

**POLITICS AND LITERATURE : A STUDY OF THE  
INTERACTION BETWEEN POLITICAL MOVEMENTS  
AND LITERARY TRENDS IN ANDHRA PRADESH  
( 1960 — '80 )**

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DECLARATION

This Dissertation entitled "POLITICS AND LITERATURE: A STUDY OF THE INTERACTION BETWEEN POLITICAL MOVEMENTS AND LITERARY TRENDS IN ANDHRA PRADESH (1960-'80)", submitted by Mr. S.S. SRINIVAS in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Philosophy, has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any University. We recommend that this dissertation should be placed before the examiners for their consideration for the award of M.Phil. Degree.

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## PREFACE

This work relates to the field of politics and literature in general. Specifically, it is an attempt at studying the nature of interaction between politics and literature in concrete situations. The case looked into here is that of interaction between political movements and literary trends in Andhra Pradesh during 1960-80.

The study of the interaction between politics and literature from the angle of social and political analysis proves to be not only interesting but important too. Especially so, when we attempt to study the role of literature (as part of the cultural sphere) in relation to political movements and process. It is important for students of politics in India because it throws light (1) on the processes shaping the consciousness of target groups mobilized for political action under specific conditions; (2) on confrontation between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces on the level of ideas, culture and consciousness parallel to the confrontation on the political level; (3) and on the nature of the State seen

from its response not only towards the struggles on the political level but the counter-hegemonic forces spreading a consciousness threatening its hegemony over the civil society.

To the extent these aspects of certain political movements in India are not studied, our understanding of those movements remains incomplete. The present study is but a small step towards throwing light in this direction, through a focus on the concrete case of interaction between politics and literature in Andhra Pradesh during 1960-1980.

The conclusions arrived at through this study are by no means absolute; they need to be tested and verified through similar studies. What ever the conclusions, one fact cannot be ignored : that studies in this area could be fruitful and necessary to throw light on certain important aspects that affect our understanding of the nature of political movements and political processes in India.

That I have been able to pursue this study to completion I owe a lot to many, and some of them need to

be specially acknowledged for their contribution and support in a variety of ways at all stages of my research.

Foremost among them is the guidance rendered by my supervisor, Dr. Kiran Saxena. I am extremely grateful for her earnest interest, critical comments and constant encouragement and support through out this study.

I should express my greatest thanks to Sri. C. Prasad - a senior lecturer of politics, Mrs. A.V.N. College, Visakhapatnam, and an active participant in the Telugu literary and cultural circles and a regular contributor to several literary journals - for the invaluable help he extended in allowing me access to his splendid personal collection of Telugu literary works and journals, and in directing me towards sources from where I could get the necessary material. The importance of such a help may be properly qualified only when it is noted that much of the Telugu sources cited from in this dissertation are not available in the regular official libraries and institutions.

I am grateful to the faculty of the Centre for Political Studies, especially Prof. Kuldeep Mathur, Dr. Gurpreet Mahajan and Ms. Neeraja Gopal Jayal for their friendly support, advice and encouragement giving me the confidence to pursue this study. Also, I should express my thanks to Dr. Sudipta Kaviraj for his valuable comments from which I gained much while I was still unclear about the theoretical background to the study of politics and literature.

There are others whose contribution cannot be acknowledged in academic terms, but no less significant : Parents and Friends. To father and mother I cannot acknowledge their contribution in the few words I can muster as I owe them for everything that is good in me today, and for completing this dissertation at a steady pace.

I am happy to have friends - Anurag, Ajay, Rashmi and Ramesh - who could keep me in good spirits during the course of writing this dissertation. I have special thanks to Sambhu Prasad, one who has been more than a friend to me, with whom I could discuss anything and

everything to clear myself of many a confusion while I was on my field work in Visakhapatnam.

And, not to forget mentioning that I alone am responsible for the interpretation and errors of facts, if any, in this study.

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## INTRODUCTORY

### I

Certain subjects are so alluring that you are pulled towards them by the sheer gravity of fascination they happen to generate. And the subject politics and literature can surely rank as such. What promises to be fascinating, however, can be problematic and elusive when approached for a closer and serious study.

Few deny that there is a relationship between politics and creative literature, even if the possibility of subjecting this relationship to a social and political analysis might be looked at with scepticism. Needless to note that this research starts by accepting the possibility of such an analysis. Besides, it gains impetus from the recognition of the necessity to understand the nature of this relationship in concrete situations to have a fuller understanding of the true nature of some social and political movements in contemporary India.

The significance of the relationship between politics and literature can be properly defined only when we take a holistic view of the social reality around us. The social reality comprises of what we classify as the political, economic, cultural, ideological spheres and so on to put it broadly. In practice all the spheres are interrelated and each has its influence on the others. While the students of politics, economics, culture, etc., are concerned with the dominant phenomena comprising each of these spheres they tend to neglect those specific spaces of interaction between the various spheres. Of course, the Marxist and sociological approaches agree on the question of a holistic and interrelated nature of the various spheres - though with their own differences.

Today, social and political scientists in India do pay attention to the interactive relationship between the political, economic and social spheres in concrete situations while studying social and political phenomena. And, when it comes to the question of being aware of a similar relationship between social, economic and political spheres on the one hand and the cultural sphere on the other, they agree on the theoretical level that

this relationship can exist and be significant. But, in practice, they fail to take notice of these spheres of interaction in studying social and political phenomena.

Such a failure to notice the nature of interaction between the political, economic and cultural spheres is resulting in a flawed understanding of some of the social and political movements aiming at large scale systemic transformation. The degree of such interaction and its significance, surely, may <sup>not</sup> be the same in the case of all movements. This in no way precludes us from studying the phenomena in cases where it is significant.

What we have stated above can be particularly noticed in studies on radical movements such as the Telengana peasant struggle, and the Srikakulom Girijan movement in Andhra Pradesh. For example, when the Srikakulam movement is studied it is generally analyzed in terms of a naxalite movement - which in fact it was, but only during the period 1968-1970 whereas the movement continued in several phases ever since the early 1950s - and interpreted basing on the professed ideology and the naxalite strategy of violent overthrow of the existing state structures through a direct confrontation.<sup>1</sup> None

of these studies try to see the movement in all its dimensions, that is, not merely how the state machinery and the exploiting groups had been confronted but also how the potential revolutionary subject groups had been shaped by a revolutionary consciousness and mobilized through cultural media such as literature and popular art forms. What is worth noting is that in such a situation the use of literature became political, and hence a study of such utilization too becomes essential to have a proper understanding of the movement as it evolved and developed ; not merely as it turned out to be at its peak.

A point one should not miss regarding such aspects of this and similar movements is that this aspect did not go unnoticed altogether. More than anybody else, the Indian state definitely recognized this aspect. This becomes clear when we turn our attention towards the way it snubbed not only the political movement but also the cultural and literary movement that went along with it. What is intriguing is that social and political writings dealing with such movements fail, inspite of all the evidence, to look into this phenomena.

Such a failure, perhaps, stems from the very approach the scholars studying such movements have been adopting, paying more attention to the ideological basis and practicality of a political strategy of violent confrontation of the naxalite type in the specific conditions available in India and the strength of the Indian state.

As far as the ideological basis, strategy and consequences of the Srikakulam movement are concerned, the conclusions and interpretations of the existing works are not being contested here. It is only being stressed that there is more to such movements which is not being looked into by such analyses. And the aspects not covered by the present studies on such movements can be taken note of by looking at the spaces of interaction between the political and cultural spheres. These aspects mostly relate to the levels of consciousness of the groups affected and mobilized, the means and process of dissemination of the necessary consciousness among such groups to move them towards collective, political action.

## II

The present research is guided by the understanding that while a theoretical knowledge of the possibility as well as significance of the interaction between the political and the cultural and literary spheres exists, no attempts are being made to see how it actually occurs in concrete cases in the Indian situation. Hence, the necessity to see how this phenomena occurs in practice.

While recognizing this, the present research is also conditioned by the fact that it is next to impossible to study this phenomena in the case of India through a single research of this nature.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the present study is limited to take a look at the phenomena as it occurs in a particular situation - in terms of language, region and time span - in Andhra Pradesh between 1960-1980. The need for subjecting the phenomena under study to a political analysis further narrows the choice to a analysis of the nature and implications of interaction between political movements and literary trends in this particular case of Telugu society.

There are some other reasons too for limiting to a study of the interaction between political movements and literary trends. Besides the factor of analytical convenience, there is also the concern to decrease the dangers of sliding into a mere literary analysis.

When we look for politically significant aspects of the interaction between politics and literature as it occurs in Telugu society between 1960-1980, we are not attempting a content analysis of individual literary works as such. Reference to individual works and their contents and form, no doubt, is inherent in a study of this nature. But such a reference is to be placed in relation to the larger social and political trends.

A study of this nature needs to focus on the larger literary trends within which individual works fall, and locate the specific cultural and political movements they could have drawn inspiration from and hoped to serve. Only on this level can we fruitfully trace the links between political movements and the literary sphere, and understand the manner in which political goals and tactics of some movements influenced the way a literature developed and changed in form and content. It

also enables us to see how the use of the literary sphere can be a part of the political strategy under particular conditions to mobilize and prepare certain sections of society to work towards some political goals.

### III

#### Some clarifications on the Organization of the Dissertation

Many a time the first question posed to a researcher is about the theoretical framework and approach one applies in his study. Surely this is very important. But in some fields there appears the glaring fact of a dearth of preceding work. Talking of Politics and Literature, some work has been done from the perspective of literary analysis. Very little work exists in terms of social and political analysis. Most of the work done from the angle of literary analysis resulted from the development and application of a theory that suits such needs. Whatever little work has been done from the angle of social and political analysis of individual works in depth than at locating the larger trends. Those which try to locate the larger trends are mostly Euro-centric,



in the sense they are moulded to study the specific conditions as they occur in the West. Very little exists in terms of analyzing the Indian situation. In this sense, the theoretical basis for the present analysis is to a *certain extent* borrowed from the Western experience so as to get some footing to start with - of course by adopting in a way that suits our analysis. This effort can be seen in Chapter-I of the dissertation.

Then there is the question of placing the topic of present research in its historical backdrop. This is because the period under study cannot be understood properly unless it is seen as part of a series of developments that have been taking place in modern Telugu society. In other words, the political movements and literary trends in the period under study did not emerge from a void. They emerged through, and as part of, a conscious and critical understanding of the past movements and trends in Andhra Pradesh in particular, and India in general. At the macro level, influences from other parts of the world cannot be neglected. Hence, it is necessary to devote Chapter-II to briefly survey the preceding developments in this direction, that is, from around the turn of this century upto 1960s. This helps

us to understand the historical and logical links of the period under study with the preceding developments.

As already noted, the main aim of the present work is to know the nature of interaction between political movements and literary trends. To throw proper light on this aspect, one should be able to place it in the midst of larger social, political and economic developments in which it emerged and developed. From the point of view of clarity of presentation, these larger social, economic and political developments during 1960-1980 are traced separately in Chapter- III.

Chapter-IV of the dissertation is devoted to give a detailed picture of the development of various literary trends in Telugu literature during 1960-1980 in the light of the social and political conditions of the period traced in the preceding chapter. Besides, tracing them in their socio-historical backdrop, their emergence and development into conscious literary movements having links with various political movements is brought out. The various political goals these literary trends set for themselves is also traced. Side by side, attempt is made to trace the role that literary and cultural spheres

were made to play in the course of political movements. In bringing out all these aspects, the phenomena as it occurred in the course of the Srikakulam movement, the single-most important political movement that took place in Andhra Pradesh during this period.

Such an analysis helps us notice the nature of interaction between politics and literature in the course of a popular struggle under specific conditions. This helps us in showing how a neglect of this aspect results in a failure to know the true nature of the movement in all its aspects, as stated in Chapter-III. Further, this gives us a ground from which we can come to a proper and reasonable understanding of the various literary trends that emerged during 1970-1980, which is attempted in Chapter-V. In this chapter, after tracing the various socially conscious literary trends and movements, an analysis of the nature of the so called neutral literature represented by the commercial literature is attempted and it is shown how this literature too inadvertently spreads and supports a particular type of political consciousness. This chapter is concluded by showing the response of the state towards the writers and their works during this period, and how

it sees a political threat in them. In the process the professed political goals of these movements and their goal of creating a counter-culture aimed at breaking the hegemonic grip of the pro-establishment culture as part of a long-term political plan is brought out.

Chapter-VI comes by way of conclusion, taking stock of the analysis in chapters III to V in particular and others in general to show the nature of interaction that emerges between politics and literature in this particular case. This interaction is explained in terms of an ongoing conflict between forces of 'hegemonic culture' that has the support of the Establishment whose legitimacy it seeks to maintain, and those forces striving to create and popularize a counter-culture aimed at preparing potential subjects for participating in a revolutionary transformation of the system. In the process, attempt is made to show how Telugu literature, both in its pro-system and anti-system dimensions, is performing communicative, cognitive and subversive roles as the case might be. This helps in showing how the conflict between the forces of 'Hegemony' and 'counter-Hegemony', 'culture' and 'counter-culture' run parallel to, and are interconnected with, the changes and

struggles on the economic and political levels; it helps to further our argument that a focus on the former is essential to gain a full picture of the latter.

#### NOTES

1. See for example: Sumanta Banarjee, In the wake of Naxalbari : A History of the Naxalite Movement In India, (Calcutta : Subarna Rekha, 1980); Ashish Kumar Ray, Spring Thunder And After - A Survey of the Maoist And Ultra Leftist Movements in India: 1962 - 1975 (Calcutta, Minerva, 1975); Calman, Leslie J., protest in Democratic India - Authority's Response to challenge (Boulder : Westview Press, 1985); Kondaveeti Chinnaya Suri, The Girijan Movement in Srikakulam (1964 - 1975) : A study of Political Violence (Dissertation : J.N.U., New Delhi, 1980); Shanta Sinha, Maoists In Andhra Pradesh, (Dissertation : J.N.U., New Delhi, 1976).
2. The limitations governing a study of this nature in the Indian context relate to the problems of language, region and time span.

## CHAPTER I

## IN SEARCH OF THEORY

The search for a theoretical basis of studying the relationship between politics and literature from the angle of social and political analysis is not a very easy task, if not an impossible one. Surely, many before have written and discussed with differing opinions about this relationship, with some denouncing such a relationship while others asserted the political role and significance of creative literature in its various dimensions.

Those who have done some work in the direction had tended more towards a literary analysis,<sup>1</sup> with the conceptual level moulded to meet those demands. However, even those carrying out such analyses hold out a glimmer of hope by accepting a close relationship between politics and creative literature - despite the fact that they lack any unanimity about the nature of that relationship, which is only to be expected.

The present chapter is devoted to briefly trace different positions regarding the relationship between politics and literature- idealist, liberal, and Marxist - and see how the Marxists view the political role of creative literature in its various dimensions. Besides, an attempt is made at evaluating the Marxist conceptual and methodological frame-works to study this relationship from the point of view of social and political analysis. This will help in locating possible concepts and approaches that can serve a study of the relationship between political movements and literary trends in the Indian context.

## I

### DIFFERENT POSITIONS REGARDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICS AND CREATIVE LITERATURE

Broadly speaking, we can identify four major positions regarding the relationship between politics and creative literature. They are the idealist, positivist, liberal and Marxist positions.

[A] The *Idealist position* on this question is one that

treats art and literature<sup>2</sup> on the one hand and politics on the other as quite different in their character as well as the tasks they perform. It is held that what art and literature deal with is eternal and universal while the subject of politics is transitory and short lived. Basing on this, literature and politics are placed in a relationship that is incompatible and indeed oppositional. The well known Italian aesthetician Benedetto Croce attempted to make all art completely autonomous and set it apart from all that is practical. Croce considered all art linked with politics as quasi-art. This idea was later taken by R.G. Collingwood who qualifies any art serving political ends as "magic", and hence cannot be genuine art. He, however, does not have any objection if art serves such ends.<sup>3</sup> In his opinion, any attempt at summoning forth political emotions in the readers amounts to a disservice to art even if it is a service to politics.

Such arguments are typical of the stand adopted by idealists. The stand for idealized art as "pureform" stems from being blind to the strong links between art, society and politics. Denial of such links and propagation of the complete independence of art and



literature from politics itself represents a propagation of conservative political ideas. For, as George Orwell notes, refusing to accept this link itself is a political attitude.<sup>4</sup>

The *Positivist analysis* of art and literature follows a cause and effect analysis in their relationship to society. Hippolyte Taine's History of English Literature (1871) proved a trend setter in this direction. Taine viewed art as the collective expression of society. He distinguished three concepts: 'Race', 'Movement', 'Milieu' as the material foundations of literature. He defined 'Race' as innate and involving hereditary characteristics; 'Moment' as the epoch, the spirit of the time or as a literary tradition; and 'Milieu' as the environment, emphasizing climate and geography. Taine's positivism, however, did not succeed in going beyond crude cause and effect analysis of literature as a response to specific external conditions.<sup>5</sup> This is because Taine failed to take cognizance of 'consciousness' as an important variable in socio-political analysis of literature.

Subsequent *Liberal tradition* was to draw on the positivist version. Lionel Trilling, for example, saw the connection between literature and politics as 'an inevitable connection' that is similar to the one between ideas and sentiments, where ideas give rise to sentiments that issue forth in the form of political action and institutions.<sup>6</sup> This connection between ideas and literature and action is seen as implied by the very nature of literature,<sup>7</sup> which deals with man in society, with ideas of men's relation to one another and to the world.

Fredrick Jameson points out the bankruptcy in the above mentioned positions when he refers to:

"the anti-speculative bias of that tradition, its emphasis on the individual fact or item at the expense of the network of relationships in which that item may be embedded, continue to encourage submission to *what is* by preventing its followers from making connections, and in particular from drawing the otherwise unavoidable conclusions on the political level."<sup>8</sup>

What we have seen of the idealist and liberal positions allows us to note that they are not useful to establish a relationship between politics and literature in terms of a social analysis. The idealist position is completely without any use in this direction given the fact that it altogether sees such a relationship as having a negative influence on production of good literature. The liberal version fails to bring out the dynamics operating below the surface they look at, which ultimately blocks them from gaining a proper understanding of the relationship between politics and literature. The positivist position may lead to social analysis but it is one where the spheres of literary content and social conditions are placed parallel to one another as mirror images, than providing a worthwhile analysis showing the dynamic aspects of this relationship in terms of political significance and impact on collective consciousness.

[B] These pitfalls are avoided in the Marxist Positions. Some of the Marxist *positions* do have problems of their own. However, when it comes to the basic position all of them accept that a politically significant and fruitful relationship does exist between politics and literature

and the social and economic conditions in which they operate.

Any attempt at trying to bring together the Marxist position on the subject is pregnant with a lot of problems. Hence it is essential to first of all note why it is problematic.

(i) To start with, Marx himself never turned exclusive attention towards developing a theory of aesthetics, the reasons being obvious when one sees what his efforts were mostly turned towards. Yet Marx did express certain views on art and literature in which he had a good grounding and keen interest as well. Besides, these views did not contradict his general theory and his revolutionary conception of society, and in fact fall in line with it.<sup>9</sup> This does not seem surprising when we see that though "Marxism is not a theory of aesthetics," "it does claim to illuminate the relation between the history of art and literature on the one hand, and history as class struggle on the other."<sup>10</sup>

(ii) Since Marxist views on literature evolved in close connection with Marxist theory and practice, it becomes

essential to identify that connection as well, especially with historical materialism.<sup>11</sup>



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Historical materialism, it should be noted, deals with only one aspect of art and literature, that is, in their function as social consciousness. Art and literature are to an extent linked with the basic forces underlying the mode of production.<sup>12</sup> As a form of social consciousness art and literature are bound up with an existing state of affairs. The essence, origin, development and social role of art and literature could be fully understood only through an analysis of the social system as a whole. Yet, it has to be remembered that Marx and Engels never established a crudely direct and deterministic relationship between literature and mode of production. In fact, it is shown to be a relationship that is "extremely complicated and contradictory."<sup>13</sup>

Showing that art and literature are related to social base and to politics, not directly or deterministically, but via a variety of factors, Engels clarifies this point in a letter to Starkenburg:

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"Political, juridical, philosophical, religious, literary, artistic etc., development is based on economic development. But all these react upon one another and also upon the economic basis. It is not that the economic situation is cause, while everything else is only passive effect. There is, rather, an interaction on the basis of economic necessity."<sup>14</sup>

Engels makes a similar point in another of his letters, addressed to J. Block, when he says:

"The economic situation is the basis, but the various components of the superstructure...also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggle and in many cases preponderate their form."<sup>15</sup>

One can see from this that Marx and Engels do not qualify art and literature as passive products of the economic system, though they remain subordinate to the general laws of social development. They concede the "relative independence" of art as a distinctive feature.<sup>16</sup> This fact makes them notice that though

production is a condition for art, the level of development of art does not always coincide with the degree of development in the economic sphere.

