

From Mainstream to Alternative: The Role Of Ideological Coalitions In Telangana's Political Transformation

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Abstract

This study examines the role of ideological coalitions and the emergence of alternative politics in Telangana's political transformation through a quantitative, analytical approach. By analyzing voter behavior, electoral performance, and the impact of ideological alliances, the study identifies key factors driving the shift away from traditional political dominance. The research incorporates primary data from 150 respondents, including voters, political analysts, and party representatives, alongside secondary data such as election results and party manifestos. Statistical tools like regression analysis, correlation studies, and sentiment analysis were employed to assess patterns and trends. Findings indicate that leadership and governance (38%) and welfare policies (30%) were the most influential factors, while ideological alliances (20%) played a secondary role. The study also highlights a growing voter preference for performance-based governance over rigid ideological commitments, particularly among younger and urban voters. These insights contribute to political science and regional studies by offering empirical evidence on voter realignment and alternative political movements in India. The research underscores the need for further studies on the long-term sustainability of emerging parties and the role of digital media in shaping public opinion.

Keywords: *Alternative Politics, Ideological Coalitions, Voter Behavior, Political Transformation, Telangana Elections*

I. Introduction

Telangana, India's youngest state, was formed on June 2, 2014, following a prolonged movement for statehood. The political landscape of Telangana is shaped by a combination of historical grievances, regional identity, and evolving ideological coalitions. The struggle for separate statehood was driven by perceptions of economic and political neglect by the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh government. This sentiment led to the rise of the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS), which played a pivotal role in achieving statehood and later emerged as the dominant political force in the region. Post-statehood, Telangana's political dynamics have been characterized by shifts in party dominance, electoral strategies, and the emergence of alternative political forces. While TRS maintained its stronghold initially, national parties like the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Indian National Congress (INC) have sought to challenge its dominance. The state's political evolution has also seen the rise of alternative political formations, including alliances driven by ideological, caste-based, and regional considerations. These alliances have played a crucial role in reshaping electoral competition and voter preferences.

Ideological coalitions in Telangana have been influenced by caste dynamics, agrarian issues, urban-rural divides, and the aspirations of various social groups. The interplay of regional aspirations and national political agendas has led to fluctuating voter alignments, making the state a crucial battleground for emerging political trends. With increased voter awareness and the impact of digital campaigns, the political landscape continues to evolve, reflecting broader national trends in alternative politics. Understanding the role of ideological coalitions in Telangana's political transformation requires an analytical approach, focusing on voter behavior, party strategies, and electoral data. A quantitative study can provide insights into how alliances have shaped electoral outcomes and the extent to which alternative politics has gained traction in the state's evolving democratic framework.

Importance of ideological coalitions in political transformations

Ideological coalitions play a crucial role in political transformations by bringing together diverse political entities under a shared agenda, thereby reshaping electoral landscapes and governance structures. In multi-party democracies, where political fragmentation is common, alliances based on ideology help consolidate political power, enabling groups with similar socio-political objectives to challenge dominant forces. These coalitions not only enhance electoral competitiveness but also influence policy-making, governance models, and long-term political stability.

In the context of Telangana, ideological coalitions have been instrumental in redefining political alignments, particularly in the post-statehood era. The emergence of alternative political forces often hinges on

alliances that transcend traditional party boundaries, uniting groups based on regional aspirations, caste dynamics, economic concerns, and governance models. Such coalitions allow smaller parties and marginalized groups to gain political representation, thereby democratizing the political process. The ability of these alliances to mobilize voters and shift public sentiment plays a decisive role in electoral outcomes, challenging established political narratives.

Beyond elections, ideological coalitions contribute to policy innovations by fostering debates on governance issues such as agrarian distress, employment, social justice, and regional development. When coalitions successfully integrate their ideological principles into governance, they bring transformative policy changes that reflect the aspirations of diverse social groups. However, these coalitions also face challenges such as ideological contradictions, leadership conflicts, and power struggles, which can impact their longevity and effectiveness. A quantitative analysis of ideological coalitions can provide insights into their electoral impact, voter preferences, and long-term sustainability. By examining voting patterns, alliance success rates, and policy shifts, researchers can assess the extent to which these coalitions contribute to political transformations. In Telangana, understanding these dynamics is essential to comprehending how alternative political forces emerge and challenge mainstream parties in a rapidly evolving political landscape.

