as well as their involvement as ministers and secretary of state.
3. The share of women in administration encompasses their involvement in public service organisations, the courts, education, and various levels of military service.

4. Activities inside different types of associations and political parties aim to determine the presence of women-led organisations or women holding influential positions, as well as the involvement of pressure groups.
5. Involvement in political and informational media, including the activities of women's media and their impact.
6. The study of women's indirect impact on political life involves examining the influences they exert in various contexts such as communities, neighbourhoods, and villages, as well as their political role within nuclear families.
7. The disparities in political knowledge among women based on class and social strata are evident. Women's engagement in political activities is primarily witnessed during electoral campaigns when political parties make efforts to mobilise female voters.

Political awareness is fundamentally a state of mind. Political awareness encompasses comprehension of political facts, institutions, and processes. It is a crucial notion for comprehending the operation of a political system. The absence of political awareness and the passivity of the general population contribute to an irresponsible and dysfunctional political system. The perceptions and judgements of voters towards political entities such as parties, causes, political leaders, and candidates can be seen as the outcomes of a complicated process including various factors and influences within each individual.

The quantitative aspect, which pertains to the size of the image, is crucial since it influences the available options. The existing research indicates several elements that have the potential to influence levels of political awareness. This research, as previously mentioned, demonstrates that time and educational attainment are likely the primary factors in influencing an individual's political awareness. According to Prof. Milbarth, those with a high socio-economic status, particularly those with higher education, are more likely to possess extensive knowledge and a higher level of understanding in politics. Hence, political consciousness plays a pivotal role in determining an individual's level of political engagement.

### **Research Methodology:**

The term "research method" refers to a well-organized and methodical plan and process used to carry out research. Political theorists often rely on sociological research, which has made significant scientific contributions to our comprehensive understanding of human beings and their interactions within society. According to Redman and Mory (1952), research is the process of systematically making an organized effort to acquire new knowledge. This study focuses on examining the political awareness of scheduled castes, using a deliberate and organized approach to comprehending their attitudes and engagement in political awareness and participation. Many inquiries have emerged regarding the political standing of scheduled castes in India. The objective of this study was to investigate the political dynamics among scheduled castes residing in Andhra Pradesh. Specifically, the research aimed to assess their level of political awareness, interest, and participation, as well as their perspectives on the barriers hindering their involvement in political life.

The study aims to investigate the level of participation of scheduled castes in politics and associated areas. It will address specific research issues on their involvement and set clear objectives to explore this topic.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To examine the socio-economic status of the respondents belonging to the scheduled castes.
2. To assess the level of political awareness among the respondents belonging to the scheduled castes.
3. To determine the nature of political involvement among the respondents belonging to the scheduled castes.
4. To examine the viewpoints of respondents from the scheduled castes about political awareness involvement.
5. To evaluate the degree of political interest and awareness among respondents belonging to scheduled castes.

### **Formulation of the Hypothesis**

The following hypotheses are formulated to elucidate the correlation between different socio-economic variables that influence the political consciousness and engagement of scheduled castes residing in West Godavari District:

1. There is no correlation between political awareness and engagement in political activities in West Godavari District.
2. There is no correlation between the extent of exposure to the media and the degree of political awareness.
3. There is no correlation between age and political awareness.
4. There is no correlation between educational attainment and the degree of political awareness.
5. There is no correlation between age and political awareness and participation.
6. There is no correlation between marital status and political activity and awareness.

7. There is no correlation between the limitations caused by family obligations and the level of political awareness and involvement.

### Research Design

The study is characterized by its descriptive and explanatory nature. According to D. Lal Das (2005), descriptive studies aim to provide an accurate depiction of the features of a certain group of individuals or a society. The research provides a detailed account of the characteristics of the respondents belonging to the scheduled castes in West Godavari District.

### Selection of District

The study specifically an empirical chose West Godavari District in Andhra Pradesh due to its greatest concentration of scheduled castes voters. Among the 32 districts in the state of Andhra Pradesh, West Godavari has the largest population of scheduled castes.

### Sampling Procedure

Goode and Hatt define a sample as a smaller representative of a bigger whole. P.V. Young defines a statistical sample as a scaled-down representation or snapshot of the complete group or collection from which the sample is derived. The complete set of individuals or items from which a sample is selected is referred to as the 'Population' or 'Universe'. The sample was selected using a Purposive sampling approach. A total of 360 males and 360 females were selected as the target sample from each both chosen for the study. The samples obtained from these regions are combined, and ultimately a dataset consisting of 720 respondents from scheduled castes was utilized for analysis.

### WEST GODAVARI (SC) MANDALS Selected Villages of SCs Constituencies – 2011 (Census)

| GOPALAPURAM: |                     |                   |                  |               |                   |        |       |
|--------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------|-------|
|              |                     |                   |                  |               | Sample Population |        |       |
| S. No        | Name of the Village | No. of Households | Total Population | SC Population | Male              | Female | Total |
| 1            | Gopalapuram         | 2965              | 11573            | 4983          | 30                | 30     | 60    |
| 2            | Gangolu             | 2909              | 10163            | 3850          | 30                | 30     | 60    |
| 3            | Vella Chintalagudem | 1496              | 4952             | 2546          | 30                | 30     | 60    |
| 4            | Vadalakunta         | 1191              | 4149             | 1948          | 30                | 30     | 60    |
| Total        |                     |                   |                  |               | 120               | 120    | 240   |

| KOVVUR: |                     |                   |                  |               |                   |        |       |
|---------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------|-------|
|         |                     |                   |                  |               | Sample Population |        |       |
| S. No   | Name of the Village | No. of Households | Total Population | SC Population | Male              | Female | Total |
| 1       | Dommeru             | 3646              | 13000            | 3625          | 30                | 30     | 60    |
| 2       | Vadapalle           | 2032              | 7472             | 1747          | 30                | 30     | 60    |
| 3       | Madduru             | 1783              | 6583             | 732           | 30                | 30     | 60    |
| 4       | Is. Pangidi         | 1799              | 6855             | 1209          | 30                | 30     | 60    |
| Total   |                     |                   |                  |               | 120               | 120    | 240   |

| CHINTALAPUDI: |                     |                   |                  |               |                   |        |       |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------|-------|
|               |                     |                   |                  |               | Sample Population |        |       |
| S. No         | Name of the Village | No. of Households | Total Population | SC Population | Male              | Female | Total |
| 1             | Chintalapudi        | 6811              | 25952            | 8475          | 30                | 30     | 60    |
| 2             | Pragadavaram        | 3011              | 10755            | 5326          | 30                | 30     | 60    |
| 3             | Erraguntapalle      | 1768              | 6606             | 1855          | 30                | 30     | 60    |
| 4             | Ragavapuram         | 1655              | 5792             | 1481          | 30                | 30     | 60    |
| Total         |                     |                   |                  |               | 120               | 120    | 240   |

**Data Collection:**

A comprehensive survey strategy is utilized to acquire data on the Political Awareness and Political Participation of respondents belonging to the scheduled castes. This technique involves conducting personal interviews and using a pre-designed interview schedule. Data gathering and analysis aid researchers in addressing and resolving research aims and inquiries (Holden & Lynch, 2004).

