

A Spatial Analysis of Political Participation in Telangana State, India

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author KV designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author AKL guided and edited the study and managed the analyses of the study. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Telangana state is a newly formed state in India. It is the 29th state and was formed on 2nd June, 2014. It was part of erstwhile Andhra Pradesh state. The lack of political participation from the Telangana regions in state of Andhra Pradesh was the major cause for demanding separate state hood for Telangana. The Geopolitical analysis expresses that the heads of the political parties and governing portfolios was only from Rayalaseema and Andhra region. The regional disparities were one of the major causes of discrimination among the regions. It is worthwhile to mention the political dynamics within Telangana and give the scenario of political participation among different regions of Telangana. The study of Zilla Parishad elections (ZP) is a micro-level political participation of people in Telangana as with Panchayat Raj elections in different states of India. Geographical Information System (GIS) was employed to analyse the spatial patterns of

Geopolitical participation of people in ZP elections.

Panchayat Raj elections were held 4 times in Telangana, when it was part of erstwhile Andhra Pradesh. The research paper analyse the political dynamics of Panchayat Raj as democracy of ZPTC's. There are 443 ZPTC's in Telangana and the three major political parties like Indian National Congress (INC), Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Telangana Rastra Samiti (TRS) plays the significant role in the Geo-politics of Telangana.

Keywords: Spatial study; geo-politics; region; political participation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The spatial manifestation of socio-economic phenomena is an integral reality and an imprint of human behaviour in geographic space. Its complexity is conceived in terms of the constant confrontation of man with nature. Man, being dynamic, moulds his physical environment to his changing requirements. In compliance with this, the spatial heterogeneity is an obvious historic reality. The spatial differentiation based on the possible homogeneity is reflected in the multifaceted geographic frame, indicative of the fact that society plays a greater role in the spatial processes. The space in geography is one of three dimensional space in which the intensity of phenomena is considered as the third dimension besides the territorial two dimensions. Alayer [1] expressed the space in geography, according to him geographical space is an objective, universal and cognizable form of existence of material geographical formations and objects within the geosphere.

Taylor [2] discussed the relationship between the space and development. According to him "the role of space in the development process cannot be discussed without considering the basic question of development itself. Spatial development theory and practice cannot be divorced from questions such as-"what kind of development and development for whom?" Simhadri [3] explains how the society plays a great role in the 'Spatial Process' and it enlighten 'Spatial Development' as a fundamental derivative of much debated concepts of 'space' and 'development'. It also analyses, how the society is influenced by the development and how for the development of that society, they invest their vested interest in other aspects of this society. In spite of that, the small minority of the society is gaining control over each and every aspect of socio-economic development, obviously, un-even development is an existing reality.

The political participation is the involvement at various levels in the political system. Involvement

expresses itself in various kinds of overt or manifest political activities. According to Huntington and Nelson's [4] 'Political participation' means, a simply an activity of private citizen diligent to influence governmental decision-making'. According to them "knowledge about politics, interest in politics, desire for contesting elections, and efficiency, perceptions of the relevance of the political participation and all these may often be closely related to political action'. Mathew [5] defines political participation as 'all behavior through which people directly express their political actions'.

According to Verba et al. [6] political participation refers to those legal activities of private citizens that is designed to affect governmental decision making. Rush and Althoff [7] sees political participation as "the involvement of individual at various levels in the political system. According to Finer [8], political participation means share in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly, in the formation and/or in the execution of public policies. Merriam [9] said 'comprising all those activities that one way or another, are intended to affect the working of and outcomes of the political system'

The book 'Political Geography' by Prescott [10], comprehensively explained 'the scope of political geography and methods which the political geographer should employ. He highlighted the three main growing points of the subject. They are boundaries and frontiers a long with a principal focus and these are re-examined in terms of the recent trend towards behavioral analysis in Geography. 'Prescott specially considered on 'Electoral Geography' as there appear to be dangers, that the latest fashions in the field will distort the subject. Prescott emphasizes that the responsibility of the Geographer in the field of Political Geography is the need to describe the Pattern of votes cast in elections and plebiscites, and to explain, as far as he is able, why the particular pattern developed.

According to George [11], the Panchayat Raj election is an integral part of the democratic system in India. It represents the dynamism of democratic forces at the grassroots level in the polity. The process of panchayat election is a miniature of electoral process at state level. Rajput and Meghe [12], the electorate participates in the process of these elections with a sense of involvement which they display in the electoral process of the Parliament and the State Assemblies. Therefore, the study of the electoral process of the Panchayat Raj institutions is an indicative of the mood and temper of the electorate as that of the higher level legislative bodies.

According to Panchayat Raj Act, each district is divided into a number of territorial constituencies. The Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency (ZPTC) consists of a population of over 50,000. The elections for the ZPTCs is held on a party basis. The elected members of these ZPTCs choose one among them as the Zilla Parishad Chairperson. Thus, the elections to ZPTCs are direct, and the elections of Chairpersons comes through indirect voting Bijoy [13].

2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

1. To understand the political dynamics of panchayat raj elections in Telangana state for three different elections of 2001, 2006 and 2014
2. Identifying the changing patterns of different mainstream parties.
3. Examining the factors influencing voters.
4. Mapping of three panchayat raj elections for graphical presentation.
5. Primary data was collected by employing a questionnaire to various households and political leaders.
6. Random stratified sampling technique is applied for collecting 312 samples based on the proportionality of different communities in six villages.
7. Secondary data for different Panchayat raj elections was collected from state election commission.
8. Scientific statistical technique such as standard deviation (SD) method was applied to generate real values.
9. Geographical Information System (GIS) tool was used for mapping purpose.

3. ANALYSIS

In Telangana, the ZPTC elections were held and the results were declared for 441 ZPTCs in 2001

and for 443 ZPTCs in 2006. In 2014, the elections were held for 443 ZPTCs but the results were declared only for 441 ZPTCs; the two ZPTCs from Khammam district were withheld due to court order.

3.1 Percent Poll

The poll percentage increased from 2001 to 2014. In 2001, the percent of poll was 72% and it increased to 75.64% in 2006 and it is raised to 80.33% in 2014. The reason for increased poll percentage is due to voters awareness. In 2001, the less poll percentage of ZPTCs were distributed around North-West and South-West parts of Telangana comprising Mahabubnagar district and some ZPTCs in Adilabad district. The average poll percentage recorded was 72.4% to 79.02% was witnessed in 170 ZPTCs in Telangana (i.e.) they were concentrated in the central parts of Telangana. The high poll percentage between 79.03% and 85.65% was witnessed in 50 ZPTCs, and was recorded in South Eastern part of Telangana. The very high poll percentage which is greater than 85.65% was recorded in 8 ZPTCs in Telangana (Fig. 1).

In 2006 ZPTC elections, the very less poll percentage which is less than 65.77% was witnessed in 68 ZPTCs; and mostly seen in North-west and Northern parts of Telangana. The less voting percentage of votes is between 68.56% and 76.34% was recorded in 158 ZPTCs which spread over Telangana. The average poll percentage is between 76.35% and 84.13% which is recorded in 165 ZPTCs in Telangana, they are distributed in the Central part of Telangana. But the high poll percentage between 84.14% and 91.92% was recorded in 30 ZPTCs and very high poll percentage was recorded in 8 ZPTCs in Telangana, and they are found in Southern part of Telangana, and a few were scattered over Northern part of Telangana (Fig. 2).