For the reasons noted above it has to be stressed that the historical understanding of literary production cannot be deduced from the general principles of historical materialism as found in the model of base-superstructure. It has to be sought through a dialectical analysis of the given socio-economic formation which can demonstrate the necessary laws of the actual conditions for that artistic creation.<sup>17</sup> Thus when Marx thinks about literature he does so in a wide economic, social and historical context.

(iii) As a social phenomena art is a human creation, and hence a product of human labour. It is a creation that manifests the creative power of man. In this sense, "the artistic product is a new reality that attests, above all else, to the presence of human beings as creator."<sup>18</sup>

The labour process manifest in a work of art, no doubt, is different in form from other forms of labour,

but like others it too cannot escape some degree of social conditioning. Hence, to understand the "concrete" nature of literature in terms of the labour process one should see in terms of the specific forms of labour process,<sup>19</sup> as reflecting men in different socio-historical settings, "produced as well as received by individuals, socially conditioned men."<sup>20</sup>

The relationship between art and production process had not been uniform all through history. It had been continuously changing. What had been a simple and direct relationship in primitive society, started becoming more complex as society itself tended towards greater differentiation, whereby in capitalist society consciousness appeared as more and more independent of the productive process. However, when we begin to see art as a labour process, a socially conditioned creation, we come to see that the supposed independence of art in the sense of a complete break from the productive process is only apparent. In fact, as a social being, a work of art should be seen as a connecting link, a form of communication, between the artist and other members of the society. Given this, a work of art objectifies the social nexuses of the system



in which the artist finds himself whether he intends it or not.

[C] The Political role and significance of creative literature in its various dimensions:

Given the type of relation to the social system, as discussed above, art and literature have certain aspects or functions, each of which had been highlighted by Marxist writers studying art in its historical development or in its current manifestations.

(1) Literature and Ideology:

The relationship of art and literature to ideology has been controversial and conflicting. Until recently, many Marxist aestheticians and above all those literary critics confronted with specific works of art tended to overestimate the role of ideological factor and consequently to minimize the importance of form, the internal coherence, and the specific laws of the work of art.

Since the Marxist position highlights art and literature as being socially and historically conditioned, the ideological positions of the artists do play a particular role in shaping his work. But, this in no way implies a need to reduce a work of art completely to its ideological components, or see it as a mere ideological phenomenon. There is even less justification for equating the aesthetic value of a work of art with the value of its ideals.<sup>21</sup>

While literature has a relation to ideology, it cannot be *reduced* to ideology. It would be equally misleading to simplistically say that authentic art can transcend ideological limits completely, yielding eternal truths. Such reductions arise when one overlooks the fact that the relationship between literature and ideology is a complex one just as the relationship between production process and literature. Althusser points to this when he says that art has a *particular* relationship to ideology, but cannot be reduced to it.<sup>22</sup> Literature is held within ideology but it also distances itself from it, permitting us thereby to perceive the contours of the ideology from which it springs, showing its limits as well. The emancipatory interest of art and literature

lie in their subversive potential in relation to the existing social order. Literature, then, is ideological only to the extent it objectifies and makes explicit the current social consciousness and thereby seeks to modify it. A work of art achieves a universality in and through the particular, so much so that it not only is an expression of the social divisions that give its ideological character but also universal in its "ability to extend a bridge between people across time and social divisions."<sup>23</sup>

(2) Literature, class and class struggle:

The relationship of art and literature to ideology can be properly understood only by taking into account the Marxist position on the relationship of art and literature to class and class struggle. In a class society all art has a class orientation, and it is through its connections with class struggle (through which social-consciousness tends to be modified) that the content of art can be perceived in its full reality.<sup>24</sup>

A point to be noted here is that in a capitalist society, the struggle to transcend capitalist alienation

emerges from the objective contradictions in that society. Those conditions can be overcome only by an objective revolutionary force produced by those very contradictions. Hence, the position of art and literature in relation to class struggle is to be seen within those limits. One cannot conceive for literature such a role that it could resolve those contradictions because they cannot be transcended from outside simply by mastering consciousness. Literature does not reflect the class structure of the capitalist society but expresses the context of the fundamental struggle against the contradictions in that society.<sup>25</sup> For Marx, art and literature have a role to play in 'aesthetic education' as part of the continuous self-transformation of the individual in developing his humanity and "of the revolution men must make to initiate the realm of freedom."<sup>26</sup> Such a transformation will have objective meaning only when seen as emerging from the social reality in which men suffer the exploitation and material and ideological oppression of capitalism, and not simply by ideally counterposing it. Marcuse saw the greatest threat coming from cultural tendencies that implied the premature reconciliation of contradictions at the level of popular consciousness.

Thus an artist, who at any time reflects his age, in a capitalist society will in a way reflect in his work the dynamic struggles of his society, but only artistically. One cannot expect direct and crude expressions of class struggle in art. Any art work that seeks to artificially construct its characters as mere mouth pieces of certain ideas can only degenerate into 'propaganda.' Rather, good literature and art represent life as it is lived. As important human activities political and social movements can be conveyed in ideas through art, but only by placing them in human contexts representing authentic social situations. Only then will social art be convincing and in the long run have the deepest influence on consciousness and social action.<sup>27</sup>

### (3) Literature and Subversiveness

Marx shows in Paris Manuscripts of 1844 how creative literature can be used to serve the ruling class, falling a victim to alienation and class hegemony. He shows how the age of capitalism, in which men and women in their social relations are constantly driven to subordinate their humanity to the economy of time and

acquisition, is unfavorable to the appreciation and creation of great literature.

Marx, however, believed that authentic art must be subversive of these tendencies.<sup>28</sup> Praver refers to the subversive potential of literature that Marx chalks out. Literature may,

"Help us to gain insight into the mechanics of alienation and reification .... It may project images that make us more conscious of our dehumanized state or of what we might be in more favorable circumstances....it may be used as a weapon in the class struggle; and like the other arts it will play its part in man's cultural rehabilitation."<sup>29</sup>

The capacity of art to be subversive of inhuman conditions can be understood only when it is seen as one among the social forces having the power to communicate ideas through a specific medium, to shape and change consciousness and beliefs which form the basis of social action. Art, in this sense, is inseparable from the rest of the society with which it has a reciprocal

relationship. Through working on feelings, attitudes and emotions, the artist expresses and interprets human problems and values which are actively accepted or rejected by the people in varying degrees.

Adorno maintains the autonomy of art, stemming from oppositional attitude to society, an attitude that basically determines the 'social' character of art. Thus for Adorno, art not only gives a 'dialectical image' of society, but also creates ground for its change. This becomes clear when he says:

"Art, however, is social not only because it is brought about in a way it embodies the dialectic of forces and relations of production. Nor is art social only because it derives its material content from society. Rather it is social primarily because it stands opposed to society. Now this opposition art can mount only when it has become autonomous."<sup>30</sup>

As for the place of art and literature in society, Marx had always been aware "of the great service writers of poetry or fiction can render to a cause by espousing

it, by producing works which pillory injustice, urge the necessity of change and ridicule opponents."<sup>31</sup> Louis Harap sums up the nature of that great service of the work of art thus:

"In general, art exerts a cumulative influence to confirm a close attitude or to shake its hold. In this way it takes its place in the pattern of social forces and contributes to change to the extent that it coincides with lines of social tension. As a whole, art thus influences social movements, while the power of any single work varies greatly."<sup>32</sup>

(4) Literature and Cognitive Function:

In the discussion relating to the position of ideology in relation to a literary work, we noted that no art work can be judged merely by its ideological content. No doubt an art work has some bit of ideological orientation but it is one that is implicit in the evolving characters shown to be reacting to real life situations. In that sense the ideological aspect of art can be understood only by seeing the cognitive function of art, and literature in particular. Marx and Engels,



and even Lenin, drew attention towards the cognitive function of art without ignoring its ideological nature. "They recognized that the relationship between these two functions of art is extremely complex and at times contradictory."<sup>33</sup>

In emphasizing the cognitive function of art they saw art as a form of knowledge. The conception of art as a form of cognition, then, is opposed to merely ideological interpretations which approach the work of art from the assumption that the artist addresses himself to reality in order to express his vision of the world, as well as his time and class.

The conception of art as a form of cognition emphasizes that the artist approaches reality, as Adolfo Sanchez Vasquez sees it, "to capture its essential features, to reflect it, but without dissociating his artistic reflection from his attitude to reality, that is, from the ideological content of the work."<sup>34</sup> What becomes essential to be noted here is that art can be knowledge, by not merely copying a reality like a mirror image but by creating a new one by transforming the external reality. In other words, art as a form of

cognition starts with the objective reality and then goes on to construct a new reality. The aim of this new reality is to give us truth about a given society and in the web of historically and socially conditioned relationships. Such conception of art as a form of cognition amounts to realism. This is so because realism does not lie merely in representing reality as it is (stopping here amounts to naturalism than realism) but creatively knowing truth behind the reality, that is, the essence of the human phenomena.

George Lukacs gave the most fruitful exposition equating art and realism, of art as a form of cognition - of knowledge. Lukacs sees art as a form of cognition, that is, as a means to reflect the world and reality, to discover and grasp it. Art reflects the reality in a way that the particular and the universal are transcended at the same time. Lukacs points out that along with the changing reality, the means of artistic expression and reflection of that reality also change. In spite of the variation in the means of expression over the years, all great art possesses one feature, that of realism. It is the capacity of great art to grasp the essence of the reality which explains its durability. His view of art

as reflecting the essence of human phenomena is based on Marx's idea of "totality", through which he related the individual creations to "types" or genres corresponding to particular historical stages in the gradual emancipation of man.<sup>39</sup> Thus Lukacs did recognize that forms of art other than those falling in the realm of realism exist. Only he has a preference for critical realism for its superior grasp of reality. And it is also true that Lukacs goes to the extreme of making realism the measure of all true art, which made him conclude that all true art is realist art, irrespective of the period to which it belongs or the conception of the world it expresses. Such a value orientation towards judging all art makes Lukacs' realism dogmatic and closed and fails to pay attention to any other aspect or function of art other than cognitive function, as a form of knowledge.

Adolfo Sanchez Vasquez notes that to see all true art as one in the realm of realism is narrow as it restricts our vision to one aspect of art, that is, art as a form of knowledge. This conception makes realism not a function of art but a value of judging all art. It, thereby, suffers from limitations as do the merely

ideological and sociological conceptions of art. Hence, realism should not be made a value to judge all art. Rather, it should extend its boundaries without excluding or absorbing other artistic phenomena. This becomes essential when we note that art has several aspects - ideological, sociological, cognitive - and all these aspects are united by a universal character that all art manifests, namely, "art as an essential human activity."<sup>34</sup> It would do well to quote Vasquez in detail in stressing the need to see art as manifestation of human creativity :

"Certainly, art has an ideological content, but only in the proportion that ideology loses its substantiveness by being integrated into the new reality of the work of art. That is, the ideological problems that the artist chooses to deal with have to be solved *artistically*. Art can have a cognitive function also, that of reflecting the essence of the real; but this function can only be fulfilled by *creating a new reality*, not by copying or imitating existing reality. In other words, the cognitive problems that the artist chooses to deal with have to be solved *artistically*. To forget this

- that is to reduce art to ideology or to mere form of knowledge - is to forget that the work is, above all, creation, a manifestation of the creative power of man."<sup>37</sup>

(5) Literature and the Communicative Dimension.

In its communicative dimension literature becomes the connecting link between the artist or the writer and other members of the society, where the former shares the objectified experience with the latter. Here, a work of literature can affect other people by contributing to the reaffirmation or devaluation of their ideals, goals or values. It is a social force, which, with its emotional and ideological weight shakes or moves people. Nobody remains the same after having been deeply moved by a true work of art.

Seeing literature as a form of cognition and also a means of communication to influence people's consciousness, makes one particularly attentive to the peculiarities of the literary medium. It is a fact inherent in communication that there are several ways of expressing ideas and making people to know, to

understand, to reflect. Some modes of communication can reach an audience that is large. In that sense literature definitely has a larger reach than formal education. A point to be noted here is that within literature there are different modes of communication to reach different sections of society. Say, one cannot expect literature to perform a revolutionary role if it is written in the classical mould if we take the case of present Indian context. It has to be written in the spoken language, and this has long been recognized. So also within this, a novel or a poem can reach only a particular audience, the literate sections of our society. In India, then, such literary modes could hardly perform the revolutionary function of influencing the popular consciousness in its widest range. This again is a fact that has been recognized by those involved practically in mobilizing the masses for various purposes. They have realized the necessity to reach those sections through the genre of songs in the folk form and street plays. Here, we see that the political needs and strategies are influencing the literary modes of communication. The communicative role of literature, however, cannot be stretched too far. Literature by itself cannot bring about revolutionary change of

consciousness. Rather, literature and art can only act as catalysts to the spread of such consciousness when they fall in line with the objective social tensions and conditions in a society.

## II

### CONCEPTUAL DIMENSIONS TO THE STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICS AND LITERATURE

What we have shown as the nature of relationship between politics and literature, according to some, in the preceding section is based on the study of the historical development of literature in concrete socio-economic and political situations. It does not project as to what is needed from such a relationship but states the political and social role literature played through history. At times the question of 'ought' did surface. But it is to be seen as emerging to meet the needs of practical struggles in the course of aiding a movement.

What is to be derived from this is that there is already a tradition that attempted to study the relationship between politics and literature. And it is

necessary for us to identify some of the methodological and conceptual categories used in such studies.

At the outset, it may be mentioned that there has been no agreement among various writers on this point. Each tends to evolve his own concepts to analyze the particular relationship in the case being looked into. However, a closer look at the various studies in the field shows that the conceptual differences seem to be arising from their attempts to focus attention on (1) studying one particular aspect of the relationship, and (2) subjecting the concrete cases to either a literary analysis or a social analysis. In the ultimate sense their differences converge when it comes to the question of final purpose, that is, seeking a positive relationship between politics and literature.

We can identify the various frameworks, and the way they were used, by classifying them into three broad types. They are: (1) those studies that are based on an analysis of single-works that are identified as representatives (classics) of their age, in the backdrop of their socio-historical conditions; (2) those studies analyzing the aspects of literary forms and their



structure in relation to the structure of the systems in which they originate, and thereby seeing the impact of one over the other; (3) those studies that locate broad tendencies of literature of a period as it can be seen over a range of several works, and thereby to place them in their socio-political origins and their position in the structures of dominance and resistance.

Within these broad types there exist differences in the concepts used, basing on their special foci of attention on grounds noted earlier.

For the purpose of our analysis here we can name these broad types as (1) 'Representative' studies; (2) 'Form'-Based studies; and (3) Studies identifying broad tendencies in the contexts of dominance and resistance, respectively. In what follows, an attempt is made to look into examples of the frameworks falling under these divisions, before going on to assess what concepts can be useful in a social and political analysis to locate the relationship between political movements and literary trends.

[1] 'Representative' Studies

The studies done by George Lukacs stand as a good example of this type. Lukacs, in his studies on European realist works like those of Balzac, Tolstoy etc., follows the method of studying the classic works that are representative of their age and genre by placing them in their historical backdrop and trying to evaluate them according to the standards of what he calls '*realism*' in literature.

Lukacs first locates the *social basis* of a writer's *experience* and those *social forces* which influenced his human and literary personality. He then goes on to analyze the *context* of the writer's work or works in terms of what they stand for, and also identify the '*forms*' through which that context is sought to be expressed.<sup>36</sup>

Lukacs tries to analyze these aspects through the use of certain concepts like '*artistic reflection of reality*', '*objectivity*' of such reflection<sup>37</sup>, '*objectivity of form*'<sup>40</sup> and the social factors behind the origin of forms, '*style*' and '*concreteness*'.<sup>41</sup>

Lukacs sees how artistic reflection of social reality is achieved in a particular work. For Lukacs, artistic reflection, like any other reflection of reality, involves a resolution of the contradictions through a spontaneous integration of appearance and reality, the particular and the general. This could be achieved in a work of art to the extent it is 'self contained' in evolving within itself all the preconditions for its characters, situations and events, and thereby reflecting social reality in its 'totality and motion'.<sup>42</sup> While this close connection of artistic reflection of reality with social life is a manifestation of the social function of creative works, the usefulness of reflection depends on the 'objectivity' of such reflection.<sup>43</sup> Such objectivity, in its turn, depends on the correct reflection of reality. This objectivity lies in a faithful portrayal of reality, irrespective of whether or not the implications of what is portrayed conforms to the world view or the political attitude of the writer.<sup>44</sup>

By 'style' or 'form' Lukacs refers to the particular way in which a writer chooses between the alternatives of

the 'particular' and the 'real' of his times and render it through his work.<sup>46</sup> The degree of integration between the 'real and the particular, the subjective and objective worlds, that the 'form' of work allows determines the degree of 'concreteness' of a work when taken by itself.<sup>46</sup> Artistic forms, for Lukacs, result from specific social conditions and ideological premises governing a particular society in which the form originates. The content that is expressed through a work of art in a way is linked to these very conditions and premises, because only such content can be expressed which that particular form facilitates. In this sense, the concept of 'objectivity of form' can be used in analyzing the historical and social factors that are behind the generation of specific forms, and thereby the works of art that go with them.<sup>47</sup>

Lukacs considers realist literature as the only literature that matters, and goes on to analyze only the realist works. He feels that one can ignore the study of individualistic and psychological trends in literature in terms of social analysis. This is because, as he goes on to explain, only realist literature can portray faithfully and objectively the situations and conditions

of social upheaval and political change. It is another matter that great realist works have a 'topicality' by which he means they emerged only under such conditions, when looked at historically.<sup>48</sup>

Another criterion that Lukacs identifies as central to realist literature is the ability to portray the important contradictory social forces and the direction of change through creation of 'types'. The category of 'type' enables the depiction of human personality as a total entity.<sup>49</sup> And the depiction of reconstruction of humans as total entities through creation of types, which for Lukacs form part of the philosophy of proletarian humanism, also shows the process of resolving the alienation and dismemberment suffered in a class society.<sup>50</sup>

From the point of view of our analysis such an identification of criteria governing realist literature becomes important to the extent it enables us to locate such works from the thick of movements and struggles in our own times.

[2] 'Form' - Based Studies

In this category we see two types of studies. The common feature is that they are centred round the question of the 'form' of literary works. The differences can be seen when it comes to the question of what other aspects are analyzed in relation to 'form(s)' of literary works. In other words, some like Walter Benjamin study the impact of environmental factors on the form and quality of works of art, including literature.<sup>91</sup> Some like Lucien Goldmann on the other hand, establish a correlation between the structure of an art form, say 'Novel', and the structures of the society in which it emerges, in this case the capitalist system.<sup>92</sup>

Walter Benjamin deals with the possibility to locate the development of various tendencies of art not only on the level of economy but also in the super-structure under certain conditions which he identifies as those of mechanical reproduction in this age. He maintains that increasing tendency towards mechanical reproduction of art that is seen in the present century, say as in the case of films, has come to change the reaction of the masses towards art. The increasing fusion of the visual

and the emotional enjoyment has resulted in greater receptivity towards art by the masses. This phenomena has only increased the social and political significance of this art form. Benjamin's analysis shows, however, that these art forms can be equally put to different uses. For example, he notes how under conditions of fascism the political response was one where politics projected through war itself was aestheticized. Such a glorification of war, which mobilized the masses without allowing them to question the existing property system, was popularized before the masses through such art forms as films more easily. He also points out that the same art forms can be used by the communists through politicizing art.