**Primary Data:**

Does the researcher collect the data firsthand using instruments such as an interview schedule, considering that this method requires more effort, time, and expense? Primary data is specifically gathered for the purpose of study, which sets it apart from secondary data. The researcher obtained primary information by directly collecting data from the field using various strategies, such as conducting interviews with respondents using an interview schedule. Primary data was collected using interview schedules and observation techniques.

**Secondary Data:**

Additional data was gathered from numerous sources including books, published materials, journals, magazines, seminar papers, and websites. In addition to the articles and written pieces published in newspapers pertaining to academic research. The secondary data were obtained via e-books, national reports, and by visiting libraries, Collector's office Eluru and bookstores to collect reliable secondary data in the West Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh.

**Data Processing:**

The statistical analysis is conducted utilizing statistical techniques, including percentage analysis and rank analysis, with the use of a statistical programme. The data was acquired using computer technology and the SPSS software suite. Mean scores are computed when necessary. The user mentions two statistical tests: the chi-square test and the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Correlations have been utilized to examine the hypothesis and determine the link between the various characteristics of political awareness and political participation. Bar diagrams are utilized in the research of pie diagrams to depict relevant data where appropriate. Statistical methods such as measures of central tendency, measures of dispersion, and correlation were rejected or discarded. Hypothesis test The  $X^2$  - chi-square test was employed to make conclusions and inferences.  $X^2$  is a statistical technique that is practical for hypothesis testing and also serves as a means of discovering associations and interdependencies between two variables.

**Limitations of the Study:**

The objective of this study is to evaluate the level of political awareness, political participation, and empowerment among the respondents in the chosen villages, based on specific variables. The study is limited by the selection of only three Mandle's, with only 2 communities chosen due to financial and time limitations. Likewise, the size of the sample population is restricted to 720. The study's conceptual agenda has been designed with a focus on the specific objectives. However, it is impossible for a single worker to maintain the highest level of objectivity due to limited time and resources. The study contains constraints that may prevent it from obtaining accurate data on the topic. This is due to the fact that a single worker is responsible for collecting data from a large number of respondents from three Mandle's of West Godavari District. The survey was conducted prior to the division of the Andhra Pradesh State.

**Review of Literature:**

The literature review is a crucial aspect of any research. This chapter provides an overview of the relevant literature. Several studies have been undertaken on the involvement of caste groupings in political activity. However, only very relevant studies are chosen and examined in this context.

**Sarbjee Singh (2019)** Scheduled caste and scheduled tribe households have a lower percentage of cultivated land and a higher percentage of uncultivated land compared to general caste households. This is mainly because the land allocated to them by the government is either on steep hillsides with trees, bushes, and stones or on riverbanks that are submerged in water for half of the year and covered in stones and sand for the other half, making it unsuitable for cultivation.

In his study, **Andre Battelle (2008)** analysed the relationship between caste and political party formation, specifically focusing on how power dynamics transition from the caste system to discriminatory power structures. As previously mentioned, a significant number of new structures of authority have arisen in India since gaining freedom. At present, traditional bodies, like a group of caste elders, are facing increasing competition from specialized institutions of authority.

In 2008, **Kannappan** conducted a study on the relationship between indebtedness and forced work and bondage, identifying indebtedness as a primary underlying factor. Hence, the study asserted that indebtedness is more prevalent among the scheduled castes compared to the general population.

In her study, **Lucia Michelutti (2008)** conducted an ethnographic investigation into the process by which 'democracy' becomes deeply rooted in the social and cultural fabric of India. Her research reveals that democracy is not just a political system, but also a set of ingrained cultural and social practices that become embedded in the collective consciousness of ordinary people.

**Kochar (2007)** explained that scheduled castes have lower levels of education compared to upper castes. Despite decades of government efforts aimed at reducing this disparity, it has persisted and grown, especially in rural areas. In her study, **Jayathi Ghosh (2006)** explored the underlying factors that contribute to the profound social and economic disparities in India. She found that these disparities are intricately interconnected, albeit in a progressively intricate manner. The researcher concludes that reserves for diverse clusters in higher education are still necessary. This is not because they are perfect solutions to address long-standing discrimination, but rather because they are the most feasible approach to make progress in this direction.

**Neera Chandhoke (2006)** argued that reservations are significant, however, they should be fully utilized and used sparingly. The primary objective of addressing discrimination should be fairness or the provision of a basic level of support to all those who require it.

**Noor Mohammad (2006)** found that there is a correlation between the socio-economic changes experienced by scheduled castes and the disparities in educational attainment between rural and urban areas for scheduled castes. The researcher analysed the various programs and policies aimed at rural development, with a special focus on agricultural expansion. These efforts have resulted in economic prosperity for the whole population, including the scheduled castes.

In his study, **Shashi Tharoor (2006)** observed that in post-independence India, there has been a noticeable emergence of privileged individuals within historically disadvantaged groups. This is attributed to the preferential treatment received by the children of influential scheduled caste leaders, who have been able to ascend in society due to their caste affiliation.

In 2006, **Sukhdeo Thorat** discovered that the lower castes, specifically the scheduled castes, were prohibited from participating in any business activities due to the belief in purity and contamination. Additionally, they were also excluded from owning agricultural land. The researcher emphasized the importance of acknowledging the exclusionary and discriminatory nature of our society and economy, as well as the need to consider changes that arise from factors such as caste, ethnicity, religion, and other group identities.

**Ashok Kumar (2005)** explained that poor castes were unable to gain political power at the grassroots level and instead remained loyal supporters. Researchers concluded that hurt all categories of social discrimination and underprivileged of social justice.

**Harriss John (2005)** conducted a study on political participation and representation among the urban poor in Delhi. The study reveals that electoral contribution is high, and there are some indications that participation may be a bit higher among poorer and less educated individuals, specifically self-employed, roughly in a sentence that it has been observed in Indian election studies more widely, where the phenomena accompanying with the second democratic expansion have been recognized. Researcher distinguishes the political participation between wealthier individuals and poor individuals in Delhi and determined that wealthier public, who are usually better educated, seek to solve complications for themselves through self-help as they are comparatively active in associations rather than in politics.

**Gorringer, Hugo (2005)** did a sociological study at the University of Scotland, focusing on field studies conducted in Tamil Nadu, namely in Madurai and its surrounding districts. The report analysed the current situation of Dalits, with a particular focus on Dalit organizations, specifically the Dalit Panther Iyakam (DPI), also known as the Liberation Panthers, under the leadership of Tirumavalavan. The study is primarily focused on systematically examine and analyses the process of democratization in Tamil Nadu and India.

**Gupta (2004)** explained that the emergence of caste-based political mobilization among Dalits and other backward castes was facilitated by the dismantling of the ideology that supports the caste system. Sudipta Kaviraj (2000, p.103) argued that rather than disintegrating due to historical embarrassment, caste groups adapted remarkably well to the concerns of parliamentary politics. Their involvement in electoral politics also transformed the structural characteristics of caste in one significant way - it replaced a hierarchical system with a democracy based on caste. In the realm of affordable electoral politics, the crucial factor for a political party was the total number of votes received from a particular caste group.