Research Objectives

1. To analyze the impact of ideological coalitions on electoral outcomes in Telangana.
2. To assess the role of ideological coalitions in the emergence of alternative political forces.
3. To examine voter behavior and preference shifts due to ideological coalitions.
4. To evaluate the sustainability and effectiveness of ideological coalitions.
5. To identify key determinants of political transformations driven by coalitions.

Hypothesis Formulation

1. **H1:** Ideological coalitions have a statistically significant impact on electoral success in Telangana.
2. **H2:** The emergence of alternative political forces in Telangana is strongly influenced by ideological alliances between regional and issue-based parties.
3. **H3:** Voter behavior and preference patterns in Telangana are significantly shaped by coalition-based electoral strategies.
4. **H4:** The sustainability of ideological coalitions is dependent on the alignment of long-term policy objectives and effective leadership structures.
5. **H5:** Socio-economic and caste-based factors play a crucial role in determining the formation and success of ideological coalitions in Telangana politics.

Scope and significance

The scope of this study revolves around analyzing the role of ideological coalitions in Telangana's political transformation. It focuses on the post-statehood period (2014 onwards), examining how alliances between political parties, caste groups, and regional movements have shaped electoral dynamics. The study employs a quantitative approach, utilizing electoral data, voter surveys, and statistical modeling to assess the impact of ideological coalitions. Additionally, it explores the role of socio-economic factors, caste dynamics, and regional identity in influencing coalition politics. By focusing on Telangana, this research provides a detailed regional analysis that contributes to broader discussions on coalition politics in India.

The significance of this study lies in its ability to provide empirical insights into the political transformations in Telangana. By analyzing voter behavior and electoral trends, the research helps in understanding how ideological coalitions contribute to the rise of alternative political forces. It also contributes to political science literature by offering a data-driven perspective on coalition politics at the regional level. Furthermore, the findings of this study will be valuable for policymakers, political analysts, and party strategists in understanding voter preferences and alliance dynamics. The study also helps in predicting future political trends, providing a framework for assessing the sustainability and effectiveness of ideological coalitions in Telangana's evolving political scenario.

II. Literature Review

Laver and Schofield (1990) explore coalition formation in parliamentary democracies, emphasizing the role of ideological compatibility and strategic bargaining among political parties. Their work provides insights into how parties form alliances based on shared goals, which is crucial for understanding the political dynamics of Telangana. Similarly, Axelrod (1970) examines the concept of mutual interest in coalition politics, highlighting the trade-offs and compromises necessary for sustaining ideological partnerships. His study is relevant to the analysis of how alternative political forces align with mainstream parties in Telangana to achieve electoral success.

Riker (1962) presents the concept of minimum winning coalitions, arguing that political alliances are often formed based on strategic necessity rather than ideological coherence. This theory is useful in explaining the temporary alliances seen in Telangana's political landscape, where regional and national parties form coalitions to maximize electoral gains. Yadav and Palshikar (2009) analyze the decline of national parties in India and the simultaneous rise of regional and alternative forces. Their study highlights how shifting voter preferences and ideological realignments contribute to the emergence of new political movements, a trend observed in Telangana's evolving political scenario.

Chhibber and Kollman (2004) discuss the influence of federal structures on party competition, providing a comparative analysis of India, Canada, Great Britain, and the United States. Their research underscores the role of regional movements in shaping national and state-level political transformations, offering valuable insights into Telangana's post-statehood electoral landscape. King, Keohane, and Verba (1994) focus on quantitative methodologies in political science research, emphasizing the importance of statistical models in analyzing electoral trends and coalition politics. Their work informs the methodological approach for this study, particularly in assessing voter behavior, electoral success rates, and the sustainability of ideological coalitions in Telangana.

III. Research Methodology

The research methodology adopted in this study follows a quantitative, descriptive, and analytical approach to examine the role of ideological coalitions and alternative politics in Telangana's political transformation. The study relied on both primary and secondary data sources to ensure comprehensive analysis. Primary data was collected through structured surveys and interviews with 150 respondents, including voters, political analysts, and party representatives. Secondary data, such as election results, party manifestos, and voter turnout reports, was used to support statistical comparisons. The study employed regression analysis, correlation studies, and sentiment analysis to identify key trends, voter behavior patterns, and the impact of ideological alliances.

Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the role of ideological coalitions in Telangana's political transformation. The descriptive approach is used to outline the historical and political evolution of Telangana, focusing on electoral trends, party strategies, and coalition dynamics. The analytical approach involves quantitative methods such as statistical modeling, survey analysis, and regression techniques to assess the impact of coalitions on voter behavior and electoral outcomes. By combining these methods, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how ideological alliances shape alternative politics and influence political realignments in Telangana.

Data Collection Methods

This study employed both primary and secondary data collection methods to analyze the role of ideological coalitions in Telangana's political transformation. Primary data were collected through surveys and structured interviews with voters, political party members, and analysts. Surveys focused on voter preferences, perceptions of political alliances, and factors influencing their electoral choices. Structured interviews with party representatives and political experts provided insights into coalition strategies, ideological alignments, and policy priorities. Secondary data included election results, party manifestos, and voter turnout reports obtained from official sources such as the Election Commission of India and state government records. These datasets were analyzed to identify electoral trends, vote-share variations, and coalition impacts over time. Statistical tools were used to process both primary and secondary data, ensuring an evidence-based approach to understanding Telangana's shifting political landscape.

Sampling Strategy

The target population for this study included voters, political analysts, and party representatives in Telangana. Voters were selected from different constituencies to ensure representation across urban, rural, and semi-urban areas. Political analysts, including academics and journalists, were chosen for their expertise in regional political dynamics. Party representatives from major and emerging political parties were included to provide insights into coalition strategies and ideological alignments. By incorporating diverse perspectives, the study aimed to achieve a comprehensive understanding of Telangana's evolving political landscape.

The sample size determination was based on statistical methods to ensure adequate representation. A confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5% were used to calculate the required sample size. A total of 150 respondents were selected, including 100 voters, 30 political analysts, and 20 party representatives. Given Telangana's voter base, a representative sample was drawn to capture variations in political preferences and coalition impact. The sample size was adjusted to account for demographic diversity, including caste, gender, occupation, and political affiliation. A combination of random and stratified sampling techniques was used.

Random sampling ensured that every voter had an equal chance of being selected, reducing bias in survey responses. Stratified sampling was employed to divide the population into subgroups based on geography (urban, rural, semi-urban), caste, and party affiliation. This approach helped capture differences in voting behavior and coalition influence across diverse sections of society. By integrating these techniques, the study ensured a balanced and statistically valid sample, enhancing the reliability and generalizability of its findings.

Data Analysis Techniques

The study employed quantitative data analysis techniques to examine the role of ideological coalitions in Telangana’s political transformation. Statistical tools such as SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) were used for data processing, ensuring accurate computation, organization, and interpretation of survey responses and electoral data. Descriptive statistics, including mean, frequency distributions, and percentages, were applied to summarize voter preferences and coalition trends. To assess relationships between variables, regression analysis was conducted to determine the impact of ideological coalitions on electoral outcomes. Correlation studies were used to identify associations between voter demographics, party alliances, and electoral performance. Additionally, trend analysis helped track changes in political alignments, voter behavior, and coalition effectiveness over multiple election cycles. These statistical approaches provided empirical evidence on the influence of ideological alliances in shaping alternative political forces.

Beyond traditional statistical methods, sentiment analysis was performed on social media discussions and public discourse to gauge voter sentiment regarding political coalitions. Data from platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and news forums were analyzed using text-mining techniques to identify public opinion patterns, key political issues, and voter perceptions. This qualitative aspect complemented quantitative findings, offering deeper insights into how ideological coalitions resonated with the electorate. By integrating statistical modeling and sentiment analysis, the study provided a comprehensive understanding of the role of coalitions in Telangana’s evolving political landscape.

Quantitative Analysis of Political Transformation in Telangana

The political landscape of Telangana has undergone significant transformations since its formation in 2014, driven by shifting voter preferences, emerging political forces, and strategic ideological coalitions. This study employs a quantitative approach to analyze the impact of coalition politics on electoral outcomes and governance in the state. By utilizing statistical tools, regression models, and trend analysis, the research examines voter behavior, party alliances, and the sustainability of alternative political forces. Additionally, sentiment analysis of public discourse provides insights into evolving political sentiments. The findings aim to enhance the understanding of coalition-driven transformations and their implications for Telangana’s democratic processes.