While Benjamin dealt with the impact of the technological changes on the development of new art forms and their capacity to reach the audience more easily and effectively, and the social and political implications of such development, Lucien Goldmann tries to show an analogous relationship between the economic structures and the literary manifestations. Thus, we see Goldmann positing a link between the economic structures of the individualistic modern Western society and 'Novel' form

which is its most important literary manifestation. This he calls "homology of structures" on two different planes, namely, that of the fictional genre of the novel and the structure of exchange in the market society.

In a way, Goldmann is not the first to talk of such a homology. There are previous Marxist and sociological positions too which talked of it. However, there is a difference between the two. While the previous Marxist position identifies the link at the level of collective consciousness, Goldmann rejects any such analogous structural transposition at the level of collective consciousness. Goldmann rather sees the link as occurring outside the collective consciousness.

If one were to see the practical implications of such an analysis, we may maintain that such a homology between these structures shows the potential as well as the limits of this particular literary form, the Novel, in its ability to depict and contribute to our understanding of the social reality. Perhaps, we can read into Goldmann's analysis the proposition that the Novel form can serve to show the structural contradictions in the capitalist society.



[3] Studies Identifying Broad Tendencies In the Contexts of Dominance And Resistance.

Gramscian social and political analysis serves as an important guide in this direction. Gramscian analysis is based on the identification of certain broad tendencies in a given society, which will help in showing the particular direction for political intervention as part of a revolutionary transformation aiming at a total social change.<sup>53</sup>

Gramsci stressed that authentic revolutionary change is possible only when it covers all aspects of society, which he expressed through the notion of 'ensemble of relations', including economics, politics, culture, social relations, ideology etc. For Gramsci all these aspects are interrelated, and hence any attempt at changing an established order has to involve a struggle against all these aspects simultaneously.<sup>54</sup>

Gramsci's concepts of 'hegemony' and 'counter-hegemony' serve a useful purpose in analyzing the extent to which both the notions operate on the literary,

cultural and ideological planes in a particular society. This can be understood when we take note of the stress laid by Gramsci upon the role of consciousness as a concrete political force in shaping and influencing revolutionary change,<sup>55</sup> besides the influence of mode of production itself. While rejecting the economic determinist position of orthodox Marxists,<sup>56</sup> Gramsci projects a reciprocal relationship that is dynamic between the economic base and the superstructure. He does not deny the impact of economy on the cultural, political and ideological forms in the ultimate sense. Only he asserts the causal power of cultural, political and ideological forms too in periods of revolutionary struggles in setting the direction of social change.<sup>57</sup> It is to conceptualize such a reciprocal relationship in terms of its impact either on the maintenance of an established order or on class relations and on struggles for changing that order, Gramsci introduced the notions of 'hegemony' and 'counter-hegemony'.

Gramsci maintains that class domination is perpetuated not merely through the use of force by the coercive state apparatus, but also through a popular consensus achieved on the cultural and ideological levels

in civil society in support of the established order. While the former is referred to as domination, the latter is referred to as ideological hegemony. This is especially so in the case of capitalist societies, where values, beliefs and attitudes supportive of the ruling class interests and the legitimacy of their rule are consciously permeated on a mass level.<sup>98</sup> By implication, Gramsci makes the proposition that any crisis of the established order, that creates opportunities for active political intervention aiming a revolutionary transformation, should not only manifest in a crisis of the economic order but also a crisis of ideological hegemony in 'civil society'.<sup>99</sup> In such a situation the superstructural forms have the capacity, if properly made use of, to inspire men towards action and act as catalysts in activating objective contradictions. Thus Gramsci notes :

"To the extent ideologies are historically necessary they have a validity which is 'psychological', they 'organize' human masses and create the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle etc..<sup>100</sup>

Revolutionary movements aimed at overthrowing the established capitalist order, then, have to create a counter-hegemony which demystifies the established hegemonic control from which the ruling class continues to derive legitimacy. In other words, struggle for structural and ideological change is as much part of the overall economic and political struggle, to the extent that superstructural forms too are potentially concrete political forces that can shape the nature of class struggle.<sup>41</sup> Gramsci, thus, stresses the role of *negating* - *consciousness* that can shape particular demands, structure the revolutionary situation, define mass responses to issues and actions in the struggle for revolutionary social transformation.

Cultural forms such as literature have a great role to play in diffusing a socialist counter-hegemony among all potentially revolutionary subjects in such a process by being closely rooted in the praxis of overall political struggle. The importance of such a spread of revolutionary mass consciousness can hardly be overstressed when we see that it acts as a necessary subjective element that imparts a political meaning to the continuing crisis of the existing order.

The Gramscian concept of 'hegemony' assumed special significance in the hands of Raymond Williams<sup>2</sup> in analysing the manner in which culture forms part of the process of domination of one class over another, just as much as a basis of communication within a group. Williams considers culture in its relationship to the structure of society and recognizes the importance of focusing on the relationship between ideas and social structures in which they are embedded. Williams' study, in a way, through its stress on social structures than on the dynamic aspects of change, helps more in explaining the continuance of an order under stable conditions than in a situation of social change focussing on dynamic aspects of movements and struggles. In this latter case, one can fruitfully use the concept of 'counter-hegemonic culture' and thereby turn towards a political analysis of the relationship between politics and literature.

Seen in this backdrop, one can understand the usefulness of the Gramscian concepts of 'hegemony' and 'counter-hegemony' in a social and political analysis of creative literature, which is seen as part of the overall cultural sphere aiding either in supporting the

established order or in the struggle against that order. Within this framework, one will be looking for the broad tendencies in literature, both in terms of form and content and the manners of their diffusion, that emerge in specific situations and points of struggle against the system. Here, the analysis becomes less literary and more social and political. It concentrates more on the manner in which literature serves a political role in the process of diffusion of counter-hegemonic culture and consciousness as part of the overall revolutionary struggle against the existing order. Besides, the role of 'creative elites' comes to the fore either in the case of hegemony or in the creation of counter hegemonic culture in articulating the political will and potential force of class struggling against the system.<sup>43</sup> Attempting to study the political role of creative literature in this context also necessitates its analysis as part of the larger social, economic and political conditions and struggles in which literature and other cultural forms are located.

## III

Each of the approaches looked into in the previous section has its limitations as well as some usefulness from the point of view of the present research. We have noted the limitations of the various frameworks and concepts while dealing with them separately. It would be useful to note how some of the concepts used in those frameworks would be of use here. Our job in this direction becomes easy as the various approaches and frameworks do not contradict one another, but only look at different aspects of the subject.

Thus, for example, Lukacs' category of 'Realism' may not be useful for us directly as we are not concerned with analyzing the literary aspects of 'style' and 'form' etc., of literary works by themselves. However, the same concept can be useful for locating a trend and characterizing it in terms of its portrayal of reality, especially in such literature which emerged from the thick of movements and struggles.

Similarly, there is not much we can derive directly from the concepts and categories Walter Benjamin uses

while analyzing the relationship between politics and popular cinema. However, we can gain from an approach that studies the impact of environmental factors on the form of works of art, and its impact on the popular consciousness. Perhaps, this helps in analyzing the popular fiction being belted out in serialized form by the commercial magazines catering to the lower and upper middle classes.

Lucien Goldmann too can be made use of here not directly but indirectly through a negative reading of his conclusions. It is implicit in Goldmann's arguments that Novel form has its limitations, borne of its "structure", in reflecting all types of social reality. Since there is a homology between the structures of bourgeois individualistic society and the form of the Novel, the latter can realistically reflect only the reality and values of the system which gave rise to it. Such a reading would be useful, though in a limited way, while talking of the Telugu Novel and its limitation in reaching all sections of a society that is not completely capitalistic, and there by the necessity to look for other forms of expressing the revolutionary reality and diffusion of the same.



Of all the concepts, the Gramscian conceptualization on 'Hegemony' and 'Counter-Hegemony', 'Culture' and 'Counter-culture' seems to be the most useful from the point of view of the present study. Of course, while looking into this framework we did not have the possibility to give the example of any work using it for studying the relationship between politics and literature. Yet, its usefulness in studying the interaction between political movements and literary trends can hardly be overstressed, especially in a case where we have the opportunity to study anti-system struggles carried on at the political, economic, as well as the ideological and cultural planes, and which in turn are confronted by state repression on all levels.

#### NOTES

1. See for example: Irwing Howe, Politics And The Novel (Newyork: Book for Libraries Press, 1970); Leo Lowenthal Literature And The Image of Man (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1957); John Lucas (ed.), Literature And Politics in the Nineteenth Century (London: Methuen Co, 1975); Lionel Trilling, The Liberal Imagination - Essays on Literature And Society (London: Secker and Warburg, 1951); Joe Andrew, Writers And Society During The Rise of Russian Revolution(London: MacMillan, 1980); This is by no means an exhaustive list, but serves to show the point made here.
2. It is to be noted at this point that for much of the

chapter the words art and Literature may be taken as interchangeable. Whenever the word art has been used, it is used in a way that includes the notion of literature as an art form too.

3. R.G. Collingwood, The Principles of Art (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947), pp. 279-280.
4. George Orwell, A Collection of Essays (Garden City: Doubleday & Co, 1957) p.316.
5. Rene Wellek, The Later Nineteenth Century (London: Jonathan Cape, 1966), pp. 27-57.
6. Trilling, op. cit., p.xi.
7. Ibid., pp.282-87; Also see Edward Zwick (ed.), Literature And Liberalism (Washington D.C.: The New Republic Book Co., 1970), pp. xi-xxiv.
8. Fredrick Jameson, Marxism And Form-Twentieth Century Dialectical Theories of Literature (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971) ,p.x.
9. S.S. Prawer, Karl Marx And World Literature (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p.401.
10. Cliff Slaughter, Marx And Marxism - An Introduction (Calcutta: Orient Longman, 1988), p.66.
11. Cliff Slaughter, Marxism, Ideology And Literature (London: MacMillan, 1980), p.22: the "dialectical materialist method and the theory of history developed by Marx and Engels has profound implications for the interpretation of literature."
12. Louis Harap, Social Roots of the Arts (Newyork: International Publishers, 1949), pp.9-10. Also see Avner Zis, Foundations of Marxist Aesthetics (Moscow: Progress, 1977) p.31: "The description of art as a form of social consciousness is a direct result of the application of dialectical and historical materialism in its capacity as the methodological foundation for the apprehension of art."
13. Jurgen Ruhle, Literature and Revolution - A Critical Study of the Writer And Communism In the Twentieth

- Century (London: Pall Mall Press, 1969), p.131.
14. Quoted in Ruhle, *Ibid.*, p. 131.
  15. Quoted in Ruhle, *Ibid.*, p. 131.
  16. Karl Marx., Frederick Engels., On Literature And Art (Moscow: Progress, 1976), op. cit., p. 412.
  17. Slaughter (1980), op. cit., p.73.
  18. Adolfo Sanchez Vasquez, Art and Society - Essays in Marxist Aesthetics (Translated Maro Rio Francos) (London: Merlin Press, 1973), p.44.
  19. Slaughter (1988), op. cit., p. 19.
  20. Prawer, op. cit., p. 403.
  21. Vasquez, op.cit., pp. 24-5.
  22. Cited in Rekha Jhanji (ed.), Communication And The Arts (Delhi : Ajanta Pub., 1984) pp. 90-91.
  23. Vasquez, op. cit., p.25. The writings of Marx and Engels on the complex web in which artistic phenomena exist stress on the autonomy and independence of 'spiritual' creations, on the durability of art across changing historical conditions, and on the uneven development of art and society. Referring to this, and even while stressing not to forget that art is made by men who are historically conditioned, Vasquez draws attention towards the incongruity of reducing art to its ideological content: "to characterize art according to its ideological content ignores a historical fact: class ideologies comes and go, but true art persists."
  24. Harap., op. cit., p.38.
  25. Slaughter (1980), op. cit., p. 23.
  26. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
  27. Harap, op. cit., p. 114.
  28. Slaughter (1988), op. cit., p. 66.

29. Praver, op. cit., p. 402.
30. T.W. Adorno, Aesthetic Theory (Translated, C.Lenhardt, Eds. Gretel Adorno & Rolf Tiedemann), (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), p.321.
31. Praver, op. cit.,p. 419; Writing from a different perspective Joyce Cary makes a similar point on "the universal activity of art and the fear it inspires even in authority. The written and spoken arts are extremely powerful." As for instance, he goes on to note," The influence of Rousseau, Voltaire, Diderot, on the French Revolution, or Turgenev and Dostoevsky and Tolstoy on the Russian, has been exaggerated, but it was extremely strong.": Art And Reality (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1958), p.20
32. Harap, op. cit., p. 110
33. Vasquez, op. cit., p. 28.
34. Ibid., p. 29.
35. George Lukacs, The Meaning of Contemporary Realism (London: Merlin Press, 1963), pp. 55-7 p. 60.
36. Vasquez, op. cit., p. 41.
37. Ibid., pp. 40-1
38. George Lukaacs, Studies in European Realism (Newyork: Grosset and Dunlop, 1964), p. 16.
39. KM. Dolgov," Aesthetics of George Lukacs", The Polish Philosophical quarterly (Vol xv, No:1-2, 1988), p 121
40. Lukacs (1964), op cit., p 56
41. George Lukacs, Writer and Critic And Other Essays (Ed & Translated, Arthur Kuhn), (London: Merlin Press, 1970), p 19.
42. Ibid., pp. 34-7.
43. Dolgov, op. cit, pp 128-31.
44. Lukacs (1964), op. cit, p. 10.

45. Lukacs (1970), op cit., p. 19.
46. Ibid., pp. 22-3.
47. Ibid., pp. 50-6.
48. Lukacs (1964), op. cit., p. 10.
49. Ibid., pp. 6-8.
50. Ibid., p.5.
51. See Walter Benjamin "The work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction ", in Illuminations, (Translated, Harry Zohn, Ed., Hanna Arendt), (Newyork: Harcourt Brace, 1968).
52. See Lucien Goldmann, Towards A Sociology of The Novel (Translated, Sheridan,A.), (London: Tavistock press, 1975).
53. Carl Boggs, Gramsci's Marxism (London: Pluto press, 1976), p. 30.
54. Ibid., p.. 18.
55. Ibid., p. 63.
56. Roger Scruton, Thinkers of The New Left (Essex: Longman, 1985), pp. 80-1.
57. Boggs, op. cit., pp. 36-7.
58. Ibid., p. 39.
59. Ibid., p. 40.
60. Antonio Gramsci," The study of philosophy", in The Prison Note Books (Eds. & Translated, Quintan Hoare Geoffrey Nowell Smith), (London: Lawrence Wishort, 1971), pp. 377.
61. Gramsci, "State and civil society", op. cit., p. 270.
62. See Raymond Williams, Marxism And Literature (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977).

63. Luciano Pellicani, Gramsci: An Alternative Communism? (California: Hoover Institution press, 1981), pp. 37-8.

## CHAPTER II

### PLACING THE PRESENT STUDY IN ITS ROOTS

#### I

The focus of present research is the nature of interaction between political movements and literary trends, as part of the larger relationship between politics and literature. For looking into this aspect we have chosen a specific case study within a time frame - that of politics and literature in Telugu society during 1960-1980.

As clarified in the introductory chapter, a proper understanding of the phenomena as it occurred in Andhra Pradesh during 1960-80 requires some knowledge about the preceding period as well. This is essential as the present trends in literary sphere as well as the political sphere have their roots in the preceding period, as much as they have been shaped by the new social and political changes.

The influence of the preceding period on the period under study can be seen in two ways: (1) learning from the preceding trends and movements by critically assessing them; and (2) borrowing some elements from some of the past developments while consciously avoiding certain elements from some of those trends.

The same remains true in the case of social and political movements as well. Hence, the historical links and divergences of the present period from the past.

This chapter, therefore, traces very briefly the changing social, economic and political scene in Andhra Pradesh in particular, as also the national and international developments in general between the turn of the century to the early 1960s, and show the various literary trends that emerged from such conditions. This will be done simultaneously.

## II

There exists a rich variety of "modern" literature in Telugu encapsulating a complex panorama in terms of



themes and problems it focused on, the differing perspectives and ideological standpoints from which the problems were explained, analyzed and sought to be solved, and in terms of influencing the thinking of different strata of people and contributing towards social and political change in Telugu society.

Another significant feature of modern Telugu literature is the diversity in terms of trends that emerged over a period of time, as a reaction to the changing social and political scene. Besides, as many trends emerged not all remained active. Some were relegated to history by the new trends, while those that emerged newly drew their lessons from the performance of the preceding trends. This is the way modern Telugu literature came of several stages of development starting with the social reformist writings in the first quarter of the Twentieth Century to the Romanticist trend of "Bhavakavitvam" during 1920s and 1930s, followed by the "progressive" writings under the "Abhyudaya" Movement in 1940s and 1950s, which became inactive during 1960s. Later on during 1960-80, there emerged new trends like the anarchist "Digambara" trend and the radical "Revolutionary" trend.

Besides these literary trends of the mainstream serious literature, there always existed the commercial fiction (with, of course, the largest readership) having little links with the social reality *in terms of content*, though in the larger sense can be linked to the growing commercial culture ever since Independence.

These various developments in the Telugu literature have their roots in the changes taking place in the society itself. They have been emerging as responses to the social, economic and political problems and conditions of the day. and most of the trends had to face opposition from the establishment of the day both on the cultural and literary sphere and the political levels. The process in which some of these trends stuck to their ground, inspite of all odds, and went on to gain the acceptance of the people shows one point distinctly - that change, wherever and whatever it be, could not be stopped; while the pace of change had been regulated and controlled with some degree of success, it could not be fully stunted.

All this can be seen by tracing briefly the various trends upto the 1950s in the backdrop of their social and political conditions in the following section.

### III

#### [A] The Beginnings of Modern Literature in Telugu

One comes across modern literature in Telugu by the turn of this century, the foundations of which were however gaining ground in the second half of the nineteenth century itself.<sup>2</sup>

Until then Telugu literature was in the grip of a highly sanskritized literature, drawn in content and <sup>form</sup> from the translation literature popularized in the medieval period. This literature stood for feudal values and practices, confined as it was to the scholarly circles and the kings and zamindars cut to size by the British colonial rulers.<sup>3</sup> There, however, continued to exist all the time a rich oral tradition reflecting the Telugu social reality better; but it never received the patronage of the establishment.<sup>4</sup>

Telugu literature woke up from this deep slumber with the jolt it received through changing economic and political conditions, and life-styles in Telugu society, as also elsewhere in India, under the influence of the changes introduced by the colonial rulers. By the turn of the century there emerged a progressive educated middle-class that started questioning the traditional values and practises.<sup>5</sup> such changes had their impact on the Telugu literary scene of the period.<sup>6</sup>

There now began a movement for modernity in literature through the efforts of social reformers and writers such as Gidugu Ramamurthy, Kandukuri Veeresalingam paytulu, Gurajada Apparao etc.,<sup>7</sup> who started propagating individualist values. Literature came in handy as a vehicle for attacking social evils, prejudices and superstition, as well as propagating social reform and educating the people.<sup>8</sup>

Given such a purpose, there was not only an effort at fighting for a change in the content of literature reflecting the emerging social values but also a parallel effort at changing the form and language to facilitate

the proper expression of the new reality. The change towards writing in the spoken language became necessary as they had to reach a wider mass of population, which no doubt is still restricted to the literate middle-class sections. Attention began to be diverted from poetry to prose forms like Novel, short story, Essay and Play.\*

The attempts at breaking the shackles imposed by tradition, superstition and ignorance could be seen in the writings of Veeresalingam, Gurajada AppaRao etc., projecting the nascent capitalist values in the cultural sphere during the first quarter of this century. There also emerged a spate of nationalist literature, both reformist and radical during this period. <sup>10</sup> These writings reveal a high degree of social consciousness and realistic depiction of the society of that period. However, this social reformist trend started by Veeresalingam and Gurajada received <sup>a</sup> blow by 1920s due to lack of worthy successors in the literary sphere.