**Marcus J. Kurtz (2004)** explained how a certain type of inequality can weaken political representation. Researchers have shown that in order to have genuine democratic representation, the allocation of benefits must be fairly dispersed among the main social groupings and divisions within the political system. If this distribution of impact is absent, the researcher suggests that politicians are more likely to be attentive solely to influential minority groups.

### **ANALYSIS ON POLITICAL AWARENESS AMONG SCHEDULED CASTES IN WEST GODAVARI DISTRICT STATISTICAL ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:**

**Table 1: Overall perceptions of respondents towards Political Awareness Among Scheduled Castes in West Godavari District**

| Area                              | N   | Min. Score | Max. Score | Mean  | Mean Percent | Std. Dev. |
|-----------------------------------|-----|------------|------------|-------|--------------|-----------|
| Political Awareness               | 720 | 8          | 16         | 12.72 | 79.48        | 2.32      |
| Level of Political Awareness      | 720 | 11         | 44         | 31.20 | 70.90        | 5.59      |
| Knowledge about Political Parties | 720 | 7          | 21         | 16.10 | 76.66        | 4.22      |
| Knowledge about Politicians       | 720 | 9          | 27         | 22.55 | 83.51        | 4.02      |
| Knowledge about Government        | 720 | 7          | 21         | 12.12 | 57.73        | 4.74      |
| Knowledge about Elections         | 720 | 5          | 15         | 11.36 | 75.70        | 2.53      |

Table 1. shows that the, respondents expressed high perceptions with respect to the areas viz., Political Awareness, Level of Political Awareness, Knowledge about Political Parties, Knowledge about Politicians, Knowledge about Elections, and average and below average perceptions with respect to Knowledge about Government. The mean values for all the areas were 12.72, 31.20, 16.10, 22.55, 12.12 and 11.36 and the mean percentages for all the areas were 79.48%, 70.90%, 76.66%, 83.51%, 57.73%, and 75.70% on their total score.

**Figure – : Overall Perceptions of Respondents Towards Political Awareness Among Scheduled Castes In West Godavari District**

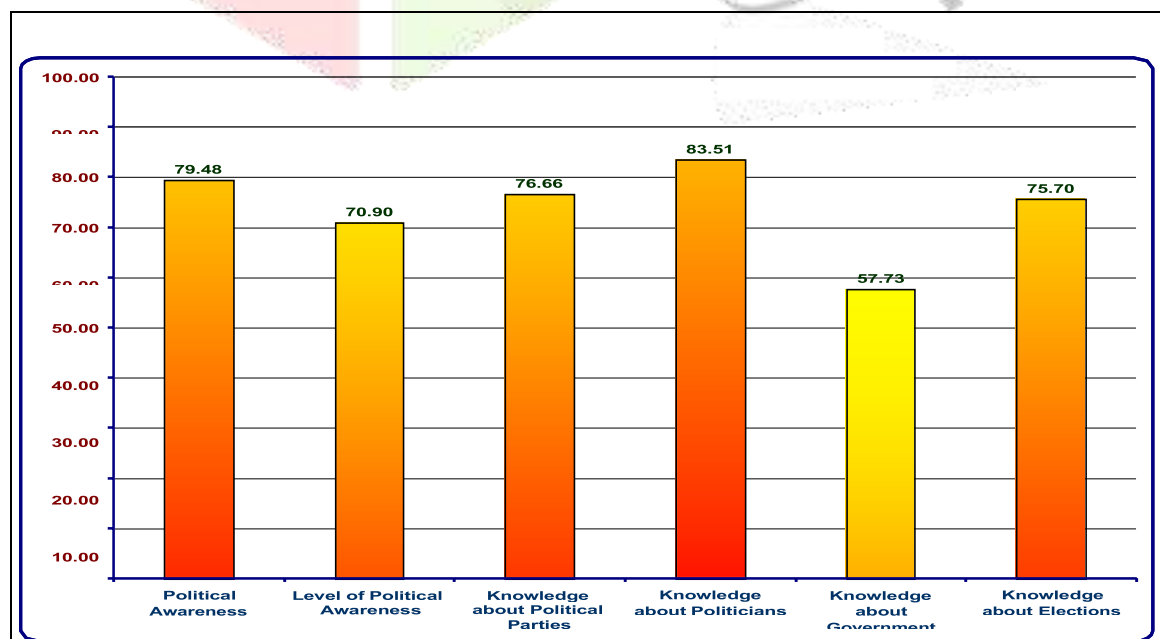


Table 2, observed that the mean perceptual scores of respondents based on their constituency with

respect to Political Awareness, the mean perceptual scores of Gopalapuram Constituency respondents was 12.45, whereas it is for Kovvuru was 12.45 and it was for Chintalapudi was 13.24 and SD values are 2.53, 2.38 and 1.94 respectively. The 'F'-value was 9.40 and the p-value was 0.00, which was significant at 0.01 level. This shows that, there is a significant difference among the perceptions of respondents and Chintalapudi Constituency respondents perceived high towards Political Awareness than that of the rest.

With respect to Gender, the mean perceptual scores of male category respondents was 12.16, whereas it is for female category respondents was 13.28 and SD values are 2.28 and 2.24 respectively. The 't'-value was 6.64 and the p-value was 0.00, which was significant at 0.01 level. This shows that, there is a significant difference between the perceptions of male and female category respondents and female category respondents perceived high towards Political Awareness than that of the male category respondents.

With respect to Age, the mean perceptual scores of below 25 years age group respondents was 13.31, whereas it is for 25-30 years age group respondents was 12.25, it was for 30-35 years age group was 12.66, it was for 35-40 years age group was 12.54, it was for 40-45 years age group was 12.41, it was for 45-50 years age group was 12.80, it was for 50-55 years age group was 13.04, it was for 55-60 years age group was 13.49, it was for 60-65 years age group was 13.21, it was for above 65 years age group was 12.75 and SD values are 1.89, 2.49, 2.47, 2.46, 2.35, 2.35, 2.07, 1.77, 1.74 and 2.31 respectively. The 'F'-value was 3.04 and the p-value was 0.04, which was significant at 0.05 level. This shows that, there is a significant difference among the perceptions of respondents based on their age group and 55-60 years age group respondents perceived high towards Political Awareness than that of the rest.

With respect to Caste, the mean perceptual scores of Mala category respondents were 12.66, whereas it is for Madiga category respondents was 12.77 and SD values are 2.40 and 2.25 respectively. The 't'-value was 0.65 and the p-value was 0.52, which was not significant. This shows that, there is no significant difference between the perceptions of Mala and Madiga category respondents and they perceived similar opinion towards Political Awareness.

With respect to Religion, the mean perceptual scores of Hindu religion category respondents were 13.61, whereas it is for Christian category respondents was 12.49 and SD values are 2.09 and 2.33 respectively. The 't'-value was 5.26 and the p-value was 0.00, which was significant at 0.01 level. This shows that, there is a significant difference between the perceptions of Hindu and Christian religion category respondents and Hindu religion category respondents perceived high towards Political Awareness than that of the rest.

With respect to Marital Status, the mean perceptual scores of Unmarried category respondents were 13.93, whereas it is for Married category respondents was 12.59 and SD values are 1.86 and 2.33 respectively. The 't'-value was 4.57 and the p-value was 0.00, which was significant at 0.01 level. This shows that, there is a significant difference between the perceptions of Unmarried and Married category respondents and Unmarried category respondents perceived high towards Political Awareness than that of the rest.