In 2014 ZPTC elections, very less poll percentage (i.e.) less than 75.37%, was recorded in 67 ZPTCs which were distributed in South-west parts and North-east parts of Telangana. The less poll percentage is between 75.38% and 81.69% was witnessed in 132 ZPTCs, distributed in South-west and Western parts of Telangana. Average poll percentage is between 81.7% and 88.01% was recorded in 181 ZPTCs; which distributed in Western and Northern parts of Telangana. The high poll percentage is between 88.02% to 94.34% witnessed in 60 ZPTCs were

scattered all around Telangana and very high poll percentage which is higher than 94.34% was recorded in only one ZPTC which is present in Nalgonda district of Telangana (Fig. 3).

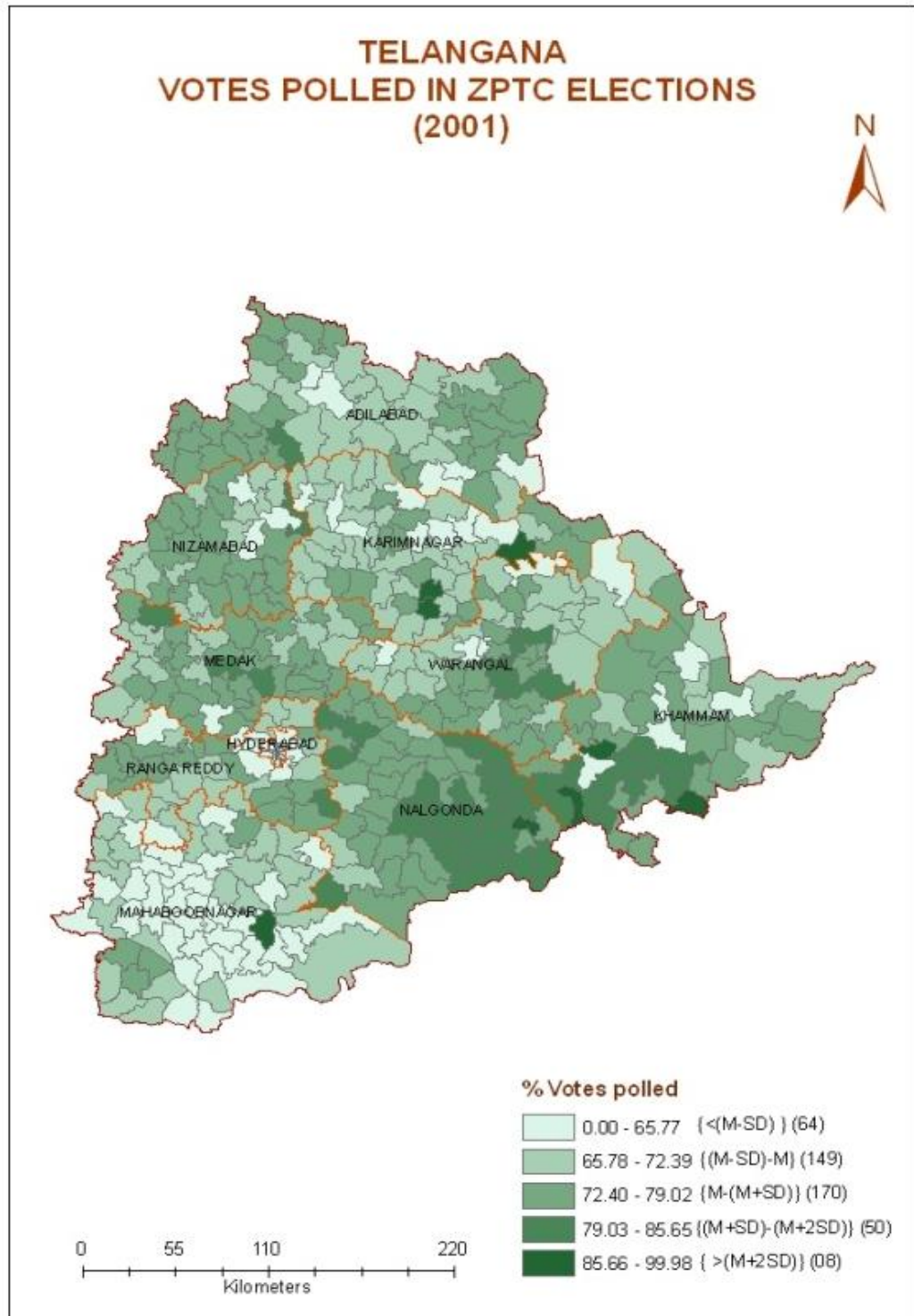


Fig. 1. Votes polled in ZPTC Elections, 2001

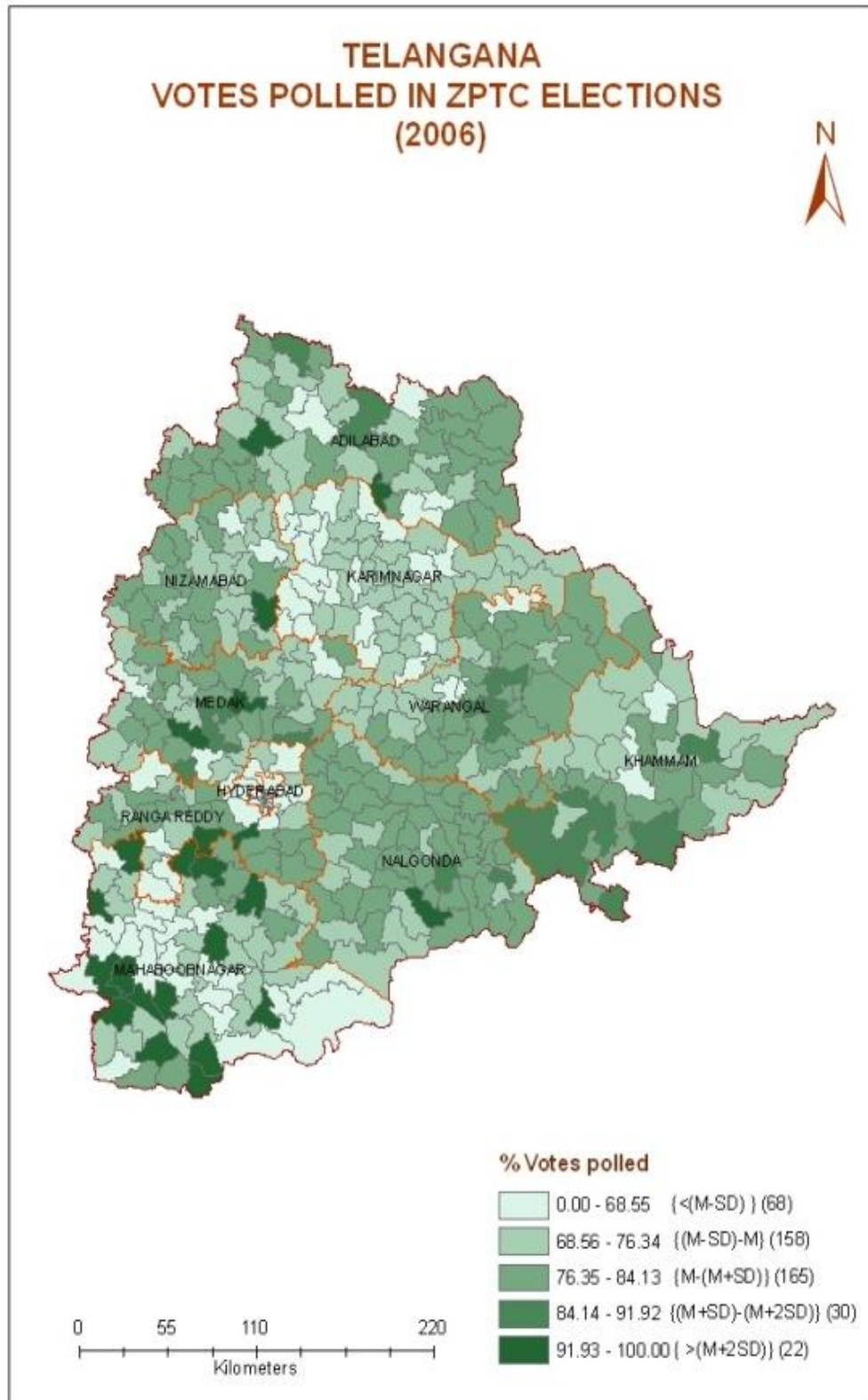


Fig. 2. Votes polled in ZPTC Elections, 2006

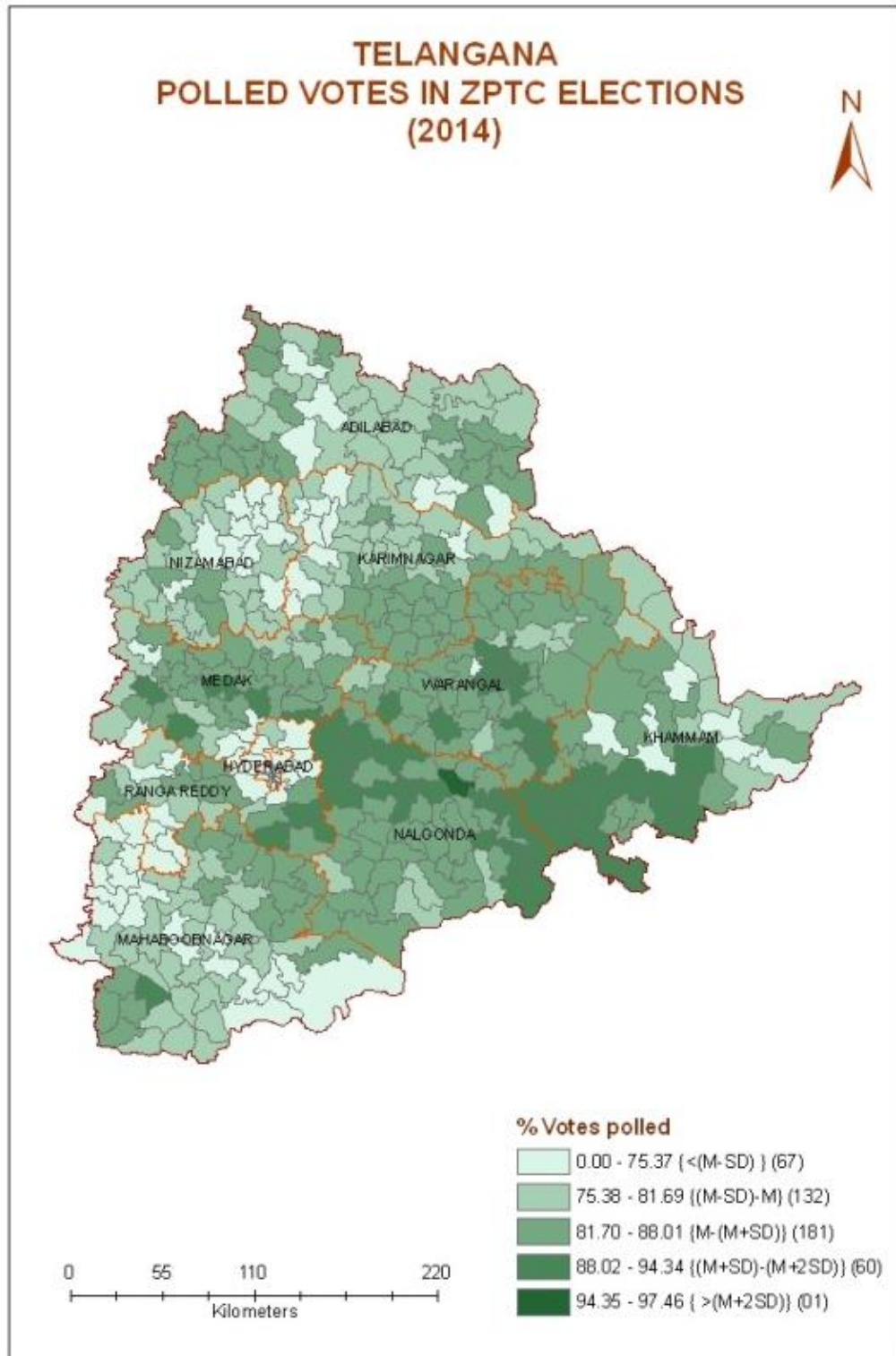


Fig. 3. Votes polled in ZPTC Elections, 2014

Fig. 1-3. Spatial pattern of poll percentage in Panchayat Raj Elections of Telangana, 2001, 2006 & 2014

Source: State Election Commission of Telangana

3.2 Vote Share of Political Parties

The political dynamics of Telangana is examined based on percent votes gained by different political parties. In Telangana there are three parties which played major role in the political contestant and votes gained as well as number of winners and runners. The INC party gained 32.45% of valid votes in 2001, the proportion increased to 39.21% which was the highest share of votes in 2006; while in 2014 it has come down to 36.14% it is due to political raise of TRS party. The TDP party gained the highest percentage of votes as 35.38% in 2001; it slightly