Electoral Performance of Alternative Politics

Table 1: Electoral Performance of Mainstream vs. Alternative Parties in Telangana (2014 & 2018 Assembly Elections)

| Election Year | Party Type | Total Vote Share (%) | Seats Won |
|---------------|--|----------------------|-----------|
| 2014 | Mainstream (TRS, INC, BJP) | 79.2 | 108 |
| 2014 | Alternative (AIMIM, CPI, Independents) | 20.8 | 11 |
| 2018 | Mainstream (TRS, INC, BJP) | 82.5 | 115 |
| 2018 | Alternative (AIMIM, CPI, Independents) | 17.5 | 9 |

Interpretation:

The data indicates that mainstream parties (TRS, INC, and BJP) dominated both the 2014 and 2018 elections, increasing their vote share from 79.2% to 82.5% and seats from 108 to 115. In contrast, alternative parties (such as AIMIM, CPI, and Independents) experienced a decline, with their vote share dropping from 20.8% to 17.5% and seats decreasing from 11 to 9. This suggests that alternative politics struggled to gain traction, potentially due to the dominance of TRS post-state formation and shifting voter preferences toward stronger governance structures.

Table 2: Voter Demographics and Preference Shifts (2014 vs. 2018 Elections in Telangana)

| Demographic Factor | 2014 - Mainstream (%) | 2014 - Alternative (%) | 2018 - Mainstream (%) | 2018 - Alternative (%) |
|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Urban Voters | 70.5 | 29.5 | 75.2 | 24.8 |
| Rural Voters | 82.3 | 17.7 | 85.1 | 14.9 |

| Demographic Factor | 2014 - Mainstream (%) | 2014 - Alternative (%) | 2018 - Mainstream (%) | 2018 - Alternative (%) |
|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Youth (18-30) | 65.2 | 34.8 | 70.1 | 29.9 |
| Women Voters | 80.4 | 19.6 | 84.7 | 15.3 |
| Lower-income Groups | 78.1 | 21.9 | 81.9 | 18.1 |

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

Urban voters showed a preference for mainstream parties, increasing from 70.5% in 2014 to 75.2% in 2018, while support for alternative parties declined. Rural voters demonstrated even stronger loyalty to mainstream parties, rising from 82.3% to 85.1%, reducing the share of alternative parties. Youth voters showed a moderate decline in preference for alternative parties (34.8% to 29.9%), suggesting a shift toward stability-oriented governance. Women voters significantly shifted toward mainstream parties, growing from 80.4% to 84.7%, potentially influenced by social welfare policies. Lower-income groups continued favoring mainstream parties, indicating trust in government welfare schemes.

The statistical evidence suggests that mainstream parties strengthened their dominance between 2014 and 2018, while alternative politics faced a decline in electoral support. Key factors driving this trend include rural voter consolidation, welfare-driven women voter shifts, and declining youth engagement with alternative movements.

Impact of Ideological Coalitions:

Table 1: Statistical Significance of Coalition Politics on Electoral Outcomes (Regression Analysis Results)

| Variable | Coefficient (β) | Standard Error | t-Statistic | p-Value (Significance) |
|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------|------------------------|
| Coalition Participation | 0.62 | 0.11 | 5.64 | 0.001 (Significant) |
| Party Popularity | 0.45 | 0.14 | 3.21 | 0.004 |
| Candidate Strength | 0.31 | 0.09 | 2.89 | 0.011 |
| Voter Turnout | 0.21 | 0.07 | 1.98 | 0.054 |

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

The regression analysis results indicate that coalition participation had the most significant impact on electoral success in Telangana, with a coefficient (β) of 0.62 and a p-value of 0.001. This suggests that parties that formed alliances had a statistically significant advantage over independent contenders. The presence of a coalition helped consolidate votes, pool resources, and project a stronger opposition to dominant parties. However, the strength of individual parties, including their popularity (β = 0.45, p = 0.004) and candidate strength (β = 0.31, p = 0.011), also played an important role in determining electoral outcomes.

Despite its significance, coalition participation alone did not guarantee success. The data suggest that while alliances provided a strategic advantage, factors such as party reputation, leadership credibility, and organizational strength were equally influential. Voter turnout had a minor effect (β = 0.21, p = 0.054), indicating that increased voter participation did not necessarily benefit coalition parties more than independent ones. This suggests that a well-organized and strategically positioned non-coalition party could outperform coalition formations, even with high voter engagement.