[B] The Romanticist Trend: Bhava-kavitwam

During the 1920s the limelight was stolen by the Romanticist trend under the name of *Bhava Kavitwam*, which

continued to hold sway upto the early 1940s, blocking room for critical literature.

This trend appeared as a middle class movement to a large extent, drawing inspiration from the Western, especially the English, Romanticist literature. During this period Telugu literature became synonymous with Romanticist poetry itself for all practical purposes.

This trend was progressive as far as it yearned for individual freedom, for freeing oneself from self-created shackles, for free and pure relations between the sexes etc.,. However, there was a section of writers who tried to draw inspiration from the past, to which extent it also had in it the revivalist touch. Some important writers belonging to this school were Devulapalli Krishna Sastry, Rayaprolu Subba Rao, Nayani Subba Rao, Chalam, and Vishwanatha Satyanarayana.

The influence <sup>of</sup> contemporary social and political conditions and events like that of the nationalist Movement and of social reformist movements like the Brahma Samaj can be seen in the writings under this trend. They advocated social reformist ideals such as the

abolition of child marriages, support for widow remarriages and women's education.<sup>11</sup>

The most striking aspect of the writings imbued with a reformist zeal is the love of freedom - freedom seen as inherent and natural in men. <sup>12</sup> This goes along with an opposition to the existing social norms and regulations,<sup>13</sup> and at least attempts to decrease the hold of blind faith in tradition and custom.

[C] Abhyudaya Movement: A Revival of Progressive Literature Along New Lines.

The period starting from the 1940s marked the dawn of a new era in the history of modern Telugu literature. This turn came with the emergence of 'Abhyudaya Sahityam' or 'Progressive Literature' as a movement, which soon came to replace in popularity the Romanticist school which held the forte in the preceding two decades.

Abhyudaya literature marked a qualitative change in Telugu literature in terms of content, form, and its relationship towards social and political movements of the day. In content, emphasis shifted from expression of

individual and personal feelings and outpourings to a depiction of the problems of the common man, the working class and the peasantry. Emphasis was laid on problem-oriented literature reflecting on social reality critically.

As a movement, this trend had Marxism as its ideological inspiration, and the building of a socialist society its main goal. It emerged in the 1930s under the influence of the All India progressive Writers Association which spread Marxist ideals in the cultural sphere by being in close relationship with the communist party of India. <sup>14</sup>

The Abhyudaya trend opposed all superstition and stood against exploitation. The understanding that inequalities in distribution, ownership of the means of production, and that unjust economic and social relations are responsible for hunger, illiteracy and poverty was basic to this movement. <sup>15</sup> It sees ideology as supporting the interests of the ruling classes, while religion, law, culture, etc., are used to buttress the ideological plane over which they have a hegemonic control. Given this understanding, the writers professing links with this



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movement wanted to bring art, culture and literature within the reach of the general mass of society and bring to their notice the exploitative nature of the existing setup, and to make them receptive for bringing about a change of the system.<sup>16</sup> Of course, it is important to note that this movement failed to reach the masses as it claimed, confined as it was to cater to the educated middle classes in practice.

Before going to see how Aabhyudayavada ideals found expression in a different form of literature, it is necessary to look into the growth of the Aabhyudayavada Movement in its general historical backdrop.

The beginnings of Aabhyudayavada literature in Telugu lie in the 1930s, though as a movement it became popular only in the 1940s. Both national and international conditions of the period influenced this trend. Such events as the Russian Revolution, the economic Depression, large scale unemployment, etc., began to reflect in the writings of the period.<sup>17</sup> The various progressive literary movements that began to develop in the West during the period between the two World Wars too made many writers turn towards leftist

outlook. The same impact could be seen on Telugu literature of the period.<sup>10</sup>

The conditions within India as seen in the struggle against the colonial rule and the nature of the Nationalist movement also influenced this type of literature. This was the period when a large number of youth began to become disillusioned with the peaceful struggle through protests and bargaining carried out by the Nationalist leaders.

By 1925, the Communist Party of India had been set up in India.<sup>11</sup> Many socialists and communists also joined together and formed the congress socialist party, and as part of the Congress they established trade unions and Kisan Sabhas through which they continued the fight for the basic rights of the workers and agricultural labourers. Side by side, there were taking place several terrorist and armed struggles in many parts of the country. At this juncture, the communist Party adopted the policy of United Front and joined hands with all the progressive forces sympathetic towards Marxist ideals, though not members of the party itself. The party began to coopt such progressive forces from literary circles

too by forming people's councils. It was as a product of all these forces that the *All India Progressive Writers Association* came into being in 1935.<sup>20</sup> As part of such events on the national level, Telugu writers like Srirangam Srinavasa Rao - popularly known as Sri Sri - Narayanababu, and Kodavatiganti KutumbaRao began to experiment with writings along those lines.<sup>21</sup> Very soon these progressive writers in Telugu joined together as a movement under the Andhra Pradesh Progressive Writers Association in 1943.<sup>22</sup>

In trying to see how the Abhyudaya Movement expressed its understanding of the social and political situation in the country and their social ideals in specific literature, we can confine our focus to the writings of Sri Sri in the realm of poetry and Kodavatiganti Kutumba Rao in prose as the major representatives of this trend. Their choice, here, is guided by the fact that they were not only prolific writers but also that they could effectively express their social and political ideas without sacrificing the qualities of great literature. Besides, their writings caught the attention of the Telugu literary scene in a

way that even those who stand opposed to their ideals and goals accept the greatness of their writings.<sup>23</sup>

Given their approach towards literature and politics, the Abhyudayavada writers had to evolve new forms for expressing their ideas in the spoken language so as to reach a wider audience. Now, the Abhyudayavada poets like Sri Sri and Narayanababu took the mantle to overcome the grammatical and metrical shackles of the past, making *free verse* the form of their poetry. And, most of all, it was Sri Sri who broke new grounds in this direction, laying the foundations of Abhyudayavada poetry and making it popular. He could achieve this by combining artistically the fiery spirit of a revolutionary with the authentic imagination of a poet.<sup>24</sup> In one of his earliest poems entitled "*Nava Kavita*" ("New Poetry"), he shows how *this new type of poetry should be*:

"One that moves and moves others,  
That which changes and changes others,  
That which takes us forward, ---" <sup>25</sup>

He wants to imbue it with a capacity that shakes the literary scene that reached a stagnation point.

Sri Sri, who originally started by writing romanticist poetry, now came to raise the banner of revolt against Bhavakavitwam, and gave Telugu literature a new philosophical basis. His poem "*Mahaprasthanam*" ("The Great Journey"), considered to be his magnum opus and written as early as 1934 under various influences, opened the doors to a new age in modern Telugu literature. His poems written during 1933 and 1941 came in the form of an anthology only in 1950 under the title "*Mahaprasthanam and other poems*". All these poems gained publicity and popularity only towards the end of 1940s when they were adopted by the communist party and its literary/cultural organizations in the state.<sup>26</sup>

Sri Sri had to his credit the achievement of establishing the vital link between the literary sphere and the lives of the people at large.<sup>27</sup> He developed his world view under the influence of Marxist ideas which became the touchstone against which he judged the contemporary reality around him.<sup>28</sup> Sri Sri was all along an ideologically "committed" poet who stood for the freedom and unity of the working classes. Yet, one should note that during this period his writings, given their

form of free verse, could reach only the middle class educated sections.<sup>29</sup> In spite of being a committed poet, he never sacrificed artistic perfection for the sake of ideological propaganda. Rather, we can say he sacrificed neither but skilfully originated new forms to express artistically the Marxist ideas and social analysis of the reality around him from that point of view. For the first time in the history of Telugu literature Sri Sri commented on history from the materialist angle. He set new goals for poetry through which he depicted the problems of the exploited and the downtrodden sections of our society, and also had a firm basis to offer solutions to those problems.<sup>30</sup> He raised his voice in support of the oppressed mass of the people, and made the concepts of class, class-division and class-struggles the tools of literary analysis of social and political reality. At last, the lives of the working men and women too were seen as good enough to be subject matter of literature in Telugu. He reveals through his optimistic calls for a socialist revolution in his poems of 1930s and 1940s the optimism of the Indian communists, at least of the party in Andhra Pradesh, at that time.

In the field of Prose writings, the most important writer to follow this line was Kodavatiganti Kutumba Rao, a novelist, short story writer and essayist who wrote with social purpose, aiming at social good.<sup>31</sup> Telling why he started writing Kutumba Rao said : I started writing "as I was worried at the lack of even a minimum level of analytical thinking and consciousness among the people in our society - - -."<sup>32</sup> As a writer, he believed in drawing the raw material from his experience, and attempted to set the reader towards thinking in a particular direction without sitting on judgement by showing some final goal.<sup>33</sup>

In his stories and novels,<sup>34</sup> Kutumba Rao described realistically the problems that faced the middle classes at that time. He analyzed their problems by placing them in the midst of historical changes at the global and national level and thereby showing their impact on the living conditions in coastal Andhra Pradesh.<sup>35</sup> Kutumba Rao described the middle-class life not only because he was acquainted with it but also because he saw an important role for them, alongside the working class and the rural peasantry, in the process of transforming the existing system. While he saw the middle class as having



a revolutionary potential they are caught in the dilemma of whether to take a chance at seeking material prosperity that eludes them or to support the poor peoples in their struggle for a more just system. In the process this section was described as falling into apathy and self-deception. Writing with the middle class educated readers in mind, his stories are directed towards bringing about a change in the thinking and attitudes of the middle class so that they inculcate a spirit of struggle against a system which he perceives to be dehumanizing in the long run.<sup>34</sup>

[D] The Telengana Peasant Struggle And the Literary Sphere : The First Spark of Active Interaction Between Politics and Literature in Modern Telugu Society.

The preceding discussion on the state of Telugu literature under the Abhyudaya trend shows the emergence and rise to popularity of a literature that was socially and politically conscious, having clear-cut social and political goals which were sought to be furthered through the cultural sphere. Yet, this does not give a full picture of the strong links between politics and

literature of the period. The peak of interaction between politics and literature was reached between 1940 and 1950, the period when the Telengana peasant struggle broke out and the literary and cultural spheres too were geared to further the cause of that struggle.

The Telengana peasant struggle was not merely a fight on the economic and political levels. The struggle encompassed the literary and cultural spheres as well. For the first time in the history of Telugu society as well as literature we come to see literature being consciously used to spread a political consciousness that is in line with the struggle. It serves as a good example of how the practical problems involved in using the literary and cultural medium to spread a political message to the illiterate mass of peasants and agricultural labourers forced the writers to take to popular art forms and styles, a lesson learnt from the praxis of political struggle - a lesson which was to be made use of once again in Srikakulam movement, as we shall be seeing.

It was around the 1940s that the movement of the agricultural workers and peasants began to gain momentum in Andhra under the Communist leadership. In the same

period the Telengana struggle<sup>37</sup> carried against the exploitative feudal land reforms under the Nizam's rule moved the whole of Andhra. This struggle against the feudal exploitation reached its peak under the aegis of the Andhra Mahasabha, soon turning into an armed struggle.

The Andhra Pradesh progressive Writer's Association had played an important role in buttressing this armed struggle at its peak during the period during 1946 - 1948, which was also the period when the communist movement was strong in Andhra. The ferment created by the armed struggle gave rise to a lot of martyrs, writers and also a number of revolutionary songs in the folk medium with a political message. This was the golden age for Abhyudaya literature.<sup>38</sup> Stress was laid on writing in a form that is suited for the oral and visual medium such as the song and Dance, and plays. Much literature in the oral tradition emerged from the struggling masses themselves, that today one does not know who first wrote or created many songs still in vogue.<sup>39</sup>

Several popular art forms like "*Burrakatha*", "*Pittala Dora*", "*Bairaguala Pata*", "*Golla Suddulu*",

Street plays etc., were used in spreading the message of the struggle.<sup>40</sup> They had been mostly spread by the toiling masses and the professional artists who worked for the movement, helping the revolutionary spirit to reach the people at large. Song, drama and verse were used to depict not only the general exploitation taking place in Telengana but also about the important incidents of confrontation between the struggling masses and the landlords and the Nizam's forces and about the atrocities of the landlords<sup>41</sup> to give a fresh heart to the struggling masses.<sup>42</sup> The struggle of a poor Muslim peasant by name Bandagi against Visnur Deshmukh in the 1920s was popularized through a play, "*Ma Bhoomi*" ("Our Land")<sup>43</sup> staged in Telengana and other parts of Andhra through such front organizations like the Praja Natya Mandali, facing a ban for some time in the process.<sup>44</sup>

Thus, in the wake of Telengana peasant struggle, alongside the political struggle there stood the struggle on the literary and cultural planes. For once, the whole of literary and cultural spheres have been moved to aid the struggle for political and economic goals. In the process, literary and other art forms became popularized, and were one with the struggling masses whom they

inspired. This close connection with the political struggle had enriched the literature itself, changed its forms, enabled it to reach wider mass of people than ever before. The political and the literary movements became so much intertwined that the power of literature when properly used under certain conditions of political struggle had been realized.

The same Telengana struggle, however, proved another side of the picture too. As the armed struggle had been crushed heavily by the Indian state after Independence, and the Communist Movement in Andhra weakened, the literary movement too lost its vitality in the 1950s. The Abhyudaya Movement under the influence of the nationalist struggle for freedom strived for that immediate goal, but also went further and influenced the struggles against feudal forces and relations as socialism was its ultimate goal. But, it failed to work towards that goal in the Post-Independence period when it found itself lacking a political movement to draw inspiration from and work with.<sup>40</sup>

This, in a way, showed that literature which is socially and politically conscious can sprout only under

conditions where political movements and popular struggles continue. Hence, we can have a proper understanding of the decline of Abhyudaya Movement in Telugu literature as also of the type of literature that emerged between 1950 and 1960 only by seeing that the defeat of the popular struggles reflected in the state of literature. Side by side, we have to see the post-independence developments in economy and society and the type of literature that became popular.

[E] The Period Between 1950 and 1960.

This was the period which, as we noted, started with the assertion of the power of the Indian State against any anti-system popular struggle, thereby showing the direction of development that was to come in the years that followed. India was firmly set towards a capitalist path of development not through the overthrow of the feudal elements who ruled the roost till then but by compromising with them.<sup>44</sup> Parallel to the suppression of the armed struggle in Telengana, considerable political pressure was brought upon the literary and cultural forms associated with the struggle. The communist party which shifted its strategy towards participating in

parliamentary elections came in for severe defeats at elections in Andhra. Under these conditions the Abhyudaya Movement in literature, which prospered during 1940-1950, now began to wilt. And, as a result, many progressive writers began to become disillusioned.

Besides the above political conditions, the nature of economic development aided the spread of a capitalist value system with a consumerist culture, at least in the urban areas at that time.<sup>47</sup> One can see the entry of capital into literary reproduction on a large scale, turning literature into a business commodity through the popular weekly magazines after 1955. The new literature, that took the form of serial literature, began to cater to the middle-class illusions and dreams<sup>48</sup>, thrown off from the complex changing social reality around. During the same period there were also writers like Viswanatha Satyanarayana clinging to classical forms and supporting a reversal to feudal values. Though the espousal of such ideals goes against the ideals laid down in the Indian Constitution, such writings continued to receive the patronage of Sahitya Academies set by the central and state governments.<sup>49</sup>

It does not mean that there was no socially conscious literature at all between 1950 and 1960 in Telugu. There did appear some works reflecting the contemporary reality, say, Kutumba Rao's novels like "*Varasatvam*" ("Lineage"), "*Aishwaryam*" ("Riches"), "*Yendamavulu*" ("Mirages"), which realistically analyze the increasing impact of commercial values on middle class families, how they submit to its vicissitudes making them dehumanized.<sup>50</sup> The same trend was to continue after 1960 with the emergence of critical and socially conscious prose writers like Rachakonda Vishwanatha Sastry and Kalipatnam Rama Rao dealing with different aspects of the Indian reality in the Post-Independence period.<sup>51</sup>

This period was, however, a lean period compared to the 1940-50 period for critical literature in Telugu. This was also the period when it lost its vital link with forces of social and political change it had earlier experienced. Though the literary sphere was not politically vibrant as before, it still reflected the impact of changing political and socio-economic conditions. However, conditions that were to bring Telugu literature back into the midst of political struggles, as



a conscious political weapon for certain political goals, were brewing all the time. This is what we will be examining in the coming chapters. As part of that exercise the next chapter is devoted to briefly trace the social and political movements and conditions during 1960-1980.

#### NOTES

1. The use of 'modern' in relation to literature as used here has a specific connotation. Basically, there are two aspects to it : (i) it can mean all that is contemporary by time-scale; and (ii) it can also relate to literature reflecting new beliefs and life-styles emerging from the changes in the social, economic and political spheres. In the case of modern Telugu literature both these aspects coincide to a large extent, though all literature in present times does not reflect new, progressive values and goals. Modernism in literature in Telugu has two strains : (i) one has its philosophical basis in secular and scientific outlook, standing for "realism" in literature and for social utility of literature; (ii) the other falls into the individualist and anarchist schools of thought. More about these strains will be seen in what follows.
2. K. Gopala Rao, "Abhyudaya Kavithvam" in K.K. Ranganathancharyulu (ed.), Growth of Telugu Literature (1900 - 47) (Telugu) (Hyderabad : Andhra Saraswata Parishat, 1979), p.72.
3. T. Madhusudhana Rao, Literature Is Not A Conspiracy, Writers Are Not Conspirators (A.P. : RWA, 1981, pp.12-13.
4. Ibid., p.15.

5. See B.B. Mishra, The Indian Middle Class - Their Growth in Modern Times (London : Oxford University Press, 1978), pp.10-6; pp.390-91.
6. T. Madusudhana Rao, op.cit., pp.21.
7. Ibid., p.22.
8. K. Chinna Venkata Rama Rao, "Abhyudayavadam" in K.K. Ranganathacharyulu (ed.), Different Trends in Modern Telugu Literature (Telugu) (Hyderabad : Andhra Saraswata Parishat, 1982), pp.7304.
9. T. Madhusudhana Rao, op.cit., p.23.
10. Ibid., pp.23-26.
11. Ibid., p.14.
12. Ibid., pp.9-15.
13. Ibid., p.28.
14. P. Rangunadha Rao, History of Modern Andhra(New Delhi : Sterling, 1983), p.16.
15. K.K. Ranganathacharyulu (ed.) (1982), op.cit., p.XIV.
16. K. Chinna Venkata Rao, "Abhyudayavadam" in K.K. Ranganathacharyulu (1982), op.cit., p.79.
17. T. Madhusudhana Rao, op.cit., p.28.
18. Infact this influence is said to be seen in many Indian languages of the period.
19. See L.P. Sinha, Left Wing In India, 1919-47 (Muzaffarpur : New Publishers, 1965).
20. The AIPWA was represented by such progressive writers as Premchand, Mulk Raj Anand etc. at that time.
21. K. Chinna Venkata Rama Rao, "Abhyudayavadam" in K.K. Ranganathacharyulu (ed.)(1982), op.cit. p.81.
22. C. Rama Rao, "Viplavavadam" ("Radicalism") in K.K.

Ranganathacharyulu (ed.) (1982), p.191.