rose to 36.5% in 2006. The TDP share during 2014 ZPTC elections sudden down fall as TRS swept the vote bank in Telangana. It is noted that, 'Andhra Pradesh state Re-organization" bill was passed by the Parliament in March, 2014, hence the demand for separate statehood for Telangana was fulfilled and has given bust to raise the vote percentage for this party in Telangana during 2014 ZPTC elections.

3.3 Party Winners

The party-wise winners in Telangana in 2001, 2006 and 2014 ZPTC elections indicates that, in 2001, the INC party won 37.41% of total 441 ZPTCs during the year, and it increased to 47.3% for 443 ZPTCs in 2006. In 2014, the INC share was declined to 39.73% of 443 ZPTCs (Note: The results of 2 ZPTCs (0.45%) in Khammam district were withheld). TDP won 35.37% of seats in 2001, it slightly raised to 38.37% in 2006 and it has suddenly gone down during 2014 elections with 11.96%. Though the TRS party won 19.27% of seats in 2001, yet their seats securing percentage came down to 5.64% in 2006 elections, again rose to 43.34% in 2014 elections.

In 2001 ZPTC elections, the INC party got the highest of 37.41% (165) winners. The TDP party won Northern, Eastern and Southern parts of Telangana with a percentage of 35.37% (156); while TRS party gained 19.27% (85) specifically in the Central part of Telangana (Fig. 6). In 2006 ZPTC elections, the INC gained the highest percentage of ZPTCs with 47.4% (210) achieved from South, South East and Western parts of Telangana. The TDP party winners got 37.92% of ZPTCs with 168 in number gained from North and North Eastern parts of Telangana. The TRS party winners, who achieved only 5.87% (26) of ZPTCs in this year, found from Central parts of Telangana (Fig. 7).