With respect to Educational Qualification, the mean perceptual scores of Illiterates was 14.23, whereas it is for Primary education was 13.97, it was for Secondary Education was 12.81, it was for Under Graduates was 11.68, it was for Graduates was 10.74, and it was for Post Graduate was 10.75 and SD values are 1.58, 1.61, 2.22, 2.22, 1.94 and 1.75 respectively. The 'F'-value was 10.97 and the p-value was 0.00, which was significant at 0.01 level. This shows that, there is a significant difference among the perceptions of respondents based on their educational qualifications and Illiterate category respondents perceived high towards Political Awareness than that of the rest.

With respect to Occupation, the mean perceptual scores of Unemployed was 13.33, whereas it is for Employed was 11.19, it was for Labour was 12.79, it was for Farmer was 13.06, it was for Business was 12.40, and it was for Home maker was 13.10 and SD values are 1.84, 2.05, 2.37, 2.22, 2.31 and 2.18 respectively. The 'F'-value was 7.95 and the p-value was 0.00, which was significant at 0.01 level. This shows that, there is a significant difference among the perceptions of respondents based on their occupation and Unemployed category respondents perceived high towards Political Awareness than that of the rest.

With respect to Monthly Income, the mean perceptual scores of respondents whose monthly income was Rs.1000-5000 was 13.51, whereas it is for Rs. 5000-10000 was 12.98, it was for Rs. 10000-15000 was 11.32, it was for Rs. 15000-20000 was 11.09, it was for Rs. 20000 - 25000 was 10.78, and it was for Above Rs. 25000 was 10.32 and SD values are 2.16, 2.14, 2.23, 2.22, 1.77 and 1.67 respectively. The 'F'-

value was 7.95 and the p-value was 0.00, which was significant at 0.01 level. This shows that, there is a significant difference among the perceptions of respondents based on their occupation and Unemployed category respondents perceived high towards Political Awareness than that of the rest.

**Figure – : Mean Comparison Among the Perceptions of Respondents Based on their Demographic Variables i.e., Constituency, Gender and AgeGroup Towards Political Awareness**

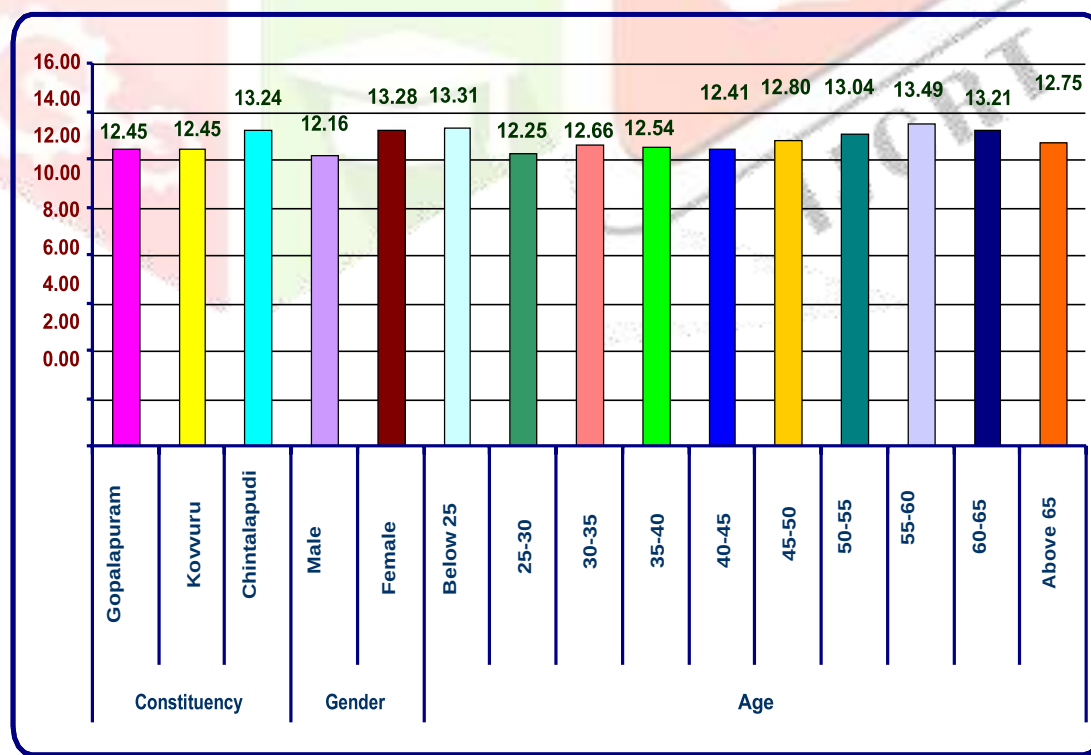


**Figure – : Mean Comparison Among the Perceptions of Respondents Based on their Demographic Variables i.e., Caste, Religion, Marital Status, Type of Family and Educational Qualification Towards Political Awareness**

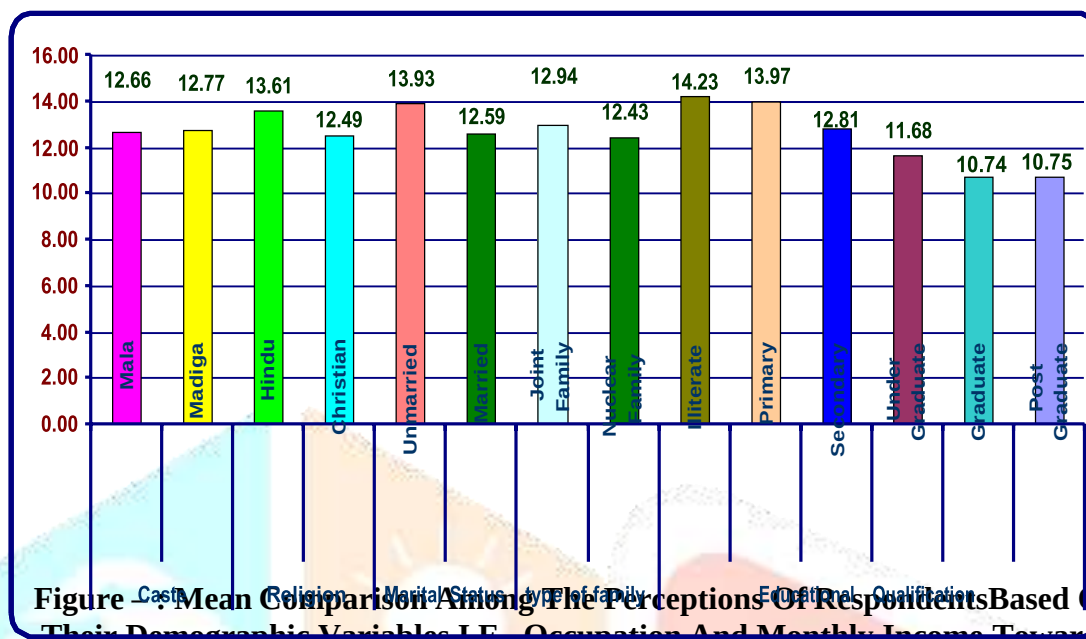


**Figure – : Mean Comparison Among The Perceptions Of Respondents Based On Their Demographic Variables I.E., Occupation And Monthly Income Towards Political Awareness**