23. The reason for limiting our focus only to two representatives one in poetry and the other in prose, is due to the limitations imposed by the very nature of this research, the main aim of which is to analyze the trends in relation to social political movements. Another reason behind the choice of Sri Sri and Kutumba Rao is that both of them turned towards the revolutionary literary movement in the wake of Srikakulam movement in the 1970s. This offers us a scope to see what differences appear in their works of the two phases.
24. D. Anjaneyulu, "Sri Sri-His Muse And Message", INDIAN LITERATURE (Vol. XXVII, no.1, Jan.-Feb. 1984), p.55.
25. Sri Sri, Mahaprasthanam And other poems(an anthology in Telugu) (Vijayawadu : Visalandhrao 1984), p.27. Free translation from Telugu as given here is mine; it is not perfect but serves the purpose here. This applies to all translated poems or stanzas to appear in the following pages of the dissertation.
26. D. Anjaneyulu, op.cit., pp.60-61.
27. Ibid., pp.55-56
28. "Sri-Sri" (editorial) (Telugu), ARUNA TARA (nos : 42-44, Jun-Aug, 1983), p.5.
29. C. Ramachandra Reddy, "Sri-Sri's Literary work - An Analysis", (Telugu) ARUNA TARA (no.25, Jan. 1982), p.22.
30. K. Gopala Rao, "Abhyudaya Kavithvam" ("Abhyudaya poetry") (Telugu), K.K. Ranganathacharyulu (1979), p.87.
31. S. Rama Mohan, "The Two Story writers. I Liked", (Telugu), SRJANA(no.10, Feb-April 1969), p.20.
32. Quoted in C. Rama Chondra Reddy, "Telugu Story - Kutumba Rao" (Telugu), SRJANA (no.109, Nov.1980), p.60.
33. Ibid., pp.60-61.

34. Ibid., p.61.
35. "Stories Reflecting War Time Situation" (Telugu), SRJANA (no. 129, July 1982), p.53.
36. C. Ramachondra Reddy, "Viplava Vadam" in K.K. Ranganathacharyulu (ed.) (1982), p.63.
37. Given the nature of this chapter, no details of the movement are given. Only the course of the movement is outlined summarily. For details of the political movement in Telengana, see : P.Sundarayya, Telengana People's Armed Struggle : 1946-51 (New Delhi : National Book Centre, (1985); Romesh Thapar, Storm Over Hyderabad (Delhi : Kutub, 1947); Raj Bahadur Gour, Glorious Telengana Armed Struggle (New Delhi, CPI Pub. 1975); Zahir Ahmed, Dusk and Dawn In Village India (London : Pall Mall Press, 1965); Pavier Barry., Telengana Movement : 1944-51 (New Delhi : Vikas Pub., 1981).
38. K. Chinna Venkata Rao, "Abhyudaya Vadam", in K.K. Ranganathacharyulu (ed.) (1982) (Telugu), op.cit., p.85.
39. T. Madhusudhana Rao, op.cit. p.29.
40. J. Tirumala Rao, "The Art Forms That Reached The People In The Telengana Struggle" (Telugu) PRAJA SAHITI (no.11, June 1985), pp.54-64. Also see Pavier Barry, op.cit. p.88 and p.101.
- For a description of how Burrakatha proceeded see Zahir Ahmed, "Dusk And Dawn In Village India - Twenty Fateful Years" (London : Pall Mall Press, 1965), pp.94-95.
41. P. Sundarayya, Telengana People's Armed Struggle - 1946-57 (New Delhi : National Book Centre, 1985), p.51.
42. Romesh Thapar, Storm Over Hyderabad, op.cit., p.24.
43. Ibid., p.14.; Also see Raj Bahadur Gour, op.cit., p.47.
44. P. Raghunadha Rao, op.cit., p.169.

45. C. Prasad, Decay and Progress in Literature (Telugu), (Vijayawada : Virasam Pub. 1985), pp.1-4.
46. K. Bala Gopal, p.IX.
47. T. Madhusudhana Rao, op.cit., p.30.
48. C. Prasad, op.cit., p.5.
49. T. Madhusudhana Rao, op.cit. p.31.
50. C. Prasad, op.cit., pp.8-9.
51. Ibid., p.13.

## CHAPTER III

A SURVEY OF THE POLITICAL MOVEMENTS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC  
CONDITIONS IN ANDHRA PRADESH DURING 1960-1980

## I

The aim of this chapter is to trace the general social, economic, and political conditions in Andhra Pradesh, as part of the larger Indian developments during 1960-80 as they took shape out of the functioning of nearly two decades of parliamentary democracy at work. This helps us to place the important political movements that developed particularly in Andhra Pradesh during 1960-80 in their time and space dimensions.

Both these, in turn, provide the ground from which we can trace (as we will do in the next chapter) the emergence of various literary trends under certain conditions, having some type of relation to political movements, and thereby locate the particular nature of that ground where both politics and literature interact

in a way that it becomes difficult to distinguish the two in practice.

It will help us in showing that any neglect in looking into this aspect, especially in the case of *some* movements only makes us fail to understand the true nature of those movements in practice. It also helps us in showing how changes occurred in the literary sphere in reaction to various phases of a movement - when a movement is in the thick of political action turning into a struggle; and when such a struggle fails while the goals of the movements still continue to inspire those working on a long term strategy.

A problem arises in the way the socio-economic conditions and the political movements have to be dealt with. But, then, the problem of presentation is tackled here by taking into consideration the main aim and focus of the present research.

The presentation of political movements and events here is attempted basing on the work already done on them. This also serves the purpose of showing how such a characterization of the movements in the existing works

fails to give a full picture, given their mode of analysis.

While tracing the socio-economic conditions during 1960-1980 historically, focus is turned towards the general nature of socio-economic development India achieved, given the nature of policies followed by the Indian Government since Independence and the various problems facing the society and polity as a result of that.

As for the significant political movements and events during 1960-80 in Andhra Pradesh, the choice immediately falls on the Srikakulam Movement which spans from late 1950s to the early 1970s, and a continuation of the movement in other parts of Andhra Pradesh between 1970s and 1980s. The focus regarding the significant political events falls on the general Indian trends as seen in the increasing centralization of powers, populism and the outbreak of Emergency during 1975-77, as also the violation of civil liberties by the law and order machinery, the impact of which is felt even in Andhra Pradesh



This would serve the purpose of placing the phenomena to be studied in detail in chapters IV and V in its socio-political backdrop, historically.

## II

### The General Direction of Economic and Political Development in Post Independence India.

Few scholars deny that the first two decades of development policies undertaken by the Indian State have increased the economic disparities between different sectors of the society,<sup>1</sup> inspite of an overall development of the economy as a whole. The general development that took place has benefitted some sections of the society - the industrial bourgeoisie ~~is~~, the commercial sections, the upper middle class, the 'rich' and 'middle' farmers - while it failed <sup>to</sup> help equally the large mass of population - the lower middle classes, the working class, the poor peasants and the agricultural labourers. Of course, the extent of being benefitted or the degree of deprivation, given the nature of development, among different groups among these sections and between these sections differed greatly.

The unequal development is spread not only in terms of different economic groups, but also in terms of imbalanced regional development that has taken place, which becomes more glaring in the case of tribal areas as against the plains.

Besides, the general direction of development had been one which aimed at expanding capitalist economic relations in both industrial and agrarian sectors.<sup>2</sup> The increasing inequalities between the different sections is but a logical extension of such a lop-sided development. But, the nature of development cannot be said to be completely capitalistic. The picture is more complex given the fact that this development has not replaced fully the feudal, semi-feudal and pre-capitalist social formations that already existed. It allowed the others to exist side by side<sup>3</sup>, which has only made the forms of exploitation more complex. It is not necessary for us here to go into the details of this development. It suffices our purpose to note the general trends in this development process, over which there is a large degree of consensus.

Some of the common effects of such a development had been inequalities of income and wealth, differing capacities to utilize the political institutions and processes, and large scale poverty and unemployment. While the governmental policies might have contributed to this unequal sectoral and regional development, it also indirectly influenced how effectively the different sections can use the electoral system and parliamentary institutions to serve their interests. While those who benefitted from the governmental policies went on to make a better use of the system, those who failed to benefit have been less able to use the system to serve their ends. In other words, the unequal distribution of social and economic power has also determined the different political capacity of different sections ~~to~~ to utilize the political and administrative institutions to serve their interests.<sup>4</sup>

While the groups which benefitted from the particular nature of development were constantly involved in a competitive struggle to influence state policies, they at the same time influenced the state policy in curbing the demands and struggles of the masses. This is especially true in the case of rural India. The very

degree of political consciousness that the democratic experiment created resulted in increasing display of unrest among those deprived of the fruits of development.<sup>6</sup> While some tried to break this trend by making use of the institutions and processes the system provides, still others under certain ideological influences <sup>attempted</sup> to fight against the system.

The way the Indian state responded towards such cases had been different, sometimes coopting them through populist measures and in other cases snubbing them with a heavy hand through use of its armed strength.<sup>6</sup> Overall, the dominant classes have succeeded in maintaining their hegemony over the increasingly deprived and restless sections through various political, economic and cultural means.<sup>7</sup>

There is another aspect to this path of development which cannot be neglected. And that is the dependence for resources and technology of the Indian capitalists on the foreign capital and aid, and the politics of subsidies and bureaucratic capital extended by the Indian state to both agricultural and Industrial sectors which hindered the development process.<sup>8</sup>

These socio-economic developments have been common to the country as a whole; and Andhra Pradesh in the last four decades has not escaped their impact. Infact, the most important political movements that took place in Andhra Pradesh had some of these developments as their root cause. But, there were other specific conditions too which contributed to the outbreak of certain political movements like the Srikakulam struggle of the 1960s and 1970s, and the spread of extremist naxalite movement in other parts of Andhra Pradesh in the next decade.

What is to be noted here is that just as the broad socio-economic developments influenced the literature that emerged during 1960-80, the political movements and events mentioned above not only had a significant impact on literature but also utilized the literary means as part of a larger political strategy.

Hence, it is essential to turn our attention towards the Srikakulam movement, and the movement that spread in other parts of the state in the years that followed.

## III

The Srikakulam Movement

The Srikakulam movement is the most significant political movement that occurred in the history of Andhra Pradesh between 1960-80. The significance of this movement stems from several factors. It is significant as it formed, in its last phase, part of a wider Naxalite movement that emerged in other parts of the country with its anti-system goals. But the historical importance of this movement also lies in the fact that it highlighted the reaction of the marginalised groups, the tribals, to the conditions of poverty, underdevelopment and exploitation that were aggravated by the lopsided developmental policies of the government since independence as also the apathy of the government in responding to rectify such conditions.<sup>7</sup> Besides, its significance can be understood when we see this movement as it developed through various phases from as early as the 1950s,<sup>8</sup> gradually grown into mass actions, before breaking out into a violent form in the wake of naxalbari movement in West Bengal. When seen this way, we cannot understand the full nature of the movement during its

long course from the 1950s to 1970s if we see it merely as a naxalite movement as the existing works do.

Another feature of this movement relates to the strategies and process of mobilization of the tribals and peasants in fighting for economic demands over the whole course of the movement. At least some of the researchers paid attention to the fact, though only passingly, that literary and cultural forms were used as part of the strategy to raise the level of political consciousness of the people before they could be ready for the struggle.<sup>11</sup>

Most of the works on this movement fail to take note of the aspect of mobilization process, which itself in a way has been responsible to see the Srikakulam movement as merely a naxalite movement. The sources basing on which one can reconstruct this process, given the fact that very little attention was paid towards the movement in its earlier phases either by the government or in the press, have to be located in the cultural sphere. This is so because, the literary and cultural planes have reacted to and participated in the movement right from its early stages and have recorded quite well the nature of the movement. Hence, the attempt to study the relationship

between political movements and literary trends as is done here also helps in throwing some light on the nature of the movement as revealed by its mobilization process, and thereby throw some light on those aspects that were ignored till now.

Before going further, we have to make ourselves clear of how to analyze this movement from our point of view. Perhaps, an analysis of the movement in terms of the "context of mobilization", the 'goals' for mobilization, the role of leadership, and the 'strategy' and course of the movement would keep it in manageable proportions.<sup>12</sup>

#### [A] The Context

The Srikakulam Movement had developed in a certain socio-economic as well as political context.<sup>13</sup> This movement to a large extent involved the issues connected with the tribals of Srikakulam district in the extreme north of Andhra Pradesh. The district broadly comprises two geographic divisions - the plains areas and the Agency tracts located in the hills.



Briefly, the local social and economic conditions were characterized by the presence of a large tribal population that was marginalised by the existing political processes and subjected to exploitation from the inroads into the agency areas by the rich farmers and traders from the plains. This can be seen as a logical corollary of the lopsided capitalist development that took place since independence; and the consequence was that the tribal tracts became a prey to the expanding, profit seeking sections from the plains.

In spite of the law prohibiting it, there was a continuously large scale displacement of tribals from their farm lands through the machinations of the merchants and money lenders, a process similar to other areas in the country. It was a process where the extreme poverty and illiteracy of the tribals was utilized by the plainmen to lend money to the farmers by taking their lands on mortgage, while later on their endemic indebtedness was made use of to usurp those lands. As a result, the tribals gradually lost their lands and some also had to lose their freedom by becoming bonded labour.

The other blow the tribals had to face was from the policies of the government which imposed limits on access to forest lands and forest produce. Such limits had affected their traditional sources of income from forests in the way of collecting minor forest produce for commercial purposes, as also the shifting slash and burn cultivation ("*Podu*" in local usage). Similarly, villages in the reserved area were removed without proper alternate homestead rights. This in practice increased the opportunities of harassment and exploitation of the tribals, who could not give up their dwellings nor their traditional occupations overnight, in the hands of private contractors and government officials.

In the face of such conditions, government made few efforts at alleviating the conditions of poverty and illegal occupation of tribal lands. By and large the administration remained apathetic and out of reach of the tribals, leaving no possibility even to respond to them.

The seriousness of such a situation was taken note of by the government only after the outbreak of the naxalite movement here in 1970s, and not during the 1950s

and 1960s, when the tribals were organized to demand for rectification of these conditions through peaceful means.

[B] Leadership, Course, Goals and Strategies

The increasing inroads of the plains traders and landlords into the tribal areas, and their exploitation of the tribals by appropriation of their lands and converting them into bonded labour, coupled with an irresponsible and apathetic government machinery contributed to the early radicalization of the tribals.<sup>14</sup>

A point one has to take note of here - a point which is not dealt with in detail in the existing works - is that, the radicalization of the tribals has been a gradual process built by a leadership having good knowledge of the local conditions. The movement grew in various phases gradually - starting peacefully, continuing so for many years, and ending up in the naxalite fold towards the end.

The movement of the tribals started in the late 1950s as a reaction to their impoverishment<sup>15</sup>, traced earlier. In the early stages, though the objective

conditions of extreme deprivation were there, the tribals lacked the required consciousness as well as the organizational support to voice their grievances. It was under the leadership of Vempata<sup>P</sup><sub>A</sub> Satyanarayana, a school teacher in Parvatipuram taluk who later gave up his job and lived with the tribals he worked for, that the first signs of tribal protest came to the fore. In the process of gaining support from the tribals, Satyanarayana also came into contact with the prominent Communist leaders like T. Nagireddy and became a member of the Communist Party which was working in the tribal tracts since early 1950s. When he began organizing the tribals in Parvatipuram taluk calling for a variety of economic and political grievances, Satyanarayana organized the tribals for a non-violent peaceful movement.<sup>16</sup> The demands were basically oriented against the exactions of the landlords as they were prohibited by the existing laws, against the harassment by forest officials, and for better wages for the landless labourers.<sup>17</sup>

Mobilization. one can understand the difficulties Satyanarayana should have faced in organizing the tribals politically, to create in them a sense of identity of their own, to make them react against the exploitation

they were subject to.- Thus, while in the early stages he followed the strategy of peaceful demonstrations and gheraos - completely constitutional means of protest - he also had to find a strategy to mobilize the tribals to participate in such protest movements. It is at this point that Satyanarayana began to organize cultural troupes to give performances through the literary medium moulded to song and dance performances. The existing works on the movement fail to pay adequate attention to this process of mobilization of the tribals by raising their levels of social and political consciousness through cultural means.<sup>18</sup>

There is no ground on which the existence of such a process of mobilization can be disputed, atleast, since some of the works do passingly refer to the phenomena.

It is said that Satyanarayana came to organize Girijan Sanghams towards the end of 1950s, thereby serving to increase the confidence of the tribals' capacity to struggle unitedly for their own betterment.<sup>19</sup> Cultural troupes, organized under the auspices of the Girijan Sanghams, were made to perform "depicting the

woes of the tribals and exposing the people responsible for this and exhorting the tribals to rise and rebel."<sup>20</sup>

This was guided by an understanding drawn from the practical problems faced in the attempts to mobilize an illiterate mass of deprived and marginalised tribals; definitely, one could not have expected these groups to understand along hard-core ideological lines their own conditions and the necessity to struggle for overcoming them through particular means. This should not be misread as meaning that the tribals by themselves were not aware of their own hardships. Only they could not assess the source of such deprivation in terms of their own value orientation and cultural context. And it became the task of the leadership provided by Satyanarayana initially, and later under the communists, to instil in the tribals a consciousness of the cause of their deprivation. We will be able to explain this process through a study of the interaction between the political sphere and the cultural and literary sphere of the movement, which we will do in Chapter IV.

However, before we can do that we should complete recounting the course of the movement on the political

movement, as the existing works show.

Once Satyanarayana and his followers succeeded in gaining the support of the tribals through the Girijan Sanghams they began to fight collectively around demands for better wages, stopping official harassment of tribals in utilizing minor forest resources etc.,. Very soon, they began fighting for better wages for the agricultural labour and the right to cultivate waste lands.<sup>21</sup>

All through the years between 1959 and 1965, the strategy was to secure these demands through peaceful means like demonstrations and strikes. The tribals fighting through the Girijan Sanghams achieved some success <sup>22</sup> during this period in the direction of wages, running cooperatives for securing the forest produce from the tribals to whom proper prices were paid, and in increasing the share of the share-croppers to two-thirds of the produce.

They, however, met with more failures than successes through out this period. While these means should not have moved the landlords and the tradesmen-moneylenders, even the administrative machinery failed to respond. On

the other hand, the tribals and their leadership fighting for their demands were subjected to landlord violence.<sup>23</sup> To top it all, the forest officials and the police themselves coalesced with the landlords in harassing the tribals and their leaders.

Around 1964, Satyanarayana and his followers joined the CPI(M), when there was a split in the Communist party. This was accompanied by a little change in their strategy. Satyanarayana now led the tribals to defy the official rules and started cutting forest timber. This act was retaliated with quick police action, whereby a number of tribals were arrested and cases were lodged against them.<sup>24</sup> This made the leadership move closer to the radical section in the CPI(M).

Here we have to note that though the Srikakulam movement grew in response to local conditions, and was restricted to the agency areas of the district, the leadership under Satyanarayana and Adibhatla Kailasam kept in touch with the changes taking place in the communist movement in India. Initially entering the communist party in 1950s, they shifted allegiance to the new party, CPI(M), in 1964 along with Andhra Communists.