In 2014 ZPTC Elections in Telangana, the highest ZPTCs achieved by TRS party was 192 ZPTCs and it accounts for 43.54%, which was distributed over the complete Northern and Western portion of Telangana. The second rank goes to INC party who got 176 ZPTCs which contributes to 39.91%, it spread over South Eastern and some Western regions of Telangana. The TDP party winners gained 53 ZPTCs constituting to 12.02% that come from North Eastern and Eastern parts are scattered in some Western parts of Telangana (Fig. 8).

3.4 ZP Chairpersons

The Members of the Zilla Parishad choose one among them as the Zilla Parishad (ZP) Chairperson/Chairman. In 2001, the Zilla Parishad (ZP) Chairman of Adilabad, Rangareddy, Mahabubnagar, and Warangal districts was won by TDP, while the newly established party TRS won two ZP Chairman positions of Karimnagar and Nizamabad districts. The INC party got three ZP chairmanships at Medak, Nalgonda and Khammam districts respectively. In 2006, the INC party got the highest number of chairman's with a total of 6 ZP's in Karimnagar, Medak, Mahabubnagar, Nalgonda, Warangal and Khammam districts. This time, TRS party got only one ZP chairman (i.e.) Nizamabad district; while Adilabad and RnagaReddy ZP chairman was won by TDP party. In 2014, The TRS party swiped almost all ZP chairman positions, except Nalgonda and Khammam districts, where INC and TDP parties attained their identity.

3.5 Voting Pattern

The voting pattern for different political parties is examined based on primary data collected from selected villages. The number of times of casting votes to different parties indicates the voting behavior of the households. It is noted that the Panchayat Raj elections introduced in 1995 continued in 2001, 2006 and 2014.

In Sarpanch elections, 312 households polled 1,563 votes. On the average each household polled 5 votes. In that, the INC party got 55.4% votes from these samples, followed by TDP (15.52%), TRS (13.63%), CPI (M) (12.06%), BJP (1.63%), CPI (1.57%) and other parties gained 0.19%. In MPTC elections, the INC party secured 49.61% of total 1028 votes, followed by TRS (19.79%), TDP (18.03%), CPI(M) (9.36%), BJP (1.95%), CPI (0.97%) and Other parties achieved 0.29%. In ZPTC elections, INC party got 50.3%

out of total 1,016 votes, followed by TRS (19.49%), TDP (17.62%), CPI (M) (9.35%), BJP (1.97%), CPI (0.98%) and others with 0.3% respectively. In Assembly elections, the voting pattern turned towards INC party which secured

54.03% votes from the total of 1,563 votes polled as per the samples, followed by TDP (16.33%), TRS (14.66%) and CPI (M) with 11.59% respectively. The same voting pattern repeated in MP elections also.