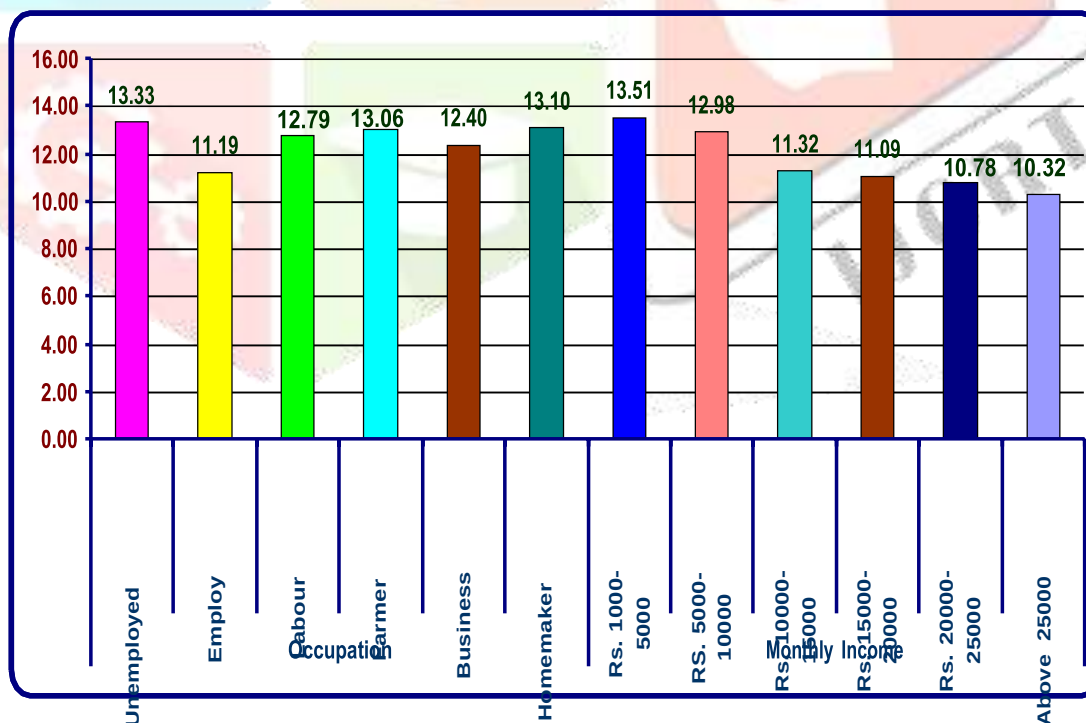


Table 3, observed that the mean perceptual scores of respondents based on their constituency with respect to Level of Political Awareness, the mean perceptual scores of Gopalapuram Constituency respondents were 33.00, whereas it is for Kovvuru was 30.80 and it was for Chintalapudi was 29.80 and SD values are 4.90, 5.84 and 5.54 respectively. The 'F'-value was 21.74 and the p-value was 0.00, which was significant at 0.01 level. This shows that, there is a significant difference among the perceptions of respondents and Gopalapuram Constituency respondents perceived high towards Level of Political Awareness than that of the rest.

With respect to Gender, the mean perceptual scores of male category respondents were 32.81, whereas it is for female category respondents was 29.59 and SD values are 5.43 and 5.29 respectively. The 't'-value was 8.05 and the p-value was 0.00, which was significant at 0.01 level. This shows that, there is a significant difference between the perceptions of male and female category respondents and male category respondents perceived high towards Level of Political Awareness than that of the female category respondents.

With respect to Age, the mean perceptual scores of below 25 years age group respondents was 29.88, whereas it is for 25-30 years age group respondents was 31.74, it was for 30-35 years age group was 31.43, it was for 35-40 years age group was 31.46, it was for 40-45 years age group was 31.78, it was for 45-50 years age group was 30.38, it was for 50-55 years age group was 30.33, it was for 55-60 years age group was 30.15, it was for 60-65 years age group was 32.48, it was for above 65 years age group was 32.38 and SD values are 4.19, 5.39, 5.35, 5.58, 5.14, 6.17, 5.87, 6.21, 5.59 and 8.37 respectively. The 'F'-value was 1.22 and the p-value was 0.28, which was not significant. This shows that, there is no significant difference among the perceptions of respondents based on their age group and they perceived similar opinion towards Level of Political Awareness.

With respect to Caste, the mean perceptual scores of Mala category respondents were 30.70, whereas it is for Madiga category respondents was 31.69 and SD values are 5.85 and 5.29 respectively. The 't'-value was 2.39 and the p-value was 0.02, which was significant at 0.05 level. This shows that, there is a significant difference between the perceptions of Mala and Madiga category respondents and Madiga community respondents perceived high towards Level of Political Awareness than that of male community respondents.

With respect to Religion, the mean perceptual scores of Hindu religion category respondents were 30.35, whereas it is for Christian category respondents was 31.41 and SD values are 5.43 and 5.62 respectively. The 't'-value was 2.04 and the p-value was 0.04, which was significant at 0.05 level. This shows that, there is a significant difference between the perceptions of Hindu and Christian religion category respondents and Christian religion category respondents perceived high towards Level of Political Awareness than that of Hindu religion category respondents.

With respect to Marital Status, the mean perceptual scores of Unmarried category respondents were 29.62, whereas it is for Married category respondents was 31.36 and SD values are 5.64 and 5.57 respectively. The 't'-value was 2.46 and the p-value was 0.01, which was significant at 0.05 level. This shows that, there is a significant difference between the perceptions of Unmarried and Married category respondents and married category respondents perceived high towards Level of Political Awareness than that of unmarried category respondents.

With respect to Type of family, the mean perceptual scores of Joint family category respondents were 31.12, whereas it is for nuclear category respondents was 31.29 and SD values are 5.75 and 5.40 respectively. The 't'-value was 0.39 and the p-value was 0.70, which was not significant. This shows that, there is no significant difference between the perceptions of Joint and Nuclear family category respondents and they perceived similar opinion towards Level of Political Awareness.

With respect to Educational Qualification, the mean perceptual scores of Illiterates was 27.75, whereas it is for Primary education was 29.04, it was for Secondary Education was 30.33, it was for Under Graduates was 33.09, it was for Graduates was 35.64, and it was for Post Graduate was 36.95 and SD values are 5.30, 4.46, 4.79, 5.08, 3.72 and 3.96 respectively. The 'F'-value was 22.54 and the p-value was 0.00, which was significant at 0.01 level. This shows that, there is a significant difference among the perceptions of respondents based on their educational qualifications and Post Graduation qualified category respondents perceived high towards Level of Political Awareness than that of the rest.

With respect to Occupation, the mean perceptual scores of Unemployed was 31.60, whereas it is for Employ was 36.03, it was for Labour was 30.26, it was for Farmer was 32.27, it was for Business was 32.87, and it was for home maker was 29.85 and SD values are 5.65, 4.20, 6.05, 4.57, 4.56 and 4.53 respectively. The 'F'-value was 17.36 and the p-value was 0.00, which was significant at 0.01 level. This shows that, there is a significant difference among the perceptions of respondents based on their occupation and Employ category respondents perceived high towards Level of Political Awareness than that of the rest.