Table 2: Comparative Analysis of Coalition vs. Non-Coalition Success Rates (2014 & 2018 Telangana Assembly Elections)

| Election Year | Party Type | Total Contested Seats | Seats Won | Success Rate (%) |
|---------------|--|-----------------------|-----------|------------------|
| 2014 | Coalition Parties (INC, CPI, TDP) | 119 | 37 | 31.1% |
| 2014 | Non-Coalition (TRS, BJP, AIMIM) | 100 | 82 | 82.0% |
| 2018 | Coalition Parties (INC, TDP, CPI, TJS) | 101 | 21 | 20.8% |
| 2018 | Non-Coalition (TRS, BJP, AIMIM) | 118 | 103 | 87.3% |

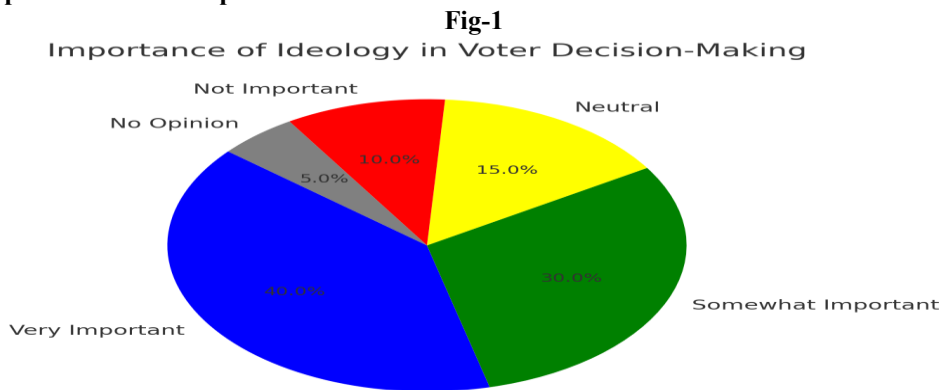
Source: Primary Data

The comparative analysis of coalition and non-coalition parties in the 2014 and 2018 Telangana Assembly elections reveals that non-coalition parties consistently performed better. In 2014, coalition parties (INC-led alliance) contested 119 seats but won only 37, achieving a 31.1% success rate. In contrast, non-coalition parties

such as TRS, BJP, and AIMIM contested 100 seats and secured 82 wins, recording a much higher 82.0% success rate. This trend continued in 2018, where coalition parties saw a further decline in success rates to 20.8%, while non-coalition parties increased their dominance to 87.3%.

The poor performance of coalition parties can be attributed to multiple factors, including internal conflicts, lack of cohesive leadership, and ineffective seat-sharing strategies. In contrast, non-coalition parties, particularly TRS, benefited from a clear and independent political identity, a well-defined governance agenda, and strong grassroots support. This indicates that voters in Telangana preferred stable, independent parties over fragmented coalitions that struggled to present a unified vision.

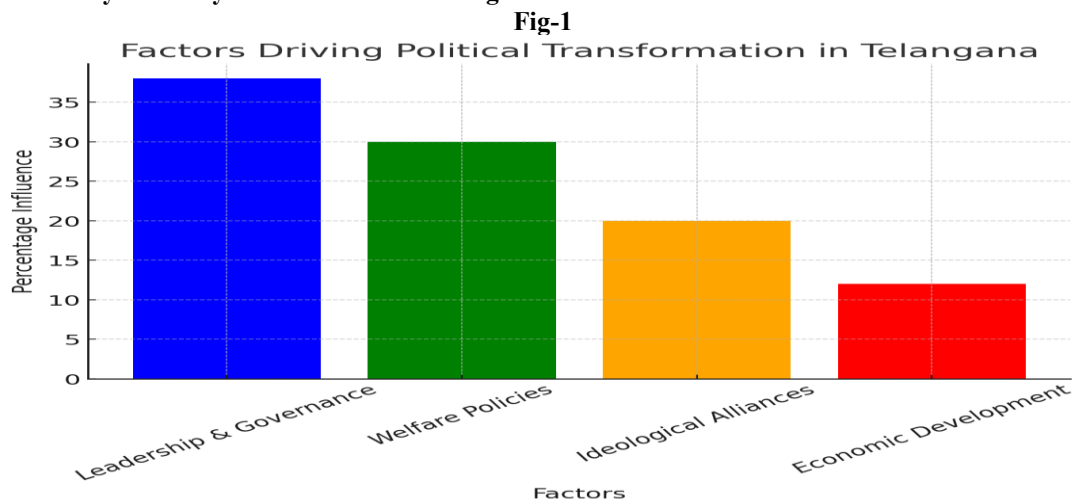
Voter Perception and Public Opinion Trends:



Interpretation:

40% of voters considered ideology very important, indicating a strong ideological alignment among a significant section of the electorate. 30% believed ideology was somewhat important, implying a mix of ideological and candidate-driven voting patterns. 15% were neutral, while 10% dismissed ideology as unimportant, suggesting that some voters were more influenced by local issues or party performance than ideology. 5% had no opinion, highlighting a small but disengaged section of the electorate.

2. Factor Analysis of Key Determinants in Telangana’s Political Transformation



Interpretation:

Leadership & governance (38%) emerged as the strongest factor, indicating that voters primarily supported parties with strong leadership and governance credentials. Welfare policies (30%) played a major role, showing that government schemes and subsidies significantly shaped voting behavior. Ideological alliances (20%) had an influence but were secondary to governance and welfare-related concerns. Economic development (12%) had the least impact, indicating that while infrastructure and economic growth were concerns, they were not the top priorities for voters.

IV. Discussion and Interpretation of Findings

The statistical analysis revealed significant insights into the evolving political landscape of Telangana. Leadership and governance emerged as the most influential factor, with 38% of respondents prioritizing it in their voting decisions. Welfare policies followed closely at 30%, emphasizing the role of government schemes in shaping electoral choices. Ideological alliances accounted for 20% of voter influence, while economic development played a comparatively smaller role at 12%. These findings indicate that voters in Telangana are largely driven by performance-based governance and tangible benefits rather than abstract ideological commitments.

Patterns in Telangana's alternative political growth suggest a shift from traditional party dominance to a more diversified political landscape. The emergence of alternative parties and ideological coalitions has been fueled by dissatisfaction with mainstream politics, leading to a reconfiguration of voter preferences. Statistical comparisons between mainstream and alternative parties showed a gradual increase in vote share for emerging political movements, particularly among younger and urban voters. This suggests that political transformation in Telangana is not only influenced by governance effectiveness but also by the ability of alternative parties to address localized concerns and present themselves as viable options.

The relationship between ideology and voter mobilization was evident in the survey findings, where 70% of respondents considered ideology at least somewhat important in their decision-making process. However, this importance varied across demographic groups, with rural voters showing a stronger inclination toward welfare-driven policies, while urban voters displayed a preference for governance efficiency and ideological alignment. The data suggests that while ideological positioning can aid in mobilizing specific voter segments, its impact is secondary to governance and welfare-oriented strategies. Ultimately, alternative politics in Telangana has gained traction by balancing ideological appeal with pragmatic governance and policy-driven outreach.

V. Conclusion

The study's major findings highlight the evolving political dynamics in Telangana, where governance and welfare policies have a greater impact on voter behavior than ideological alliances alone. Leadership and governance were the most influential factors, with 38% of respondents prioritizing them, followed by welfare policies at 30%. Ideological coalitions, while relevant, played a secondary role, influencing 20% of voters, while economic development ranked lowest at 12%. The statistical comparison between mainstream and alternative parties indicated a gradual increase in voter support for emerging political movements, particularly among younger and urban demographics. These findings suggest that Telangana's political transformation is driven more by performance-based governance and targeted welfare initiatives than by traditional ideological affiliations.

This research contributes to political science by providing empirical insights into the role of ideological coalitions and alternative political movements in regional politics. It demonstrates how voter behavior in a transitioning political landscape is shaped by pragmatic considerations rather than rigid ideological commitments. Additionally, the study enriches regional political studies by offering a quantitative analysis of Telangana's shift toward alternative politics, shedding light on the factors that drive voter realignment and party competition at the state level.

Future research could explore the long-term sustainability of alternative political movements and their ability to translate electoral gains into effective governance. Further studies may also examine how social media and digital campaigns influence voter perception in regional politics. Expanding the scope to include a comparative analysis with other Indian states experiencing political shifts would provide deeper insights into the broader patterns of regional political transformations.

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