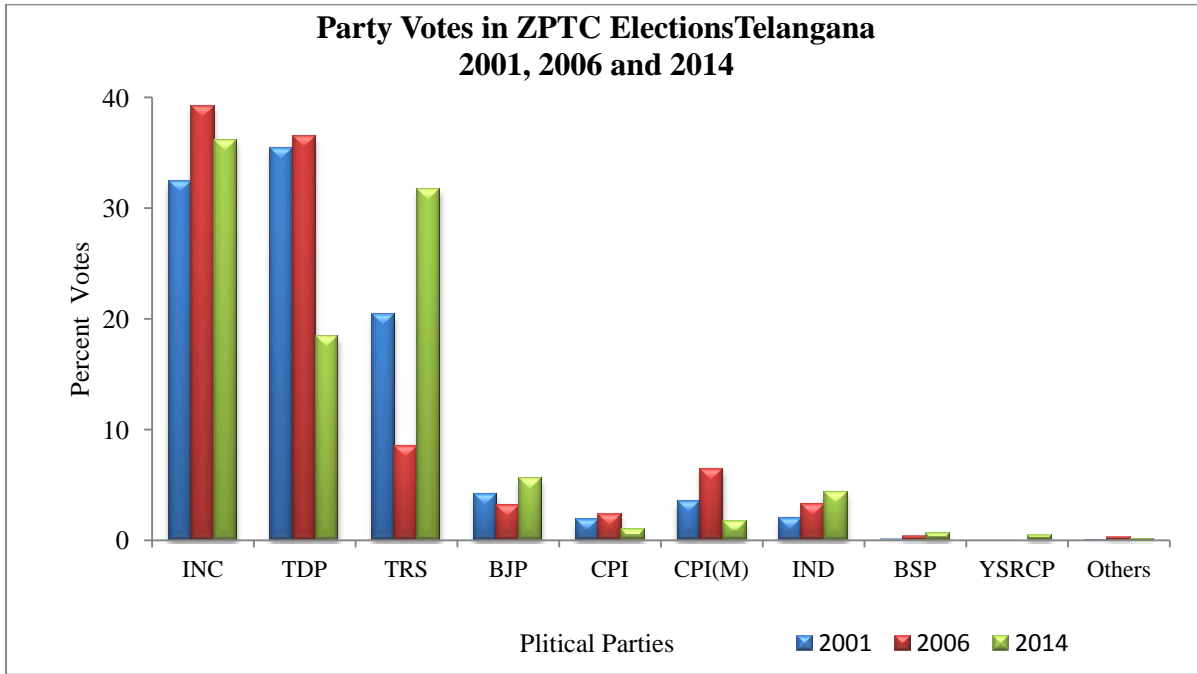


Fig. 4. Party votes in ZPTC Elections in Telangana 2001, 2006 & 2014

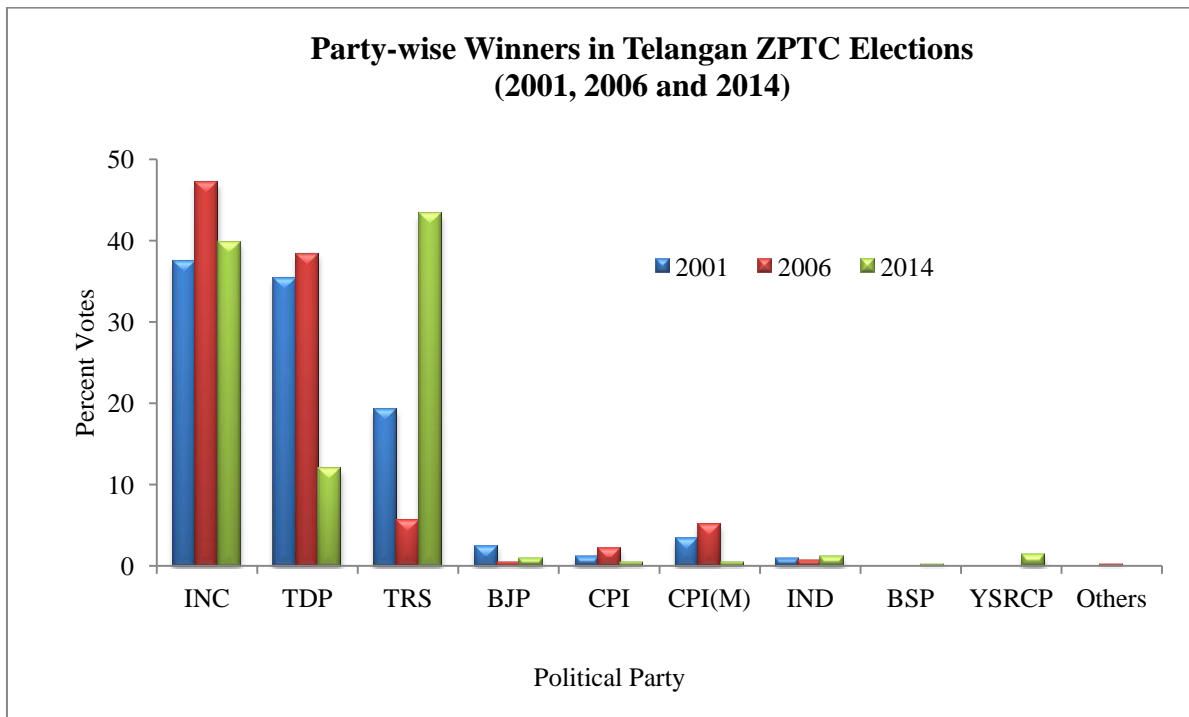


Fig. 5. Party-wise winners in Telangana ZPTC Elections-2001, 2006 & 2007

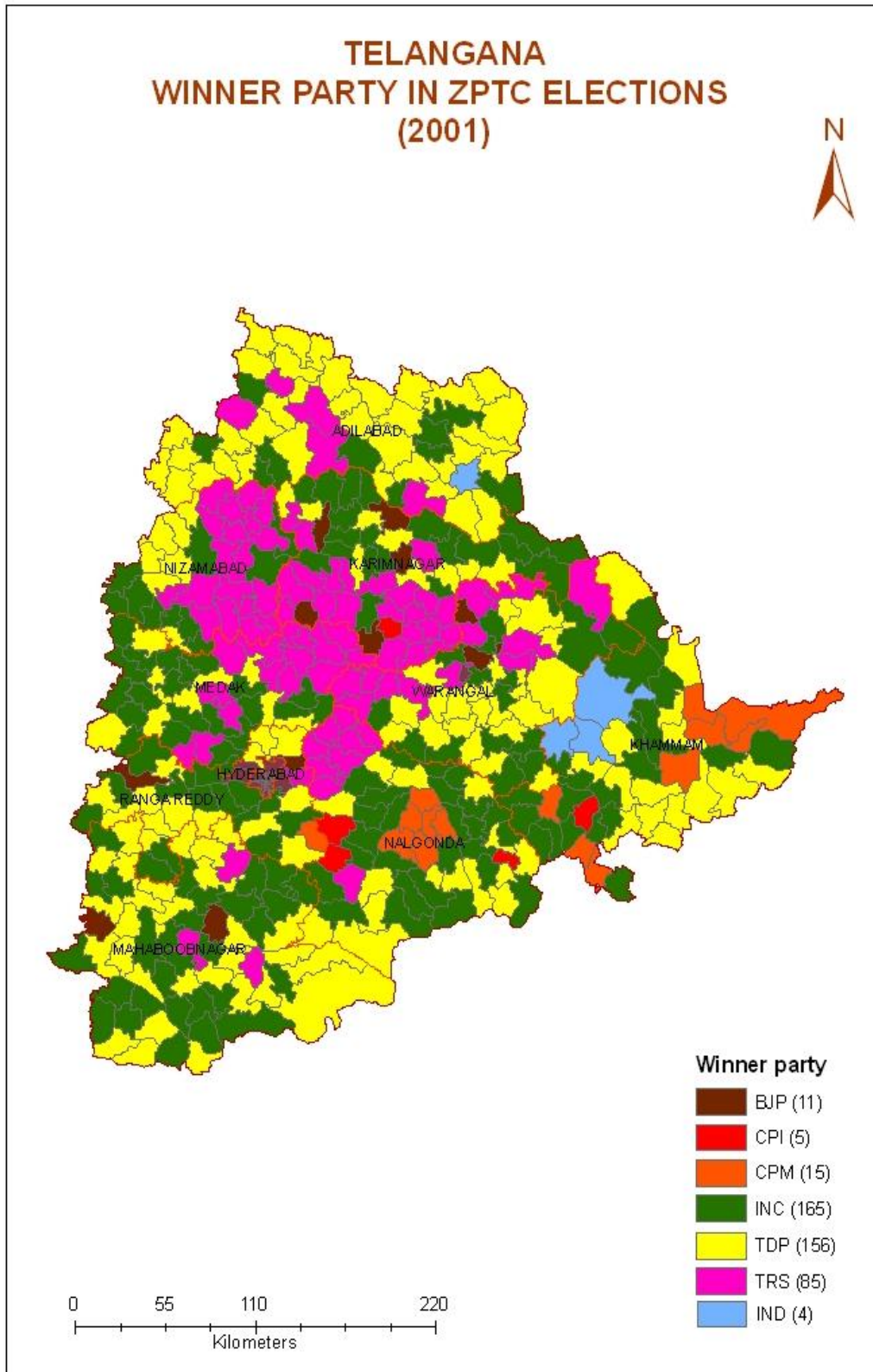


Fig. 6. Winners party in Telangana ZPTC Elections, 2001