Similarly, they began to tend more towards the extremist groups within CPI(M), casting doubts about a peaceful transition to socialism through parliamentary electoral processes. Such difference of opinion at the national level of the party reflected in the group led by Charu Mazumdar and Kanu Sanyal. This was to culminate in the Naxalbari peasant revolt in West Bengal in 1967, which however was snubbed effectively through the use of armed forces by the CPI(M) Government in the state. After being expelled from CPI(M), Mazumdar and Sanyal went on to form the All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (AICCR) in November 1967. 25

The Andhra section of CPI(M) underwent similar confusion. While some considered peaceful transformation as not possible, they did not consider the conditions ripe for an armed revolt as yet. This group led by T. Nagireddy, C.Pulla Reddy, D.Vekateswara Rao, and Kolla Vekataiah thus differed both with the official line of the CPI(M) as also the line of AICCR. Once expelled from the party, after an unsuccessful attempt to press their view point at the all India Plenum, they went on to form the Andhra Pradesh Coordination Committee of Communist

Revolutionaries (APCCR) which attracted more than half the members of the Andhra unit of CPI(M) in April, 1968.<sup>26</sup>

It was at such a juncture that the leadership of the Srikakulam struggle began to undergo changes in perception, leaning more and more towards violent means of struggle. Perhaps, this came again as a reaction to the increasing landlord violence they had to bear for long, with the state machinery remaining an apathetic onlooker. This was also the time when college-educated intellectuals, coming from outside the area of struggle and leaving little connection directly with the struggle carried till 1967-68, such as Panchadi Krishna Murthi, Chaudari Tejeswar Rao etc., began to enter the movement and act as a link between Mazumdar and Srikakulam leadership.<sup>27</sup>

By this time, Satyanarayana by himself made a positive, step towards organizing the tribals into "dalams", or armed bands, to protect themselves. The tribals did not easily take to arms initially, and when they did take up they saw it as the only way to protect themselves from landlord violence, with protection coming

from state machinery. They did not, perhaps, at any time share the idea of being part of a revolution on a larger-scale.<sup>28</sup> Even Satyanarayana did not accept the AICCR plan of large-scale revolution and overthrow of state power by 1967, when he was still reacting to his immediate conditions and events.

The tribals, organized into dalams showed the initial signs of violent action in response to an incident of landlord violence at Levidi. The landlords fired on a procession of the tribals on their way to Mondemkhal to attend the Annual Conference of the Srikakulam District Girijan Sangh on 31, October, 1967, an incident in which two tribals were killed.<sup>29</sup> The police failed to arrest immediately those who fired on the procession. They only added salt to the injury by arresting a number of tribals on grounds of illegal assembly and rioting. Though the police later on arrested the culprits who fired at the procession, they were acquitted. This incident, which is but one among the series of incidents of landlord violence over the years, seemed to have made the tribals believe in the necessity to organize themselves into armed bands to protect themselves from landlord violence.<sup>30</sup>

At this juncture, Satyanarayana came under the influence of Chaudari Tejeswara Rao, Vasanthada Ramalingachari etc., who began to join the movement as communist activists from outside the areas of struggle. Soon, Satyanarayana began to lose control of the movement,<sup>31</sup> which soon ceased to be local in terms of its goals as the new entrants began to take the driving seat pushing the movement along the lines of AICCR in terms of strategy and tactics.

The beginning of 1968 saw the dalams attacking the police shandies and villages, looting the houses of the landlords and moneylenders in the hills and the plains, and destroying written evidences of indebtedness of tribals.

The APCCR led by Nagi Reddy did not agree that it warrants fighting the state machinery as yet, since the necessary mass support for such a goal has not been attained.

The Srikakulam leadership, however, refused to pay heed to APCCR, and by October 1968 fell in line with

Mazumdar's line and began to take his directives and tactics. Organized raids of the Naxalites started by November, 1968, which initially had a mass following of the tribals.<sup>32</sup> The struggles in the agency areas were effective, while those in the plains where the struggles did not receive enthusiastic support of the poor peasants and soon thwarted by the police. Very soon, increased police strength in the area forced the leadership to recede into the hills. Many of them escaped successfully from the police hands for some time. And, as police pressure increased, the mass character of the movement was lost. It began to be reduced to the level of raids and terrorist attacks on landlords, following the annihilation tactic, which received little support from the tribals. Soon, with the increase in police and CRPF, the leadership too was hunted down. In July 1970, Satyanarayana and Kailasam were killed in a police attack, while Krishnamurthy and some others were shot dead even as early as May, 1969. This soon drew the sap out of the Srikakulam movement.<sup>33</sup>

Before ending this section it is essential to note that the Naxalite struggle in Srikakulam was but a small phase of the longer tribal and peasant struggle. While

the naxalite phase in Srikakulam was only between 1968-70, the movement in Srikakulam was built for a longer time since the early 1950s. The government which reacted sharply in the last phase of the movement, not only suppressed the naxalites through use of force, but also took remedial measures seeking to rectify the social and economic conditions that provided fertile ground for this struggle.

#### IV

#### The Political Events and Conditions Between 1970-80

The significant political event which heralded the decade 1970-80 was the suppression of the naxalite movement in Srikakulam, which also brought to an end the movement that had been built patiently over two decades. It is not our purpose here to comment on the strategy of the naxalites and its practicality under those conditions. What has to be noted is that when the political struggle was snubbed through use of state machinery, the cultural and literary activists who played their role in building the movement in its various phases also fell a prey to this repression. Till now, the

literary and cultural spheres were an integral part of the movement, and hence were also active political means furthering the interests of the struggle. But, now, the struggle ended, and the literary and cultural means that were intertwined with the movement lost the necessary ground and momentum to work. These aspects will be dealt with in detail in Chapter-IV.

As for the general political situation and the events between 1970-80 we can try to briefly note the broad outlines which will be important in terms of influencing the literature that came during this period.

In the year following 1970 the government tackled the naxalites and the literary and cultural activities <sup>sts</sup> through imposition of conspiracy cases and violation of civil liberties. During the same period, however, naxalite activities continued in other parts of the state as in the districts of Karimnagar and Adilabad, though in a different form. No doubt, the naxalites themselves were divided in their ranks, given the personal and group infights. As for the strategy, they were no longer aiming at seizure of state power. They limited themselves to hit and run raids on landlords and other exploiting sections

as pressure tactics to move the government into rectifying the conditions responsible for the improvement and misery of the masses. From the police side, "encounter killings" of the extremists became a common feature.<sup>34</sup>

The most significant event during the decade is the imposition of national Emergency by Mrs. Indira Gandhi during 1975-77, and suspension of normal democratic processes during the period. Whatever the reasons provided by the government, and whatever the controversies for and against it might have created, it is a fact that authoritarian suppression of any opposition, attacks on civil liberties, gagging of the press, imprisoning of political foes as well as intellectuals and writers reached their peak since Independence.<sup>35</sup> In such an eventful period in the history of Indian polity both the liberals and the Marxists from various walks of life realized the importance of civil liberties, in the absence of which no movements and struggles for whatever goals can be built.<sup>36</sup> This indirectly helped strengthening of the civil liberties movement in the country and Andhra Pradesh too.<sup>37</sup>



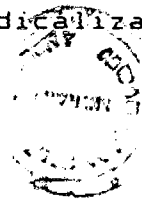
It is in this overall backdrop that we get an opportunity to analyze the nature of interaction between politics and literature in the coming chapters.

## NOTES

1. C.P. Bhambri, Politics in India-1947-87, (New Delhi:Vikas, 1988) pp.vii-viii; Also see Pranab Bardhan, Political Economy of Development in India, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986) pp. 5-7.
2. See A.R. Desai, India's Path of Development - A Marxist Approach (Bombay, Popular Prakashan, 1984), pp. 184-6.
3. Bhambri, op. cit., p. 148.
4. Ibid., p. vii.
5. Desai., op. cit., pp. 185-6.
6. Refer to Leslie J. Calman, Protest in Democratic India - Authority's Response to Challenge, (Boulder: Westview press, 1985).
7. Gail Omvedt., "Capitalist, Agriculture and Rural Classes in India", Economic And Political Weekly (Dec.1981), p.A-143.
8. See Bardhan, op. cit. Also Bhambri, op. cit.
9. Calman, op. cit., p.17.
10. Ibid, p. 38; also see, Ashish Kumar Ray, Spring Thunder And After - A Survey of the Maoist and Ultra Leftist Movements in India:1962-1975, (Calcutta: Minerva Associates, 1975), p.101; pp. 199-200; Also see, Kondaveeti Chinnaya Suri, Agrarian Movements in Andhra: 1921-1971 (Thesis: JNU., New Delhi, 1984), pp. 358-61.

11. See Kondaveeti Chinnaya Suri, The Girijan Movement in Srikakulam (1964-75): A Study of Political Violence (Dissertation: J.N.U. New Delhi, 1980), p. 8; p. 138, Also see Suri, "The Agrarian Movements in Andhra, 1921-1971", pp. 361-2; Also see Shanta Sinha, "Maoists in Andhra Pradesh, (Dissertation: J.N.U., New Delhi, 1976) p.16.
12. Bhambri, op. cit., p. 188: "A study of mobilization demands an analysis of the context of mobilization, the goals for mobilization, and the role of leadership and relevant strategies for mobilizing segments of the society."
13. No originality is claimed in describing the origin and course of the Srikakulam Movement as portrayed in this section. This is but a brief summary of the broad causes and course of the movement as described in various works on the subject. For details see, Calman, op. cit; Ashish Kumar Ray, op. cit., Samar Sen, et.al., Naxalbari And After - A Frontier Anthology (Calcutta : Kathashilpa, 1978); Sumanta Banerjee., India's Simmering Revolution - The Naxalite Uprising (London : Zed Books Ltd., 1984); Biplab Dasgupta., The Naxalite Movement (New Delhi : Allied Pub., 1974).
14. Calman, op. cit., p.31: For a clear account of the conditions leading to the early radicalization refer to pp. 17-34.
15. Ibid., p. 45.
16. Ibid., p. 45.
17. This is understandable given the fact that there was a continued alienation of the tribals from their lands. Thus we see that by 1961 only 48 per cent of the tribals were cultivators. By 1971 this decreased further to 34 per cent. During the same period one witnesses the rise in percentage of tribal agricultural labourers from 40 per cent in 1961 to 53 percent in 1971. This process shall be seen as having started even in 1950s in the light of which we can understand these demands; see Calman, op. cit., p. 23; also see Sumanta Banerjee, op. cit., p. 101.

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18. Most of the works on the movement we cited before start with showing the impoverishment of the tribals in the hands of the plains men and the apathetic, corrupt officials, and go on to show the gradual inclusion of the tribals under Satynarayana into the Communist Movement through its various splits until they fought under the naxalite banner. Thus, between the *process of impoverishment* and *process of confrontation* with the exploiting sections and the official machinery, there is a missing link in these works - the *link* that is to be seen in the *process of mobilization* and tapping the potential struggling masses by raising their level of consciousness of the objective conditions. Perhaps, this lacuna is resulting from the type of sources they are drawing upon, which is limited by the highly empiricist approach of falling upon statistics and documents provided by the Government sources and newspapers to describe the course of the movement. Of course, in evaluating the failure of the movement not all are empiricist in outlook. And this lacuna can be filled not merely by seeing what demands and goals around which the tribals were mobilized and later through violent means, but by taking a look at *the means by which they were prepared to be mobilized* which we will attempt in chapter IV.
19. Calman, op.cit., p.17.
20. Shanta Sinha, op.cit., p.16; perhaps Satyanarayana, who himself was a poet and writee was drawing on the Telengana experiences, as also under the force of necessity imposed by practical ground situation of mobilizing an illiterate and impoverished section like the tribal population of Srikakulam.
21. Banerjee, op.cit., p.101.
22. Calman, op.cit., p.47.
23. See Samar Sen, et.al., op.cit., pp.1-3; pp.19-23 for news reports testifying such violence perpetrated on the tribals fighting peacefully for just demands.
24. Banerjee, op.cit., p.102.
25. Calman, op.cit., p.65.

26. Ibid., p.65.
27. Ibid., p.67.
28. Ibid., p.54.
29. Ibid., p.55.
30. This incident proved a break not only in terms of leaning towards violence as part of political strategy, but also proved an inspiration to create a new literary form while projecting the incident to the larger sections of tribals and other revolutionaries. The new form called *Jamukula Katha*, taken from the oral tradition of Srikakulam was adopted to express a written socio-political message through song and dance performance. It proved extremely popular among the masses not only in the areas of struggle but also in several parts of Andhra Pradesh where it was performed and became a means to spread the message of Srikakulam struggle to the illiterate common people in other regions. This will be discussed at length in Chapter IV.
31. Calman, op.cit., pp.65-6.
32. Ibid., p.74.
33. Ibid., pp.8-80; for details about the response of the State towards the naxalites and tribals, see pp.87-95.
34. Samar Sen, et.al., op.cit., pp.75-80.
35. For more details on this subject, see, Max Jean Zins, *Strains on Indian Democracy : Reflections on India's Political And Institutional crisis* (New Delhi: ABC Publishing House, 1988), pp.1-62.
36. See Rajni Kothari, *State Against Democracy* (Delhi : Ajanta Pub., 1988), p.255.
37. All these events influenced the literature, or so to say some literary trends in Telugu during the following years, something we will be seeing in the next chapter. What has to be noted here is the response of the State towards such literary trends, and writers and artists standing for a socially and

politically conscious literature professing to influence the popular political thinking and action. The response is understandable, and it came in the form of repressing, jailing, and denial of civil liberties which continued into the eighties. ,

## CHAPTER IV

### THE INTERACTION BETWEEN POLITICAL MOVEMENTS AND LITERARY TRENDS IN ANDHRA PRADESH DURING 1960-70

The aim of this chapter is to trace the various literary trends and movements that emerged during 1960-70 in the light of the socio-political conditions of the period as described in chapter III. Besides tracing them in their socio-political backdrop historically, the connection between the literary sphere and the single most important political movement, the Srikakulam Movement that took place in this period is brought out in section II of the chapter.

This helps us notice the nature of interaction between politics and literature in the course of a popular political struggle under specific conditions, and how a neglect of this feature also means failing to know the true nature of the movement in all its aspects.

An understanding of this aspect of the Srikakulam movement is necessary to have proper understanding of a major literary trend in Telugu today, the revolutionary trend, which emerged as a conscious movement in the 1970s itself, drawing inspiration and lessons from that struggle. This is significant when seen from the angle that this trend works with a long term goal in preparing the necessary *ground* for spreading revolutionary consciousness among potential groups; that will be taken up in the next chapter.

Before attempting to go into all these aspects, we have to first take a look at the state of outlook in the literary and cultural spheres during the 1960s, and the socio-political conditions responsible for it. This refers us to a major trend - major in terms of the shock treatment it gave to serious literature that almost went into hibernation and inactivity - the Digambara trend that broke onto the Telugu literary scene in 1965 and some other nascent trends, which will be dealt with in section I.

## I

We have noted in chapter II the decline in Abhyudaya Movement in Telugu literature by the 1950s, which gave a blow to the socially conscious literature. We have also seen how this was accompanied by a lopsided development strategy since the 1950s, which was only to continue in the following years. This, as we have seen, also resulted in the emergence of movements like the Srikakulam Movement in Andhra Pradesh, besides the prevalence of unemployment and poverty - all of which provided the basis for various forms of protest in the rural and urban areas.

These conditions reflected in, as well as had an impact on, the Telugu literary scene. The very direction of developments which had caused a decline in socially conscious, and politically active literature, thus, were to provide by mid 1960s the conditions for rebirth of such literature. This is the context in which we can understand the "Digambara Movement" in Telugu poetry which emerged in 1965, and later the "Tirugabadu" poets ("Rebel poets"), highlighting the contemporary reality through their own ideological prisms.<sup>4</sup>



The Digambara poets, comprising a group of young writers such as Cherabanda Raju, Nikhileshwar, and Jwala Mukhi shot into the public gaze in 1965 by breaking the passive atmosphere that haunted the Telugu literary world for more than a decade. These poets virtually shocked the literary circles as well as the general political and social circles through their use of language as well as the content of their poetry. And when they shocked the literary world and caught the attention of political circles, they succeeded in their immediate aim.<sup>2</sup>

For the Digambara poets poetry became the vehicle for literary and political protest at the same time. And, one can gauge the constructive effect of this trend on the literary and social planes only when we analyze them in terms of "protest". Through directing literary means as a vehicle of protest, they gave literature cognitive, communicative and subversive functions at the same time.<sup>3</sup> All this can be seen in a positive light only when we see, as one writer puts it, that :

"Modern man has no way out but to choose protest for existential as well as social reasons. In absurd

situations and debased environment, protest seems to be the only legitimate alternative - - -. Protest of an individual is not confined to him alone, it is reflected in society as well. *It cannot be separated from social, cultural and political circumstances.*"<sup>4</sup>

Socially and politically, the Digambara Poets directed their protest against the persisting efforts of some to imitate the obsolete classical traditions in the form, content and values,<sup>5</sup> and for exposing the stark corruption, cheating and political degradation in the post-independence period. They were equally vociferous in highlighting the failure of the government in decreasing inequalities, poverty and unemployment, while criticizing the forcing of Indian economy into the grip of neo-colonialist whirl-pool.<sup>6</sup> on the literary ~~plane~~<sup>plane</sup> their protest is directed against the passivity that overcame the Telugu literature between 1950s and 1960s in the above atmosphere, and called for a literature that keeps in line with the changing social conditions.

What shocked the literary world, and attracted resentment, more was their use of language that was abusive and vulgar even at their best; and less due to

their attack on convention, though it too cannot be fully ruled out. Intellectuals from other walks of life, attacked them for their wholly negative attitude towards the society which is evident in their balantly anarchist condemnation of the evils dogging the society around them while failing to show any alternative ways of rectifying such a situation.<sup>7</sup> This definitely is a valid criticism. Politically, their anthology released in 1965<sup>8</sup> had to face a ban by the government on grounds of its subversive potential.

Perhaps, all this criticism levelled against the Digambara writings on several levels is not wrong when they are judged in themselves and separately. Yet, it would seem unjustified if we place these writings in the context of their circumstances. They were writing about the allround decay in the social, economic and political levels of our society and in the process protesting against it. Hence, if some see their content as vulgar they are not wholly right, for here is only a depiction of conditions around them which are being passively accepted till then. Definitely their use of language is vulgar and avoidable, but these writers should have thought that it was the easiest way to catch attention,

for their ultimate aim was not to gain applauses for their poetry but to turn the public eye towards the social abuse and decay they were depicting and protesting against.

It would do well at this point to take a look at some of the early poems of Cherabanda Raju to have a feel of what the Digambara poets were really doing when they were protesting through the literary medium. The choice of Cherabanda Raju is based on two reasons : (1) that he has less of the negative traits<sup>9</sup> and obscenity,<sup>10</sup> characteristic in the vulgarity of language of the Digambara poetry, and (2) he displayed a sharper and deeper understanding of the direction in which the country was moving economically and in other spheres, all of which he denounced through a display of protest and rebellion.<sup>11</sup>

Cherabanda Raju made his entry into Telugu literary scene, as part of the Digambara Movement, in 1965. Two poems deserve to be mentioned : "Vandemataram" and "Let Me Enter the Dock". In the latter poem, he threw a taunt at the legal system which he sees as corrupt and partisan:



their selfish interests, and how through aids and loans from international sources the country has been sold in the International Market from whose grip it is difficult to come out. He feels sorry that the Motherland should stand like a helpless and mute testimony to the exploitation of the weaker sections of our society at various levels. He expresses his protest against all this through denouncing them in equally abusive descriptions.<sup>14</sup>

In all, however, we see that here is an understanding that carries with it an analysis that is by far accepted by many social scientists today. Perhaps their reactions may be less emotional, more regulated. That is quite understandable. Leaving aside the criticism on their use of language to the literary critic, from the point of view of social and political analysis we can still find fault with such writings : that they are entirely negative in spirit, anarchist to the core, devoid of any concrete direction of how to change that situation they detest through political action.<sup>15</sup>

Yet, given the context in which they were protesting, it is to be accepted that they were

successful in provoking the intellectuals, writers and artists to take a critical look at the society and politics around them.<sup>16</sup> Here we have to note that Cherabanda Raju and other Digambara poets underwent a process of change in their ideas as well as form and expression in the years ahead, whereby when the Andhra Pradesh Revolutionary Writers' Association was formed in 1970 they joined it. This we will look into in section III of this chapter.