With respect to Monthly Income, the mean perceptual scores of respondents whose monthly income was Rs.1000-5000 was 29.23, whereas it is for Rs. 5000-10000 was 30.48, it was for Rs. 10000-15000 was 34.23, it was for Rs. 15000-20000 was 36.29, it was for Rs. 20000 - 25000 was 38.11, and it was for Above Rs. 25000 was 36.53 and SD values are 4.81, 5.45, 5.04, 4.52, 3.14 and 2.93 respectively. The 'F'-value was 23.55 and the p-value was 0.00, which was significant at 0.01 level. This shows that, there is a significant difference among the perceptions of respondents based on their monthly income and Rs. 20000 – 25000 monthly incomes of respondent's category respondents perceived high towards Level of Political Awareness than that of the rest.

**Figure – : Mean Comparison Among the Perceptions of Respondents Based on their Demographic Variables i.e., Constituency, Gender and Age Group Towards Level of Political Awareness**

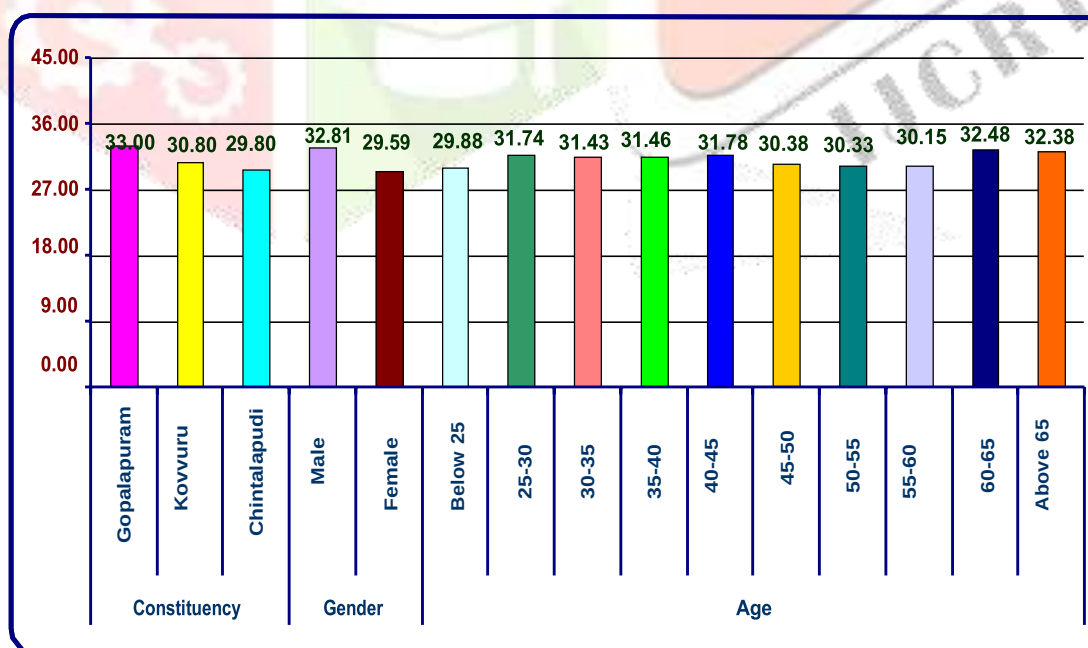


**Figure – : Mean comparison among the perceptions of respondents based on their demographic variables i.e., Caste, Religion, Marital Status, Type of Family and Educational Qualification towards Level of Political Awareness**

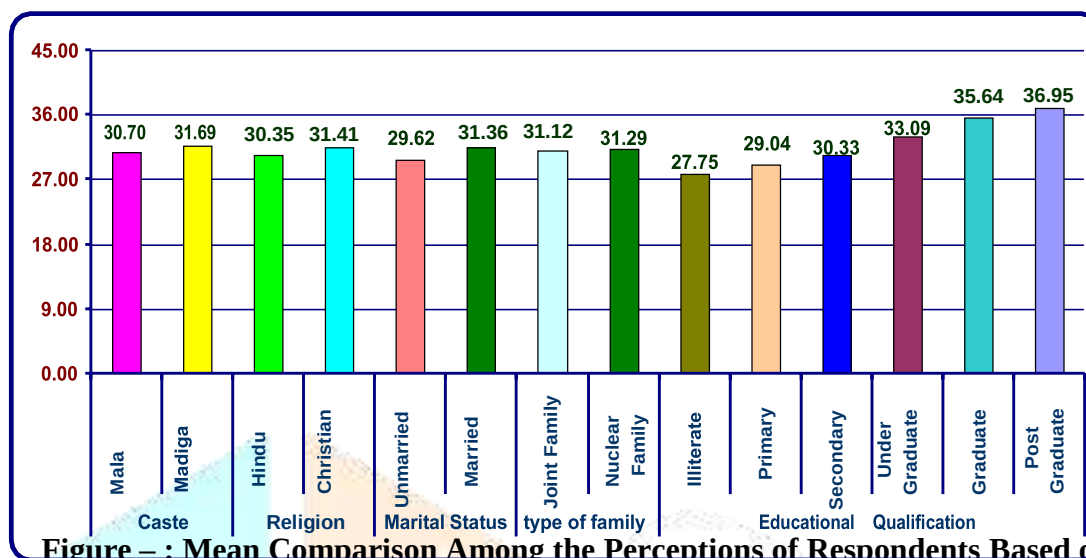


**Figure – : Mean Comparison Among the Perceptions of Respondents Based on their Demographic Variables i.e., Occupation and Monthly Income Towards Level of Political Awareness**