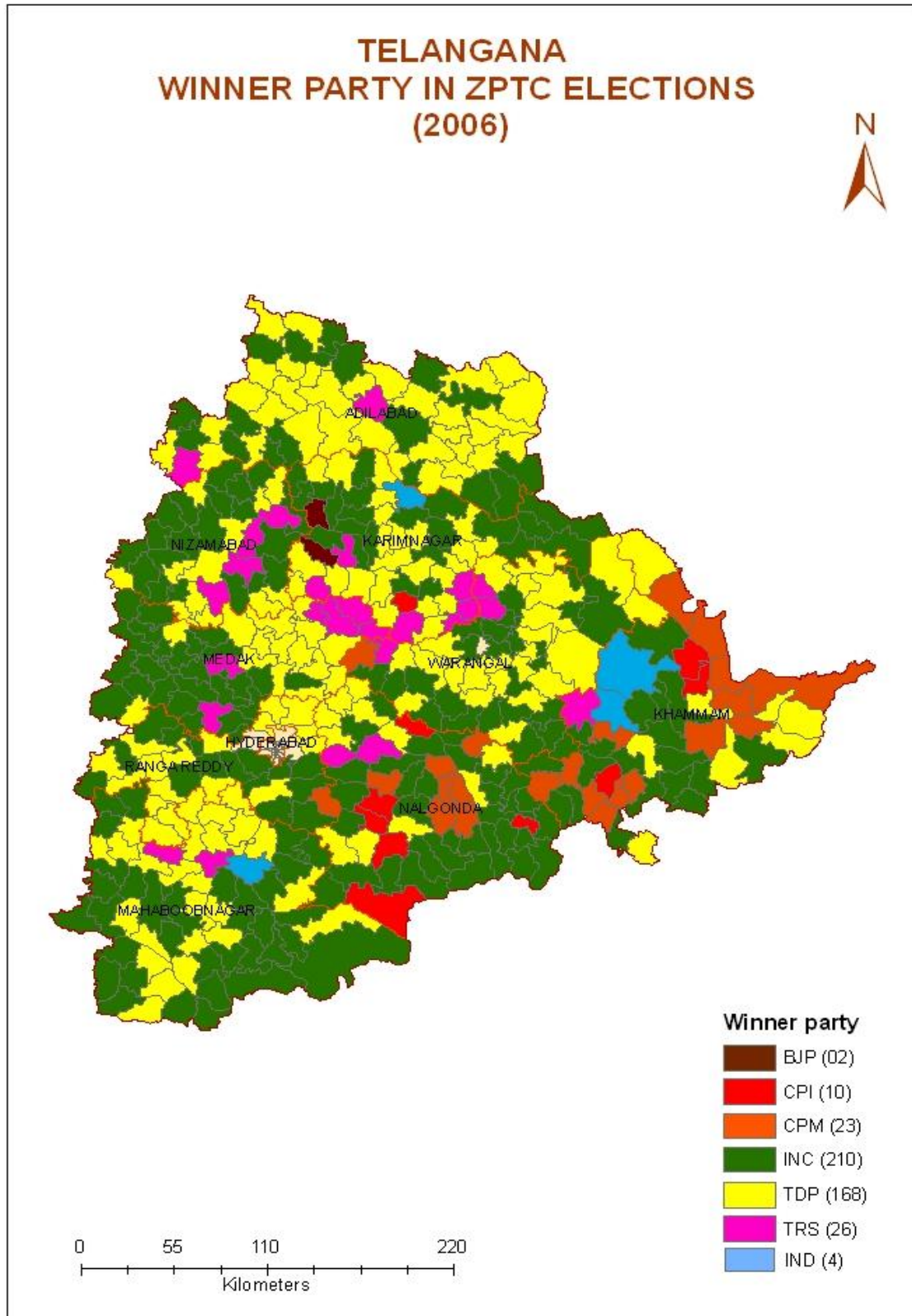


Fig. 7. Winners party in Telangana ZPTC elections, 2006

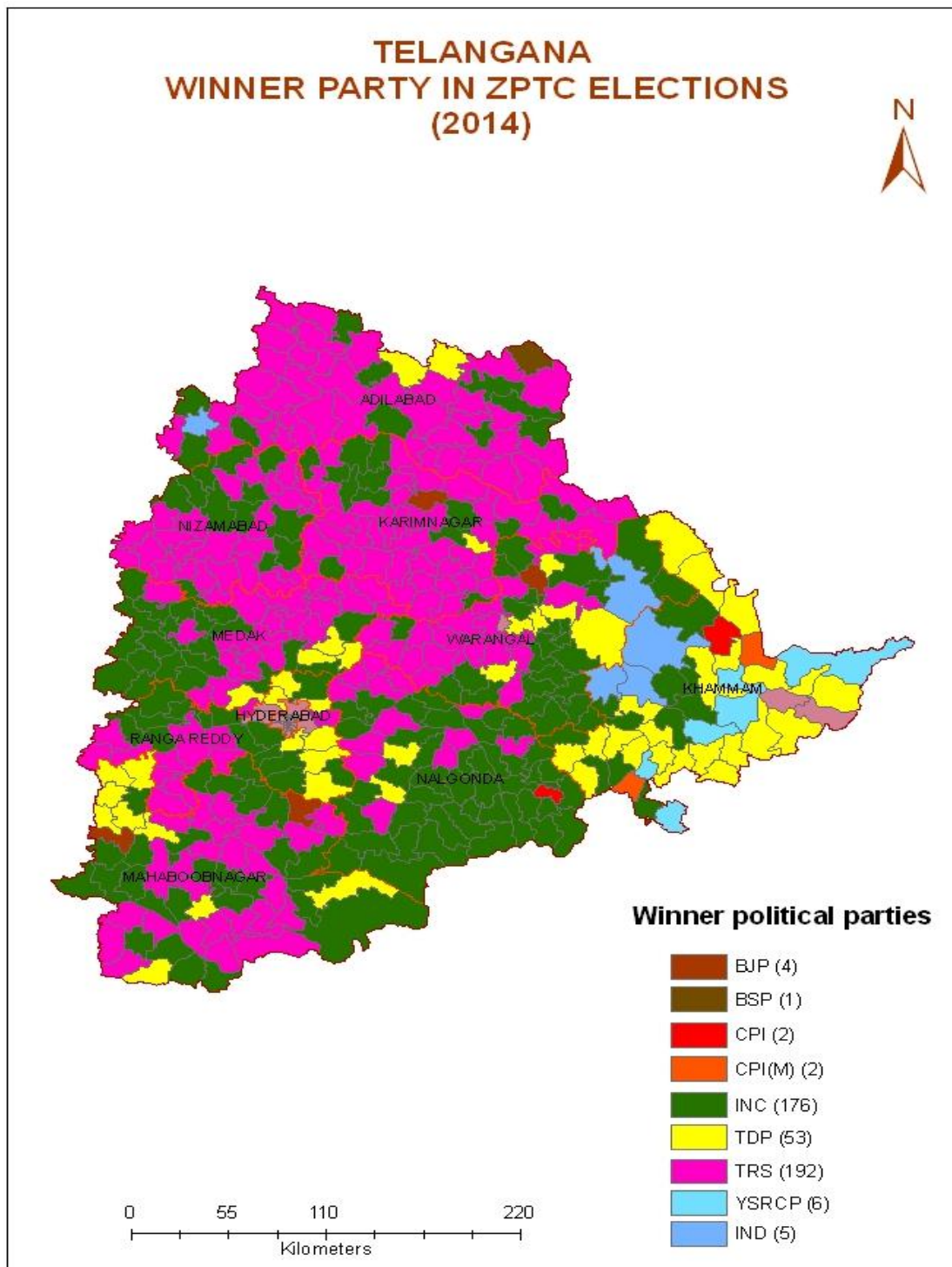


Fig. 8. Winners party in Telangana ZPTC Elections, 2014

Fig. 6-8. Spatial pattern of ZPTC winners in Telangana, ZPTCs wise 2001, 2006 & 2014
Source: State Election Commission of Telangana