Around this very time there were to be heard other voices of protest too on the Telugu literary scene, which however were more regulated in their expression, but no less severe in their criticism of the development that is taking place in the country at that time. These voices once again came from young writers, a group called "Tirugabadu" ("Rebel") poets.<sup>17</sup> These poets however were able to project some solution to get out of the existing situation. For them, the only recourse in sight was to fight against those conditions, not merely protest against them. They paved the way for the revolutionary trend that was to emerge in the 1970s.

## II

[A] In the preceding section we have seen the literary trends emerging from urban middle-class sections reacting to the conditions around them. Around the same time, there were other developments in the literary and cultural spheres emerging in the thick of political movements - in Srikakulam. In this section an attempt is made to look into the literature that emerged as part of the Srikakulam struggle, and conscious role literary and cultural forms were attributed and made to play by the political leadership as part of their political strategy and necessity. In tracing this we come to see the particular nature of interaction between literature and politics during the 1960s in areas of struggle, as against that which developed in the urban literary sphere.

At this point, two aspects concerning the choice of literature have to be clarified. The first relates to what we include, or turn our attention towards, when we examine literature under the Srikakulam Movement. Generally, there is a literature that is spread through "print" meant for the individual reader, and there is



also a literature meant specifically to be spread through the oral and visual forms and moulded to be performed before a group. Given our analysis, we have to look into both the types. In fact, looking into the latter becomes more essential as it was the vehicle for spreading the revolutionary message in the hands of the revolutionaries. And more so, because those who made conscious use of this type of literary means considered the writer as being at one with the movement, spreading the message to mobilize the masses. Hence, when we examine literature of the Srikakulam movement we also examine the oral and visual means such as song and dance through which that literature was spread. One cannot avoid this for the one reason that those who evolved and used such literary means saw them as unified whole, at one with all cultural means, just as they did not distinguish between the cultural and the political spheres.

Secondly, a clarification regarding the time span that is chosen for this research, and the necessity to overstep these strict time limits just as we had to while dealing with the Srikakulam movement on the political level in the preceding chapter.<sup>18</sup> Since the Srikakulam

struggle is seen as emerging even as early as the 1950s and passed through various phases of peaceful struggle, before it ultimately went into the naxalite fold in late 1960s, we need to trace the role literature and other cultural forms *were made to play* right from the early stages in the process of mobilization of a mass of illiterate tribals, marginalised by the existing political processes and the administrative structures.

[B] Politically, the Srikakulam struggle had its unique features to the extent that it developed as a reaction to specific local conditions, not merely due to the influence of naxalite ideology which is not to be seen until the later stages, nor under the influence of communism only as in the earlier stages. It was more of a movement that took its shape through the struggle itself over the years by reacting to the local problems and conditions to a greater extent.

Just as this movement threw up a leadership and a particular political strategy, it also influenced or created for itself a particular literary and cultural sphere,<sup>19</sup> as part of its strategy. The Srikakulam Movement like the Telengana peasant struggle<sup>20</sup> created

conditions where the literary and cultural spheres could become part of the political struggle for change.<sup>21</sup>

In what follows, one point comes out clearly : that here is a literature that is at the same time the product as well as the part of an interplay of revolutionary ideology and revolutionary struggle under specific conditions.<sup>22</sup> Hence it throws light on both the state of political consciousness as well as the nature of political praxis that characterized the Srikakulam movement. The same reason makes it essential for us to see the Srikakulam movement in all its facets - the political, literary and cultural, and the ideological - which are interlinked. Trying to analyze this movement (and movements like this) by focusing on only one of these facets does not give us a full picture of the movement, and hence the *incomplete* understanding which follows in many analyses, as we noted in the introductory chapter, and seen in chapter III.

[C] At around the same time when incipient efforts at organizing the tribals of Srikakulam agency areas began in the 1950s under Vempatapu Satanarayana, Adibhatla Kailasam etc., practice taught the leadership that even

before they can organize the tribals politically they have to first of all create in them a sense of identity as well as belief in their own strength to fight for their interests. The leadership tried to tackle this early block through two means : organizational and on the level of consciousness. Organizationally, they tried to bring the tribals together by forming Girijan Sanghams, as we have seen in the preceding chapter.

To bring about the necessary change on the level of consciousness, they formed cultural troupes who gave performances in villages through songs and dance depicting the social and economic conditions and relations that lie behind their deprivation, and showing a political direction to rectify such a situation.

Perhaps such a twist even in the initial stages came about because Satyanarayana himself was a writer in his own right, though better known as a political organizer, while the Telengana example was already there as historical signpost in this direction.

Vempatapu Satyanarayana recognized the prevalence of the oral tradition in song form among the Savara and

Jatapu tribes of the Srikakulam agency areas.<sup>23</sup> He started to tell the tribals the use of Girijan Sanghams through songs. He writes in his work<sup>24</sup> how they used to gather the tribals at the place by singing certain songs, though he fails to note who wrote these. One of the songs which he notes in detail goes on to describe how the tribals in the hills were selling away their crops, which they toiled to grow, to the traders at cheap rates, while the same traders today are exploiting them. The song ends ~~urging~~ urging the tribals to unite and fight against such exploitation.<sup>25</sup>

Once the organizing of the tribals gained some momentum, several members began to use the song-form for this purpose. Satyanarayana's songs explain in a simple language the necessity of concerted political action.<sup>26</sup> Here one sees a recognition of the utility of the oral literary form of song to convey the message to the mass of tribals being organized, thus making it a political weapon.<sup>27</sup>

While Satyanarayana recognized the utility of the literary medium as part of his political strategy, there were others like Subba Rao Panigrahi who were involved

even earlier in using the literary and cultural medium to spread the political message.<sup>28</sup> It is commonly said that Satyam's word and Panigarhi's song have helped in turning the tribals towards concerted political action.<sup>29</sup>

Panigarhi was the most important activist in the literary and cultural sphere during the whole course of the Srikakulam movement.<sup>30</sup> In fact, Panigarhi's political career and his literary output were intertwined to the extent that changes in his political associations and understanding reflect in his writings as well.<sup>31</sup> It becomes essential to look into Panigarhi's work in various phases as a member of the Communist party, working in the Srikakulam plains to mobilize the peasants against the zamindars between 1958 and 1965, and later when he was drawn towards the Girijan movement in the hills till his death in 1969. This gives us an excellent opportunity not only seeing how politics and literature interacted during the course of the Srikakulam movement, but also assess the significance of the literary and cultural sphere as part and parcel of a political movement.

Panigrahi started his career as an artist singing songs and performing certain local art forms in 1947, after being forced to stop his studies as his family could not afford it financially. He continued this upto 1957, by which time he proved his mettle as a writer, singer and performer, all in one. It was around 1957 that Panigrahi came under the influence of communist ideas spreading in the area as a result of the anti-zamindari struggles carried out by communist leaders like Marpu Padmanabham.<sup>32</sup> Around the same time the communists here recognized the importance of the cultural sphere and utilized Panigrahi's talents by making him work in a village named Boddapadu, where he went as a priest in disguise, thus starting his political career. Panigrahi adopted the local folk forms to suit his purpose of spreading the message of the Communist Party in its struggle for land redistribution and other reform.<sup>33</sup>

By the end of 1950s and early 1960s the Girijan Movement in the agency areas began to take concrete shape, given the efforts of committed leaders like Vempatapu Satyanarayana and Adibhatla Kailasam, who too became members of the Communist Party by now. However, these leaders gave the struggle in the agency areas a

stamp of their own, influenced as they were by the local conditions in which they were working.

Between 1963 and 1965 the Girijan Sanghams started becoming active in the agency areas in their fight against the landlords, money-lenders and traders from the plains through strikes and demonstrations. And, as we have seen in Chapter III, attempts were also made to move the officials and the Government to stop the illegal occupation of tribal lands by the plainsmen, and the corruption and harassment of forest contractors and officials. While the government remained silent and apathetic, the landlords and traders came to increasingly resort to violence against the struggling tribals and their leadership. Such conditions have gradually forced the tribals led by Satyam and Kailasm to take to arms to protect themselves.

It was under these conditions that Panigrahi, who was working in the coastal and plains areas, also began to move towards the agency tracts of Palakonda and Parvatipuram, where he came to observe closely the life of the tribals and their living conditions. Seeing their extreme poverty and deprivation, and the exploitation



involved in it, Panigrahi turned to work for the tribals, and thus made Palakonda the centre of his activities.<sup>34</sup> Panigrahi, too, began to undergo a change in his attitude towards the policies of the CPI(M) which he joined after the split in the Communist Party in 1965. This has to be attributed to the increasing landlord violence and the apathy of the law and order machinery. He began to term the policies of the CPI(M) as revisionist by 1967,<sup>35</sup> and wrote a satirical poem, named "Calcutta Kali's Tongue" exposing the futility of such policies. This along with other similar poems were sung in several party meetings in the district and the state, attracting much applause from large sections of the Party membership:<sup>36</sup>

"Calcutta Kali's Tongue  
 Got used to Sweet-meats  
 And began to preach satisfaction  
 Mumbling new words  
 [of peaceful Revolution!]"

Thus, the same conditions of increasing landlord violence, and failure of law and order machinery to stop it, led Panigrahi to become frustrated with peaceful means of struggle. Panigrahi now began to take active

part in the activities of the Girijan Sanghams. We have seen in chapter III how the incident at Levidi on 31st October 1967, when a procession of Girijan Sangham was fired at killing two tribals, sparked off a change in the strategy of the Srikakulam Movement, whereby the leadership began to organize the tribals into Dalams or armed bands to protect themselves from landlord violence. The same incident sparked off a revolution in the literary sphere too, when Panigrahi made use of this incident to write a song in the local folk form, *Jamukula Katha*, titled "October, 31" to spread the message of the Srikakulam struggle in the masses.<sup>37</sup> This became very popular among the people wherever he went and performed in his attempts to make people living in other districts know about what was happening in Srikakulam. This was the time when the Government repression of the Srikakulam Movement and its leadership began.<sup>38</sup> But, Panigrahi did not give up his optimism about the continuance of the struggle, and performed his *Jamukula Katha* at several places and collected money to use for the struggle.<sup>39</sup>

This served to demonstrate the point that literary forms especially those falling in the oral tradition as in the case of *Jamukula Katha*, can be fruitfully adapted

as a very powerful weapon to further political goals. In his "October 31", Panigrahi starts with describing the life of the Girijans from the days the traders from the plains started entering the agency areas, and goes on to show the series of developments leading to the Levidi incident, and the formation of the Dalams and beginning of police repression.<sup>40</sup> Thus, Subba Rao Panigrahi was able to adapt a popular art form to spread revolutionary consciousness, preparing the Srikakulam tribals for the struggle. He drew his form and content from the revolutionary reality in the course of the popular struggle, and worked as a revolutionary activist to further that cause.

Once the Srikakulam movement passed into the outside leadership by 1968, as we have seen, and Satyam and Kailasam veered towards the naxalite tactics of Mazumdar, recourse to violence became inevitable. Thus, there was a change in the nature of the movement from a peaceful and local movement frustrated with limited success before 1965 to a naxalite movement after 1968 with bigger goals of large-scale systemic transformation and capture of state power.<sup>41</sup>

The literary and the cultural sphere could play a role during the 1950s and early 1960s, trying to generate a social and political consciousness among a potentially revolutionary group, keeping pace with the changing political activity and struggle. But, then, the struggle changed its nature suddenly, with the tribals still thinking in terms of their local interests than in terms of larger goals the leadership wanted them to fight for. Once the struggle reached its peak through open confrontation with the landlords as well as the state forces that were there to support them, it was no longer a situation where people could be mobilized by shaping their consciousness, which is a long term process than an overnight change. It now became a different situation where all those who were convinced by now and mobilized to fight for whatever the leadership asked them went into the thick of the struggle, only to be snubbed by a state power whose strength they could not match with their level of mobilization, leave alone other weaknesses.

Obviously, under such conditions, the role of literary and cultural medium was no longer to spread consciousness so as to *prepare* the masses for the struggle, but to exhort those already in the struggle not

to loose heart and continue to fight. Ofcourse, the form did not change; the content did. This change can be seen even in Panigrahi's writings, when he even rewrote some of his earlier songs. Thus, while one of his earlier songs read as:

"Upto what point Comrade?

*Wait we are coming;*

We'll collectively move forward."

It was changed to:

"Upto what point Comrade?

*We'll come unto the end;*

We'll collectively move forward."<sup>42</sup>

A similar example can be cited, when in an earlier version reads:

"Hold aloft the red flag in your left hand,

*And tighten your fist in the other."*

It was changed into:

"Hold aloft the red flag in your left hand,

*And hold a gun in the other."*<sup>43</sup>

As the police repression of the leadership and the activists increased, and many of them started to fight from the underground, many cultural activists like Panigrahi who took to arms also had to go underground. Even while continuing the struggle, they kept writing. After being appointed a Dalam leader towards the end of 1968, Panigrahi wrote songs describing the impoverished conditions of the tribals and the exploitation of the rich. He now began to end by exhorting the tribals to take to arms:

"Turn to arms  
 And turn against the enemy,  
 For victory will be ours  
 In the path of popular struggle."<sup>44</sup>

Panigrahi's tone resembles one trying to give heart to his comrades falling before the police repression, when he rhetorically puts it:

"You can't stop the popular upsurge,  
 Through carrying out arrests;  
 You can't stop the sunlight,  
 With your bare-hand."<sup>45</sup>

Yet the struggle had to face the inevitable state suppression. The immediate political cause was lost with the defeat of the struggle. The local cause, the immediate interests of the Srikakulam tribals, was submerged and washed away in the blind rush of a political strategy that proved fool-hardy.

Thus, when the struggle came to end on the political plane, the literary and cultural sphere working hand in hand with the political sphere till then found itself in a vacuum.

However, the Srikakulam struggle had a <sup>far-</sup>reaching impact whereby it was able to influence not only the activist-literature to be used on the field, but also the mainstream literary movements among the urban middle class intelligentsia who wanted to work towards the same political goals. This we can see in detail when we consider the literary trends and movements which emerged during the 1970s, which soon settled down for a long term struggle learning from the Srikakulam experience.

## III

(A) Having traced the impact of the Srikakulam struggle on the literary and cultural sphere which went hand in hand with it, we have to take a look at the various literary movements that emerged taking inspiration from that struggle.

We have traced in section-I of this chapter that the passivity into which Telugu literature slipped during 1950-60 had been broken by the mid 1960s by the Digambara movement in poetry. At the same time new voices of protest were emerging in the form of "*Tirugabadu*" and "*March*" poets, as we have seen in section-III of this chapter.

By 1967-68, the government as well as the people from other areas of the state began to know more about what had been happening in Srikakulam. The new radicalism that had been sprouting in the literary sphere in the urban areas was obviously attracted to the Srikakulam struggle, and came to be influenced by the nature of interaction between politics and literature that had emerged there. One can see the influence of Srikakulam



movement, in its naxalite phase, on the free verse coming from these writers by 1969.<sup>46</sup> This can be seen in the anthologies released in 1969-70 under the titles "Tirugabadu" ('Rebel') and "March". This is the result of many young writers such as Siva Sagar, Vangapandu Prasada Rao etc., who began to be influenced by the image of a poet as a revolutionary arming the people, drawing inspiration from the likes of Subba Rao Panigrahi.<sup>47</sup> This becomes clear in their reference to Srikakulam in the "March" (1970) anthology:

The breeze that blew in Naxalbari yesterday,  
The same that is blowing in Srikakulam today,  
That which is set to blow  
Across the country tomorrow."<sup>48</sup>

It was under these conditions that there emerged the possibility of bringing together the various protesting and dissenting young poets and writers into an organized movement with clear goals and a direction.<sup>49</sup> This led to the formation of the Revolutionary Writers Association in July, 1970, as a literary and cultural expression of the Srikakulam struggle and other similar popular struggles.<sup>50</sup> The formation of this association came about

when such founders of the Abhyudayavada movement like Sri Sri, Kodavatiganti Kutumba Rao, K.V. Ramana Reddy etc., turned to the appeals of new radical writers to reassess their position under changed conditions. These were joined by the "Rebel" and "March" poets as also some of the "Digambara" poets like Cherabanda Raju.<sup>21</sup> The similar thread that bound them together was the understanding that they have to work to hasten the popular struggle in Srikakulam and else - where, and strengthen the political forces behind them through the cultural sphere.<sup>22</sup>

[B] In the years during and immediately following the Srikakulam struggle, it was mostly Revolutionary poetry and songs that developed the most.<sup>23</sup> A large number of poets like Sri Sri, Siva Sagar, Vangapandu Prasada Rao, Cherabanda Raju etc., were moved by the struggle. Those like Sri Sri, who earlier broke new grounds in free verse during the 1940s now gradually began to change their style towards one that is more simple and suited to song form. Cherabanda Raju started giving up his earlier 'Digambara' attitude of a wholly negative orientation towards society and began seeing in terms of an alternative order that should be built. Siva Sagar and Vanagapandu Prasad Rao were acquainted with the areas of

struggle and the local conditions which they reflected in their poetry tuned to popular forms.

Most of the Revolutionary poetry in these initial stages was by way of depicting the sacrifices of the participants in the struggle, trying to acquaint the world of letters and the middle class in the urban areas with the true nature of the struggle. The attempts at evolving simple forms stems from their goal to democratize literature and make it a concrete force capable of taking the revolutionary message to the potential sections of society. That some of these writers, inspite of their political commitments, succeeded in creating literary works of a high degree of artistic brilliance is today accepted. Thus, today, even the middle classes and all literate sections of Telugu society praise the individual talents and artistic spirit of Sri Sri, Cherabanda Raju, Siva Sagar etc. And that their writings had the potential not merely to move the literary circles but, as they want it, to create a questioning and fighting spirit in the society as a whole is evident in the manner they had to face the heavy hand of state repression along with the political movement.

The first publication of RWA was a collection of poems, "Jhinji".<sup>24</sup> Siva Sagar's verse titled "*Naruda Bhaskaruda*" sets the trend of the revolutionary writings in line with the new needs. The RWA found the necessity of writing in the oral tradition, the song form, which had been effectively used by revolutionary activities in the areas of struggle in Srikakulam. Thus, the literary sphere came to be influenced by the Srikakulam movement. The writers of the RWA exhort the masses to question the exploitation they are subjected to and to struggle against that, by infusing in them a belief in their own powers to carry on the struggle. It is in this process of politicizing literature that Siva Sagar proclaimed today's poet as the revolutionary arming the people.

In his poem "*Waves*"<sup>25</sup>, Siva Sagar gives a subtle and concentrated expression to the spread of revolutionary consciousness through the sphere of ideas despite of all obstacles placed on free expression of ideas in a class-society. Using the imagery of the waves and the sea, where waves stand for ideas and the people and society at large are compared to the sea, he warns of the constant watch by those protecting the existing system on the role

ideas can play and their attempts to snub those ideas through use of force:

"Watch on the waves,

(watch' here means vigil)

Watch on the dreams dreamt by the waves;

----- .  
Waves on the gallows !

Waves on the bars !

Waves in tears ! Waves !"

He, however, exudes an air of optimism about the victory of new ideas in the long run given the fact that they reflect the condition of the masses who will one day by themselves become conscious of the conditions:

"Sea in the masses! Waves are the dalam!

----- .  
Waves are dear as life to the sea!"

He uses words which reflect the nature of the movement at the time he was writing. "Waves" represents the ideas as well as the consciousness they were able to

generate in certain sections of society who are mobilized to carry on the struggle.

Sri Sri himself, who had since long almost remained out of public gaze, came back on to the scene with a new energy reflecting the freshness of form and content. The optimism of the 1968-69 period made him see the "first victory" in his poem "Final journey":

Swing, swing, swing!

Holding on to the gallows swing!

Holding fast to the gallows swing!

-----  
O my hero, my gallant warrior

-----  
Nothing to stay your power;

It is no waste, your sacrifice!