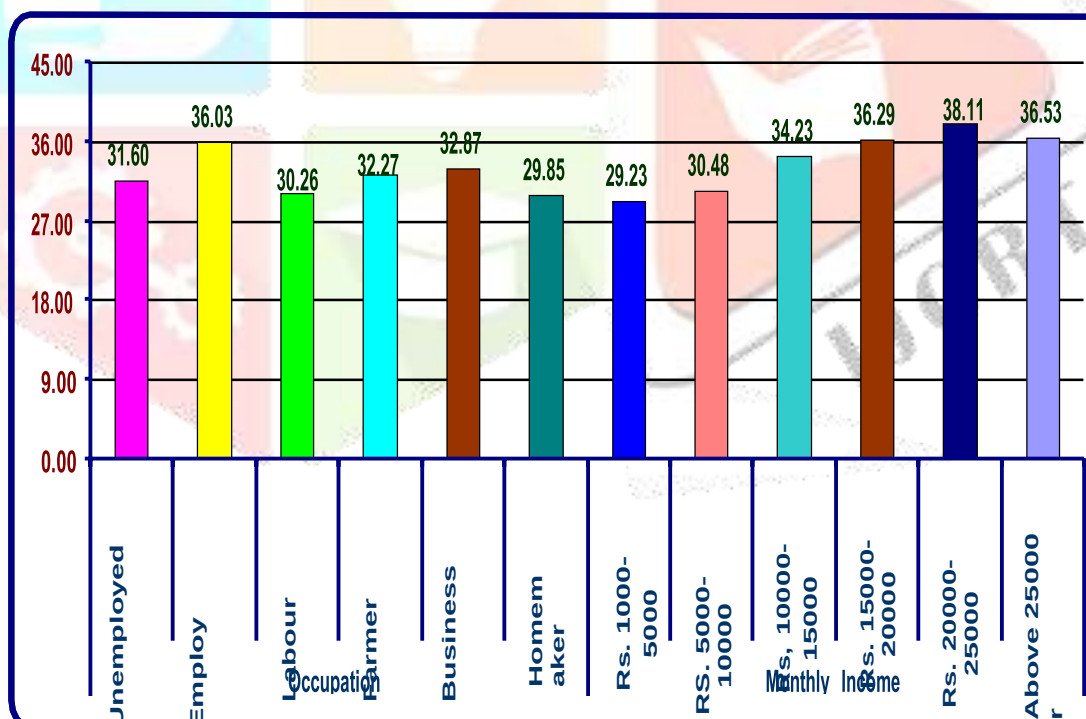


Table 4, observed that the mean perceptual scores of respondents based on their constituency with respect to Knowledge about Political Parties, the mean perceptual scores of Gopalapuram Constituency respondents was 15.51, whereas it is for Kovvuru was 16.90 and it was for Chintalapudi was 15.88 and SD values are 4.65, 4.20 and 3.63 respectively. The 'F'-value was 7.17 and the p-value was 0.00, which was significant at 0.01 level. This shows that, there is a significant difference among the perceptions of respondents and Kovvuru Constituency respondents perceived high towards Knowledge about Political Parties than that of the rest.

With respect to Gender, the mean perceptual scores of male category respondents was 17.53, whereas it is for female category respondents was 14.67 and SD values are 3.43 and 4.45 respectively. The 't'-value was 9.64 and the p-value was 0.00, which was significant at 0.01 level. This shows that, there is a significant difference between the perceptions of male and female category respondents and male category respondents perceived high towards Knowledge about Political Parties than that of the female category respondents.

With respect to Age, the mean perceptual scores of below 25 years age group respondents was 13.50, whereas it is for 25-30 years age group respondents was 16.15, it was for 30-35 years age group was 16.64, it was for 35-40 years age group was 16.06, it was for 40-45 years age group was 15.18, it was for 45-50 years age group was 15.68, it was for 50-55 years age group was 16.15, it was for 55-60 years age group was 17.13, it was for 60-65 years age group was 17.21, it was for above 65 years age group was 16.50 and SD values are 4.72, 4.35, 3.96, 4.30, 4.00, 4.87, 3.99, 3.49, 3.72 and 5.55 respectively. The 'F'-value was 2.50 and the p-value was 0.01, which was significant at 0.05 level. This shows that, there is a significant difference among the perceptions of respondents based on their age group and 60-65 years age group respondents perceived high towards Knowledge about Political Parties than that of the rest.

With respect to Caste, the mean perceptual scores of Mala category respondents were 15.82, whereas it is for Madiga category respondents was 16.37 and SD values are 4.34 and 4.08 respectively. The 't'-value was 1.76 and the p-value was 0.08, which was not significant. This shows that, there is no significant difference between the perceptions of Mala and Madiga category respondents and they perceived similar opinion towards Knowledge about Political Parties.

With respect to Religion, the mean perceptual scores of Hindu religion category respondents were 16.44, whereas it is for Christian category respondents was 16.01 and SD values are 4.02 and 4.26 respectively. The 't'-value was 1.10 and the p-value was 0.27, which was not significant. This shows that, there is no significant difference between the perceptions of Hindu and Christian religion category respondents and they perceived similar opinion towards Knowledge about Political Parties.

With respect to Marital Status, the mean perceptual scores of Unmarried category respondents were 15.54, whereas it is for Married category respondents was 16.16 and SD values are 4.16 and 4.22 respectively. The 't'-value was 1.14 and the p-value was 0.25, which was not significant. This shows that, there is no significant difference between the perceptions of Unmarried and Married category respondents and they perceived similar opinion towards Knowledge about Political Parties.

With respect to Type of family, the mean perceptual scores of Joint family category respondents were 16.93, whereas it is for nuclear category respondents was 15.05 and SD values are 3.62 and 4.66 respectively. The 't'-value was 6.10 and the p-value was 0.00, which was significant at 0.01 level. This shows that, there is a significant difference between the perceptions of Joint and Nuclear family category respondents and Joint family category respondents perceived high towards Knowledge about Political Parties than that of the rest.

With respect to Educational Qualification, the mean perceptual scores of Illiterates was 15.13, whereas it is for Primary education was 15.07, it was for Secondary Education was 14.77, it was for Under Graduates was 16.37, it was for Graduates was 18.94, and it was for Post Graduate was 19.60 and SD values are 4.27, 4.17, 4.25, 3.82, 2.67 and 2.15 respectively. The 'F'-value was 28.93 and the p-value was 0.00, which was significant at 0.01 level. This shows that, there is a significant difference among the perceptions of respondents based on their educational qualifications and Post Graduate qualified category respondents perceived high towards Knowledge about Political Parties than that of the rest.

With respect to Occupation, the mean perceptual scores of Unemployed was 17.60, whereas it is for Employed was 18.72, it was for Labour was 15.58, it was for Farmer was 17.62, it was for Business was 17.66, and it was for Home maker was 14.51 and SD values are 2.85, 2.69, 4.51, 3.10, 3.13 and 4.13 respectively. The 'F'-value was 16.54 and the p-value was 0.00, which was significant at 0.01 level. This shows that, there is a significant difference among the perceptions of respondents based on their occupation and Employed category respondents perceived high towards Knowledge about Political Parties than that of the rest.

With respect to Monthly Income, the mean perceptual scores of respondents whose monthly income was Rs.1000-5000 was 14.39, whereas it is for Rs. 5000-10000 was 16.03, it was for Rs. 10000-15000 was 18.16,

it was for Rs. 15000-20000 was 18.74, it was for Rs. 20000 - 25000 was 19.33, and it was for Above Rs. 25000 was 20.58 and SD values are 4.27, 4.04, 3.38, 2.64, 2.22 and 0.90 respectively. The 'F'-value was 25.44 and the p-value was 0.00, which was significant at 0.01 level. This shows that, there is a significant difference among the perceptions of respondents based on their monthly income and Above Rs. 25000 monthly income category respondents perceived high towards Knowledge about Political Parties than that of the rest.