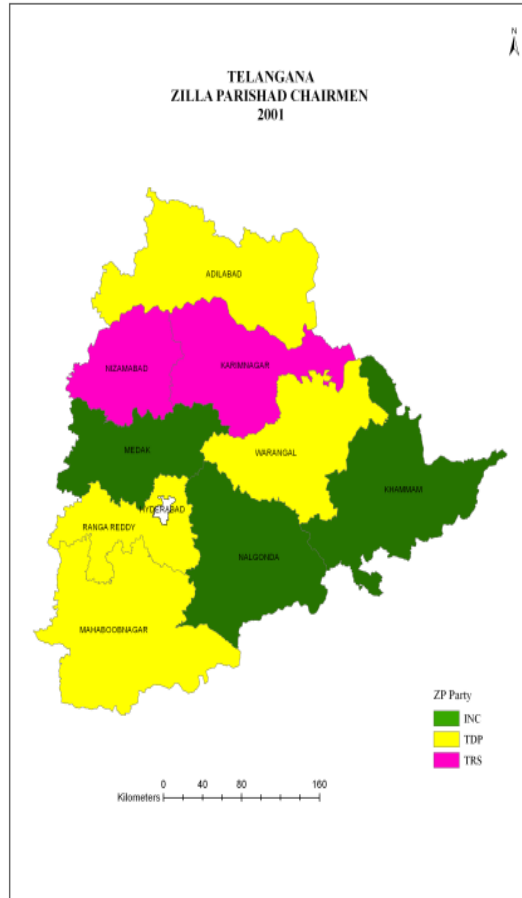


Fig. 9. ZP Chairmen, 2001

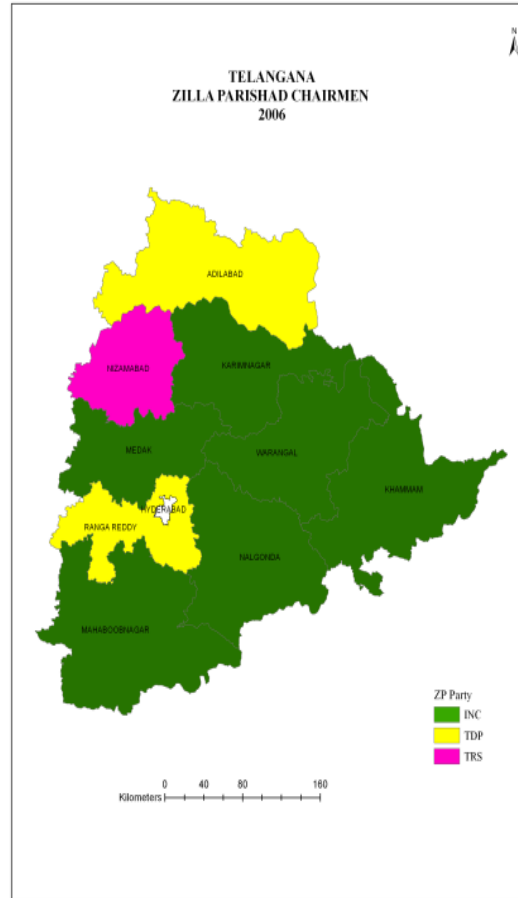


Fig. 10. ZP Chairmen, 2006

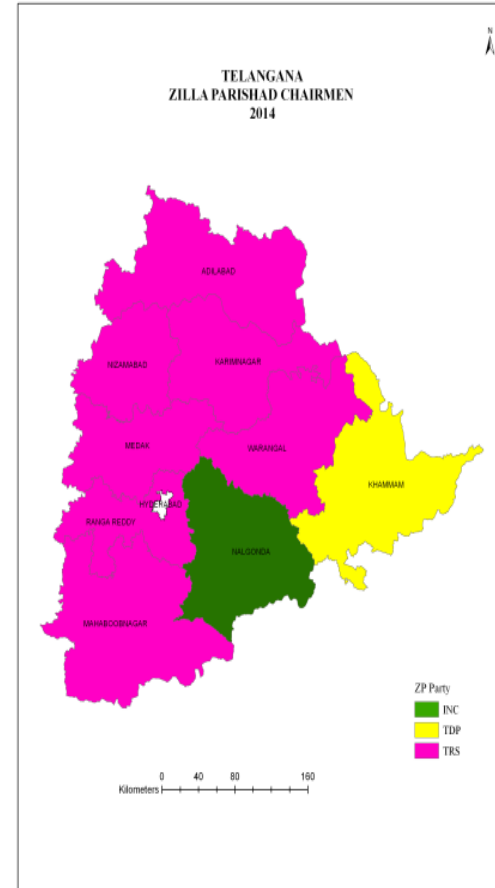


Fig. 11. ZP Chairmen, 2014

Fig. 9-11. Spatial pattern of ZP Chairmen of Telangana, 2001, 2006 & 2014
Source: State Election Commission of Telangana

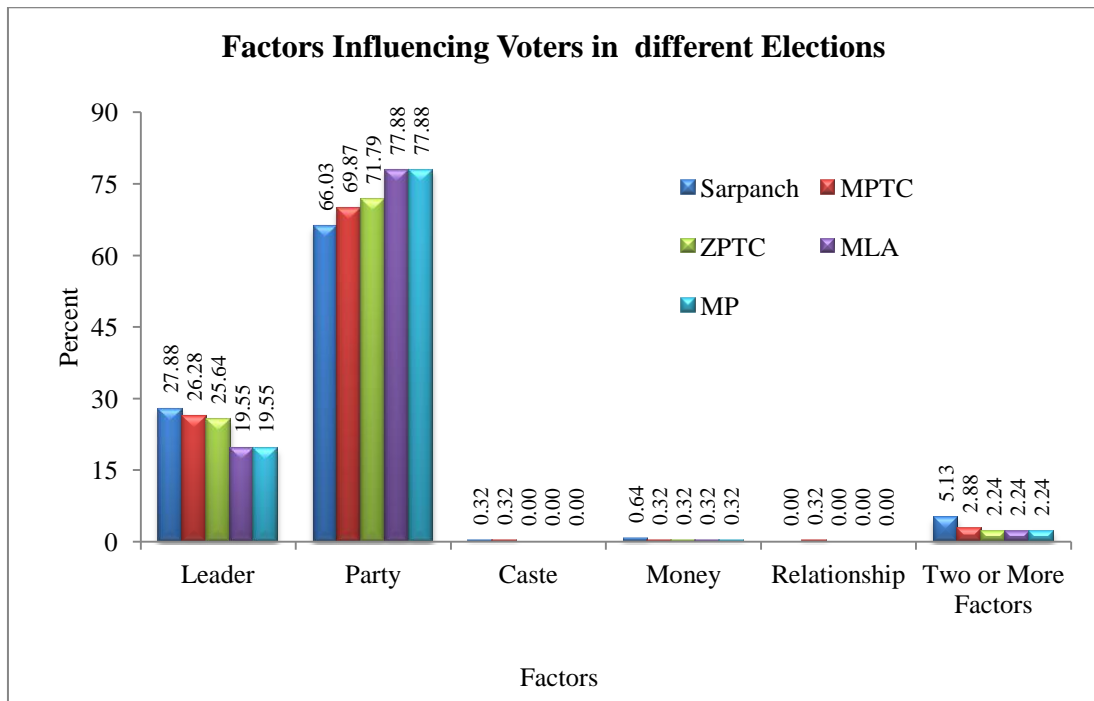


Fig. 12. Factors influencing voter in different elections

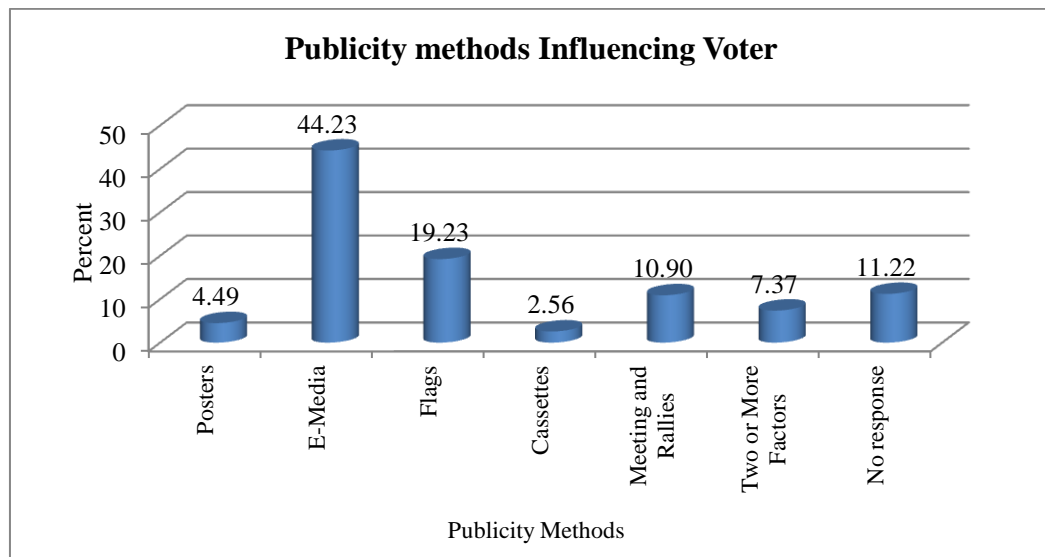


Fig. 13. Publicity methods influencing voters

Table 1. The number of times of casting votes in different elections

Election type	Total votes polled	INC	TDP	TRS	BJP	CPI	CPI(M)	Other
Sarpach	1592	55.40	15.52	13.63	1.63	1.57	12.06	0.19
MPTC	1026	49.61	18.03	19.79	1.95	0.97	9.36	0.29
ZPTC	1016	50.30	17.62	19.49	1.97	0.98	9.35	0.30
MLA	1562	54.03	16.33	14.66	1.79	1.41	11.59	0.19
MP	1572	53.88	16.41	14.76	1.72	1.34	11.70	0.19

Source: Field survey, 2014

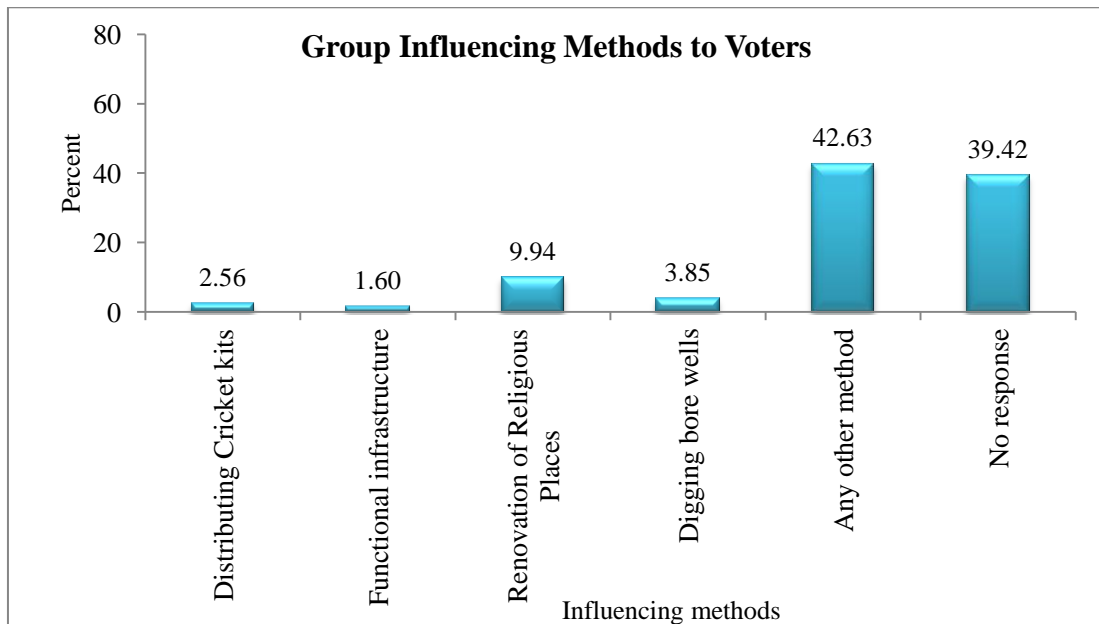


Fig. 14. Group Influencing methods to voters

3.6 Factors Influencing Voters

There are different factors which influence voters and they may be external and internal. They are a few factors identified by field survey. They are Leader, Party, Caste, Religion, Obligation, Money, Relationship, Publicity, Promises, Associates, Threat, Friendship, Ideology, Charisma and Material Inducement. Sometimes two or more factors combine together and will impact the voters which vary from one election to another. The survey results explain that in all type of elections, the party played a major role in influencing the voters. The Sarpanch elections are exempted from the party basis; however the party indirectly influences these elections too. The influencing factors on the voters almost the same in all the three spatial units.

The Fig. 12 shows that the global influencing factors influence in all the samples. In Sarpanch elections, the Party played the highest influencing role on voters is 66.03%, followed by Leadership (27.88%) and two or more factors influenced 5.13% of householders. However, money played the highest role in Sarpach elections in comparison with other elections like ZPTC, MPTC, MLA and MP. The money impact on voter is 0.64% and Caste impact is 0.32% in Sarpach elections, followed by an average of 0.32% impact on other type of elections. In MPTC elections; Party impact on voter is 69.87%, followed by Leadership impact on 26.28%, two or more factors influenced 2.88%

and Caste with 0.32%. Relationship influenced 0.32% of voters in these elections. In ZPTC elections; Party influenced 71.79% on voters, followed by Leadership with 25.64% and two or more factors (2.24%). In MLA and MP elections, Party played a higher role than the leadership impact. Here, party influenced 77.88% voters, followed by Leadership (19.55%) and two or more factors influenced 2.24% votes and publicity and promises also played a little impact on educated people.

3.7 Publicity Method of Influence

The publicity methods are the form of communication sent to voters by different political parties are, Posters, E-media (TV, Social network sites etc.), Flags, Cassettes, Meetings and Rallies etc. Out of total 312 samples, E-media influenced a higher percentage (44.23%), as most of the houses were connected with Television, through which political knowledge improved. The next prominent method of influencing voters is by flags (19.23%), Meetings and Rallies (10.9%) and Posters (4.49%); while two or more publicity methods influenced is recorded as 11.22%.

3.8 Methods for Influencing the Groups

There are methods to influence the groups of people which also make an impact on a person and they are renovation of religious places, distribution of clothes, functional infrastructure,

digging of bore hole etc. The other methods include distribution of money and other forms, like playing kits etc.

Out of a total of 312 samples any other method only influenced the highest of 42.63 per cent. The voters have directly accepted that the money is being distributed for one colony or one group. Among group influencing method; renovation of religious places which constitutes 9.94%, followed by digging bore wells (3.85%), Distribution of clothes (2.56%) and functional infrastructure distribution which accounted 1.6%. The majority of the households kept quiet while asking this question; they are also grouped in 'no responded' category which are 39.42%.

3. CONCLUSION

Political parties and the elections play an important role in any democracy. Political dynamics in Telangana has changed from 2001 after formation of TRS party. The political equation first seen in central parts of Telangana and later it was spread to the entire state. The spatial analysis was done to understand the frontiers of political parties during different time periods. During 2001 ZPTC elections, the percentage of votes to different political parties indicate that, the TDP gained the highest votes followed by INC. In 2006 ZPTC elections, INC party secured the highest vote percentage followed by TDP, the regime of TRS party emerged during this time. In 2014 elections, the TRS party tremendously increased its vote percentage and INC party is placed in second position. The analysis of winners in 2001 ZPTC elections state that the TDP had the highest percentage of ZPTCs followed by INC. During 2006 ZPTC elections, TDP winners secured the first position followed by INC party. While in 2014 elections, the TRS winner tremendously increased and secured the first rank with their highest winners followed by INC party and TDP was placed in 3rd position. The voting pattern indicates that, the INC party gained the maximum vote bank in this spatial unit, followed by TDP and TRS.

Adilabad, Rangareddy, Warangal and Mahabubnagar districts ZPP chairmen were won by TDP, while the INC party won three ZPP chairmen (i.e.) Medak, Nalgonda and Khammam districts and the remaining two ZPP chairmen were won by the TRS party in 2001. During 2006

ZPP elections the INC party which secured six ZPP Chairmen i.e Karimnagar, Medak, Mahabubnagar, Nalgonda, Warangal and Khammam districts; TDP got two ZPP chairmen viz. Adilabad and Rangareddy districts and TRS party got one ZPP chairmen i.e Nizamabad district. In 2014 ZPP elections TRS party won seven ZPP chairmen (i.e.) Adilabad, Karimnagar, Nizamabad, Medak, Rangareddy, Mahabubnagar and Warangal districts; while TDP and INC got one each ZPP chairmen i.e Khammam and Nalgonda districts.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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