**Figure – : Mean Comparison Among the Perceptions of Respondents Based on their Demographic Variables i.e., Constituency, Gender and AgeGroup Towards Knowledge About Political Parties**

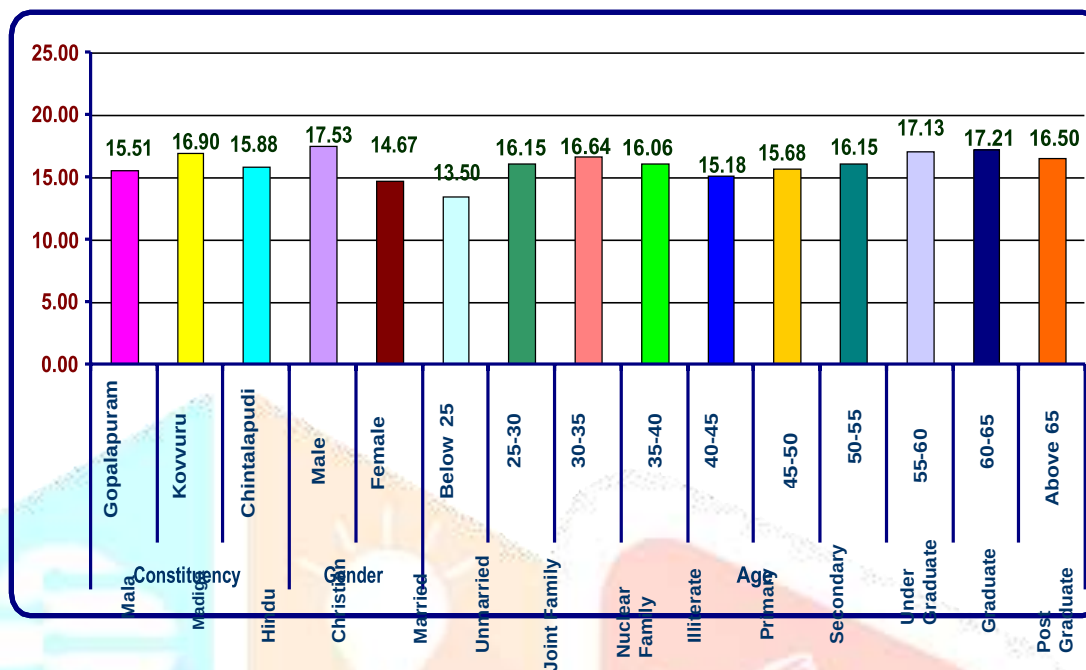
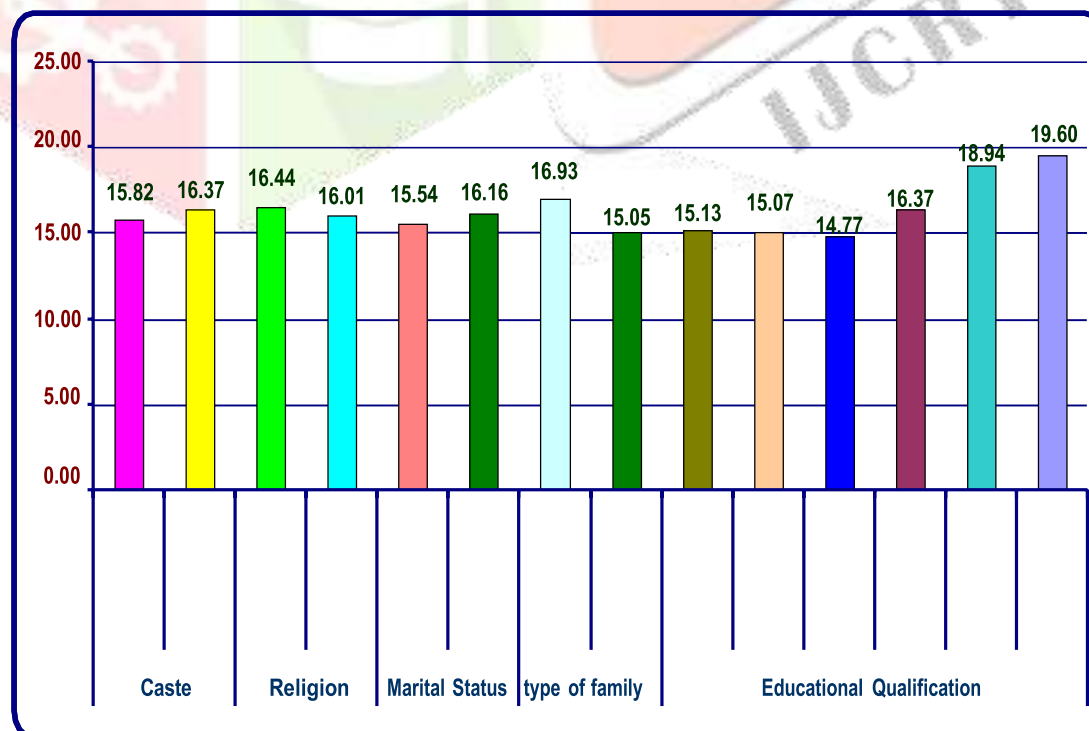


**Figure – : Mean Comparison Among the Perceptions of Respondents Based on their Demographic Variables i.e., Caste, Religion, Marital Status, Type of Family and Educational Qualification Towards Knowledge About Political Parties**



## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to determine the level of political awareness, interest, and opinion among scheduled castes, as well as the predominant form of political activity they engage in, and the barriers that hinder their involvement in politics. This analysis examines the social, economic, and political aspects that contribute to increasing the participation of scheduled castes in politics. The study also aimed to determine the specific

characteristics of social support and other support systems necessary for scheduled castes to engage in political activities. This chapter provides a summary of the findings derived from the objectives and the hypothesis claims. The suggestions and recommendations are additionally incorporated beside the conclusion. The political empowerment of scheduled castes is essential and indispensable for the progress and welfare of both the nation and the scheduled castes themselves. The population of both men and women in this country, as well as the electoral population of both men and women, is nearly same. In order to increase the representation of scheduled castes in politics, it is necessary to adopt a comprehensive and durable strategy that addresses multiple dimensions. The economic empowerment of scheduled castes was partially accomplished through a range of government programmes and interventions. Similarly, it is incumbent upon the government to ensure and mandate that political parties enhance the representation of scheduled castes in politics. By exclusively taking this action, the nation can progress towards achieving caste equality in the political arena.

#### **Item wise findings: Political Awareness**

1. It was noticed that, 50.42% of the respondents were acquired Political Awareness through reading newspapers and political magazines, whereas 49.58% were not acquire political awareness.
2. It was noticed that, 67.92% of the respondents were acquired Political Awareness through watching visual media, whereas 32.08% were not get any political awareness.
3. It was noticed that, 93.47% of the respondents were acquired Political Awareness through listening audible media, whereas 6.53% were not acquire political awareness.
4. It was noticed that, 61.53% of the respondents were acquired Political Awareness through social media, whereas 38.47% were not acquire political awareness.
5. It was noticed that, 64.17% of the respondents were acquired Political Awareness through internet browsing, whereas 35.83% were not acquire political awareness.
6. It was noticed that, 64.03% of the respondents were acquired Political Awareness through family members and peer group, whereas 35.97% were not acquire political awareness.
7. It was noticed that, 62.647% of the respondents were acquired Political Awareness through political meetings, whereas 37.36% were not acquire political awareness.
8. It was noticed that, 67.50% of the respondents were got Political Awareness through other sources, whereas 32.50% were not acquire political awareness Level of Political Awareness:
9. It was noticed that, 30.28% of the respondents expressed that, they are fully known about awareness on political parties, whereas 58.61% are partially known, 9.44% are un known and 1.67% are not interest about political parties.
10. It was noticed that, 32.36% of the respondents expressed that, they are fully known about awareness on political leaders, whereas 54.86% are partially known, 11.11% are un known and 1.67% are not interest.

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