Your ideal will not cease with you,

-----  
This struggle has its finale only in victory

In which ever country you are,

your are not alone! ee

Cherabanda Raju, after joining the revolutionary stream, responded to RWA's call that to reach the masses and mobilize them one should not merely write but go to them and sing and perform before them.<sup>37</sup> Writing in 1972, well after the Srikakulam movement was snubbed, Cherabanda Raju stressed the need to take literature to the people, especially in the popular song form. He says that while the way has been shown by those like Subba Rao Panigrahi, much remains to be achieved in terms of long term struggle.<sup>38</sup> Maintaining that there is no room for complacence, he pointed out that the forms which became popular during the hightide of a movement need to be consciously fostered and extended in popularity by the RWA.<sup>39</sup> While accepting that the anthologies of revolutionary poetry like "Suridu" ('Sun'), "Kakka ra ka" etc., which were published had the required qualities of popular poetry, he stressed that they could achieve their purpose only when they reach the people they are meant for. And it was here that the role of an organization like RWA lies: in taking them to the masses.<sup>40</sup>

This, to an extent, reflects the mood in the period of 1970 when the Srikakulam movement came to an end. The writers, who accepted the failure of the movement, did

not give up the hope of a long term struggle. They were aware of retaining the achievements of the struggle in the cultural sphere, and continue to prepare for that on the level of ideas and consciousness.

[C] Not much prose works, stories and novels, emerged under the influence of the Srikakulam struggle during the years of the struggle, while poetry and songs excelled. Perhaps, that shows the latter's effectiveness in reaching the illiterate masses faster than the prose form, which has to be read individually. In this sense, the story and the Novel have a limited reach, though they have a greater capacity for analysis and portraying the totality of conditions comprising a movement. These forms are meant for the literate middle class, who too are seen as having a role in the long term struggle. What ever few prose works have emerged from the areas of the struggle during that period, they stand as good chronicles of what really was happening on the ground in terms of human relations and experiences. Overall, during the whole period of 1968-72 not more than a dozen stories and two novels were written on the Srikakulam struggle. <sup>41</sup> Most of these stories came from writers acquainted with the conditions in Srikakulam, for example, Kalipatnam Rama



Rao, Bhushanam, Sripati and Cherabanda Raju; The two significant novels are "Yajnam" and "Konda Gali" (what is happening in the Hills), written by Kalipatnam Rama Rao and Bhushanam, respectively, and published in 1972-73.

Among the stories, Bhushanam's stories of the period depict the life and conditions in Srikakulam more realistically. In his story, "Uddharimpu" ('Help'), he shows the real nature of the so-called help the government extended to the Girijans through the corporations and health centres.<sup>42</sup> In "Adivantukundi" ("The Forest is on Fire"), he traces the changes in the political and economic conditions in the agency areas from the time the influx of moneylenders and traders from the plains started to the time the Girijans rebelled against their exploitation.<sup>43</sup> He shows this by placing the story in one village. In "Teerpu" ("Judgment"), he shows how the poverty and innocence of the girijan labourers is exploited by landlords and the traders, and shows what could be the judgment the former could deliver against the latter to end that exploitation.<sup>44</sup> The strength of these stories lies in the fact that their characters are drawn from real life situations, and usually do not display a level of consciousness more than

what the conditions depicted in the story allow. They, in a way, are objective in their reflection of social change and political awakening.

Among the two novels, we cited above, Kalipatnam Rama Rao's "*Yajnam*" portrays the conditions preceding the Srikakulam struggle, while Bhushanam's "*Kondagali*" portrays the course of the struggle.

During the same period there also emerged stories and novels on other spheres of life in Telugu society. Such writers like Kodavatiganti Kutumba Rao and Rachakonda Viswanatha Sastry came out with socially conscious and critical writings. They wrote about the life in the towns and the cities: about the middle classes as well as the working class and the ever increasing lumpen proletariat.

In the years following 1975, certain new political conditions began to emerge with the imposition of National Emergency and the suppression of revolutionary writers along with other sections of intellectuals. Violations of civil liberties by the law and order

enforcement machinery increased. These and other factors reflected in the writings during the years between 1975-1980, which we will be seeing in the next chapter.

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  26. Ibid.,p.11. Several of Satyanarayana's songs like "Kadili Randi"(Rise and fight), "Levara! Levara veeruda (Rise! Rise Warrior), "Toli Vijayam" (First Victory), "Konda Jati Simhamulu" (Hill lions) etc., depict the various stages in Srikakulam movement.
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## CHAPTER V

INTERACTION BETWEEN POLITICS AND  
LITERATURE DURING 1970-80

The present chapter, being a logical as well as chronological continuation of the preceding one, takes off where the latter ends. Here an attempt is made to trace how the forces like *RWA, Praja Sahiti, Jana Natya Mandali. etc.*, aiming at creating a counter-culture and counter-hegemonic consciousness, portrayed contemporary politics and society through literature, and how the Indian state responded to such moves during the period 1970-80.

## I

The Expansion of Socially conscious and critical literature: The Role Expected of It in Relation to Politics and Society.

[A] The genre of serious literature that is critical, socially conscious and realistic had stood its ground in



Telugu during 1970-80. Much of the serious literature of the period, despite lack of support from the publishing houses controlled by private business and the obstacles of state censorship, began to cast a critical eye on the society and politics in its varied complexity. Even writings emerging from such associations like the RWA, with all their ideological and political commitment, had to pay attention to fulfill the qualities of serious literature before they are accepted even by their members. This becomes clear on going through the critical articles and reviews in their own official journals.

The emergence of literary movements under well established literary and cultural associations has given this type of literature a chance of getting published, unlike before. Even the number of journals, publishing writings on this type of literature and on the goals of building a counter-culture have grown rapidly during 1970-80. While by early 1970s there was only one literary journal to publish revolutionary literature and criticism, by early 1980s the number has increased to over a dozen. † This represents, in a way, the increase in the quantity of literature coming out regularly, besides the fact that increasing number of new writers

were turning towards serious literature during the period.

[B] It was noted in the preceding chapter that during the Srikakulam struggle and in the immediate period of that struggle the goal of literature was seen as preparing the potential revolutionary groups for the struggle, a goal which influenced the form and content of literature that emerged then in a particular way.

As the prospect of immediate success on the political front faded, the literary and cultural movements that developed under its influence made it their task to work for a long term goal. Now, attention began to be diverted from the literature in popular forms - which however continued to receive attention - to other literary forms like the story and Novel in an attempt to reach certain literate sections of the society too whose support in long term struggle could not be discounted. This resulted in a spurt in free verse and prose writings, some of which stand on par with the best of literature in any language.<sup>2</sup>

The RWA, which projected itself as the most popular representative of this genre of literature, set forth the goal of working on the literary and cultural plane to further the prospects of popular struggles. They sought to have strong links with other cultural organizations which can take their literary work into the masses.<sup>3</sup> This necessity to reach the masses by borrowing from the popular art forms, is a lesson drawn from the Srikakulam example.<sup>4</sup> Many writers began to stress the need to project the revolutionary reality in everyday life as seen in the lives of the downtrodden and the exploited sections of our society, who they believe have a potential spirit of revolting against such conditions. They, as these writers see it, may not as individuals be able to see below the surface of daily experience and thus remain blind to the larger patterns that can decide their future. It is seen as the function of revolutionary literature to make them conscious of such patterns as their daily lives reveal.<sup>5</sup>

The revolutionary literary movement sees literature and other art forms as being closely linked to popular politics.<sup>6</sup> Literature should not merely reflect the political and social reality in a passive sense, but

should do so as an active catalyst to hasten and strengthen popular political struggles.<sup>7</sup> This does not, however, mean that only politics constitutes the rawmaterial of literature. Rather, it is meant that literature is not apolitical, and does not rule out political aspects of social reality from being reflected in literature.<sup>8</sup> It is, however, realized that literature and literary movements and associations can remain political and contribute to politics without overstepping the limits within which they have to work. They cannot be directly linked to any particular political party. They can only identify with a particular type of politics in society, as the RWA identified itself with any popular struggle and attempts at denouncing the state repression of some writers and their work. Of course, many a time the RWA accepted by way of self-analysis that it failed on the count of maintaining the drawing line between themselves and some political parties.<sup>9</sup> Such periods of self-analysis have made the members of RWA assert that at times when the lines of open confrontation between classes are not drawn, when only a preparation of subjective conditions for such a confrontation is taking place, they have to be more open in their party affiliation and pay attention towards supporting any

literature and activity that can further their long term political goals.<sup>10</sup>

Speaking of the class basis of literature, these writers, refer to the hegemonic hold of the pro-establishment culture, and of the consequent need to create a counter culture. This understanding seems to have been derived from the policies of the state towards their activity over the years. They maintain that those writers who deny literature having political goals are indirectly revealing a political value orientation that falls in line with statusquo.<sup>11</sup>

When the state suppresses certain works, inspite of their artistic excellence, because of their social and political content and views, it shows, according to these writers, that the state is only trying to restrict the propagation of a particular consciousness they seek to spread.<sup>12</sup> They try to explain the nature of the state calling attention to the patronage extended by official Akademies to certain works like those of Vishwanatha Satyanarayana for their artistic quality, without in any way condemning their support of feudal value system and calls for a reversal to monarchical way of governance

despite the fact that such ideas go against the ideals laid down in our constitution.<sup>13</sup>

Attention is drawn towards the control of the state and the private business over powerful media of communication such as the cinema, radio, T.V., press, books etc., and the way these media are used to project only such a consciousness and culture that does not go against the interests of the establishment and, more over, goes on to strengthen their legitimacy.<sup>14</sup> They buttress this argument further by showing how private capitalists such as the Tata's and Birlas establish cultural centres and fund awards and fellowships to patronize ideas which serve their interests.<sup>15</sup>

As a result of all this, they see the necessity to create a counter-culture which is oriented towards serving the interests of the exploited and deprived sections, and make it reach them by evolving new forms as well as by borrowing from past experience.<sup>16</sup> They stress the need to use art and literature, through conscious movements, serve as instruments in the hands of the forces of change, by fighting on the cultural sphere the hegemonic hold of establishment culture.<sup>17</sup>

Basing on such an understanding, they see the necessity to associate themselves with all literary and cultural associations at the regional and the national levels which try to create an environment that is conducive to shape the potential spirit of protest, that is covertly expressed, into a revolutionary consciousness. Thus, for example, RWA acts in close connection with such cultural organizations like the Jana Natya Mandali, with the well known poet and artist revolutionary Gaddar as its guiding spirit.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, the RWA became part of the All India League for Revolutionary Culture (AILRC) on the national level, for having similar ideas and the belief that unless there is an ideological transformation that creates a revolutionary consciousness among the target sections, a movement involving larger sections of the society cannot take place.<sup>19</sup>

The RWA has reflected over the decade of 1970-80 the above spirit. Their writings show that they had given top priority towards reaching the masses, while subjecting themselves to frequent self-criticism and self-analysis of their achievements and failures. They continue to be

aware of the practical problems involved in achieving their tasks.<sup>20</sup> The achievements, on the other hand, are to be seen in the way they strengthen the foundations of serious literature with a social and political outlook in Telugu. We will be getting an idea of the range of this literature while tracing the verse and prose works during 1970-80 in the backdrop of the social and political conditions of the period, and also try to see how those conditions have been portrayed and interpreted in those works. This will be taken up in the next two sections of this chapter.

## II

One of the most important aims of the revolutionary literature of this period was to reach the deprived and illiterate sections in the rural and urban areas. This was sought to be achieved by writing in the popular oral tradition through songs and other performing medium. The works in the field of poetry of the period ever since the 1970s could fulfill this goal only partially. Much of these writings were in free verse upto 1974-75. Even those written in the song form were not taken to the masses in a big way. This is evident even in articles in



the journals projecting this trend.<sup>21</sup> However, they do offer a particular interpretation of the conditions that they arose from.

In the field of taking the message through songs to the working class, it was Gaddar who broke new grounds in the early 1970s, and many followed his example in the following years.<sup>22</sup> It wouldn't be out of place to note an incident where Gaddar mixes up with the people he writes about and in turn goes on to perform before them to make them understand their living conditions in his perspective. Gaddar was in Anantapur on 17.4.1974 when there was taking place a Rikshaw-pullers strike for four days. He was sitting with one of the Rikshaw-Pullers' family that went without food for two days continuously. This was the general condition of all the striking workers. Gaddar received inspiration from that incident and came out with a song on the spot,<sup>23</sup> describing through their example about labour value and the exploitation of their labor by the owners and the police who trouble them for bribe everyday, and of the necessity to change such conditions towards a society that serves them better. The same day the song was performed in a public meeting, moving the striking workers who gathered

there. Perhaps, the ability of this song to move the workers made the Government ban the song as well as the May, 1974 issue of *SrJana* which published it.<sup>24</sup> One of the features of song-form is that it can be sung by any person before a gathering, and need not be read by individuals. This too would be evident in the way the various writers and activists were arrested in the following years, though on different charges.

One of those poets who followed in Gaddar's way of writing is Vangapandu Prasada Rao. In his song "The Jeep is Coming", he exposes the politicians who go to the interiors during election time, while they fail to respond the rest of the time, and explains how they need to be taught a lesson.<sup>25</sup>

Sri Sri who became the founder member of RWA in 1970 went on in his own ingenious way towards this change.<sup>26</sup> After 1970 he came out with his anthology, "*Mara Prasthanam*" (Another Journey), which reflects the change when he expressed his anger against the conditions of social and economic inequality, unemployment and poverty which continues to haunt the nation even after three decades of development since independence. The needs of

radical politics, he became wedded to under RWA, brought about a change in the form of his writing which is more oriented towards the song form.<sup>27</sup> In his song, "Maro Prasthanam", he addresses the exploited and deprived sections and tells them :

Where lies the Revolution

There lie your food and shelter."<sup>28</sup>

Narrating the several ways they are being exploited in their daily lives, he goes on to show that taking to arms is the only solution to change such conditions:

To reach your goal

Arms certainly have their role."<sup>29</sup>

This reflects the change in his thinking and ideas, which he shows in his writings both in content and form. He became one of the first persons to work for civil liberties after seeing the 'encounter killings' that took place in Srikakulam and the imprisonment of many revolutionaries in jails in the aftermath of police repression.<sup>30</sup> He thought that the capitalists and the ruling class are indulging in violence, the naxalites

were only using the same as a retaliation. In his song, "Whose is Non-violence?"<sup>31</sup> He questions the legitimacy of the present system with its 'parallel economy' run on black money, and the democratic system filled with electoral corruption in his poem "The Looming problem" (Doodi Puli Meeda Putra).

Many writers like Cherabanda Raju, Vara Vara Rao, K.V. Ramana Reddy etc., had to face imprisonment under the provisions of MISA and also get involved in conspiracy cases during 1973-1974.<sup>32</sup> This is only in line with the policy of restrictions on their writings under RWA ever since 1970-71,<sup>33</sup> and it continued into the 1980s. As many as thirty five writers, including Sri Sri, Rachakonda Vishwanatha Sastry etc., were detained during the Emergency in June 1975.<sup>34</sup> These experiences reflect in their writings and influence their interpretation of the present system.

Vara Vara Rao's verse has an ideological strength that enables him to cull out the larger social tendencies from what he sees around him in the society. He does not see these experiences as the suffering of single individuals but as a collective experience of the society

at large. In his poems published as an anthology, "Daregimpu" ("Demonstration")<sup>39</sup>, he brings out the nature of a class divided society as is evident in all spheres of our society seen together. Influenced as he was by the Srikakulam naxalite struggle in 1968-70, his poetry shows the ideological nuances of the naxalites. His experience of continuous imprisonment on one ground or the other since 1973 reflects in his anthology, "Swechcha" ("Freedom"), where he tries to show that the ultimate goal of revolutionary literature and revolutionary politics is to strive for full freedom of human being.<sup>40</sup> He believes that revolutionary literature is to prepare the people's consciousness in a way that they become convinced of revolutionary transformation, thereby aiding the popular struggles for ultimate freedom from exploitation and suppression..

K.V.Ramana Reddy is another of those poets who came to limelight in this decade. His poems fall in line with showing that poetry not only reflects the social consciousness of a period but also has the potential to move people towards specific action in a particular direction. He proves to be a revolutionary and a poet at

the same time.<sup>37</sup> He is able to artistically express his political ideas and message:

"Seeing the dead bodies floating in pools of  
blood,  
There is raging in my heart a demonic hatred  
against the state."<sup>38</sup>

When he writes these lines he interprets the nature of state as a revolutionary sees it out of his experience, perhaps even showing which side of the social division the state represents.

If one makes an assessment of the verse and songs that emerged from the Revolutionary trends of this period, one sees that the nature of reactions towards the conditions aroused has been changing in the post emergency period, and for that matter ever since 1972, when the first anthology of RWA, "March", was banned and many writers were arrested - soon becoming a feature of the years that followed.<sup>39</sup> The focus of the writers as a result shifted towards fighting for civil liberties and freedom of expression of the writers, and portraying the

state-violence and repression on the writers and the political activists.

### III

[A] What marks the Telugu literary scene of this period most is the growth in the quantity and quality of serious literature in prose. When we make this statement we are not at all referring to the commercial literature and popular fiction that has always been there and increased over the years. Within the serious prose writings, the genre of short story has improved more than that of the novels. The notable feature of these prose works is that they draw their themes and rawmaterials from real life situations in the contemporary society,<sup>40</sup> and cover such a wide variety of themes ranging from rural life, middle class consciousness, communalism and superstitions to political and social movements, the functioning of the governmental machinery, the nature of the state and of the economic development in the country.<sup>41</sup>

[B] An important point about these writings relates to the readers or the section of society they were aimed at. An obvious fact, given the medium of print through which

they are propagated, is that they are aimed at the literate sections of the society. But, among them, they are targeted for the upper and lower middleclasses both in the cities and towns, and to an extent rural areas too. Rural areas, because today in Andhra Pradesh the literate sections who can read and are prone to read such literature, given their frustrations stemming from unemployment and the gap between ideals they read about and the practical situation around them, amount to significant numbers. Whether the writings are about the urban or rural life, the writers mostly come from urban middle class acquainted with either the urban or the rural scene.<sup>42</sup> However, all the prose works are projected for the middle class readership. This tendency is but a logical extension of the political strategy of the revolutionary literary movement which recognizes the role of middle classes in revolutionary struggles in the long run.<sup>43</sup>

[C] We have seen in the preceding chapter that some writers like Rachakonda Vishwanatha Sastry and Kalipatnam Rama Rao took the popular literary scene by storm during the 1960s and were able to command wide readership.



Certain writers, having different social and political orientations, like Malatichandur, Lata, Muppala Ranganayakamma too have come out with serious prose works taking a critical look at the contemporary social scene.<sup>44</sup>

By the 1970s there emerged a host of other writers like N.S. Prakasa Rao, adding to the already noted writers taking up prose writing with a social purpose. These writers very soon were attracted towards the revolutionary literary movement that took shape.<sup>45</sup> Besides dealing with a variety of themes, as we noted, these writers had one thing in common: projecting a total scene of the social complexity they were depicting, without restricting themselves to merely portray revolutionary struggles.<sup>46</sup> The best of them, besides depicting what is happening in the society, also provoke the reader to think and visualize the larger social and political patterns implicit in the peoples daily lives and experiences, and their affect on the living conditions that can be changed only through conscious social and political intervention. When they do so, they are optimistic about the revolutionary potential of the oppressed sections.

[D] Not all the prose writings of this genre, in this period, were of the highest quality in either artistic and literary terms or in terms of the social and political interpretation they offer of the reality around them. Only a few fulfill these standards, and for our purpose here we can only afford to focus on the writings of those like Bhushanam, Kalipatnam Rama Rao, K. Kutumba Rao, and Rachakonda Vishwanatha Sastry. A clarification in this regard is that here we will be looking at the novels and stories at the same time because our attention will be on the themes and content in terms of the nature of socio-political interpretation they offer.

[E] In the preceding chapter, we already noted briefly the writings of Bushanam and Kalipatnam Rama Rao on the conditions in Srikakulam before and during the struggle.<sup>47</sup> Here we can look into details of Kalipatnam Rama Rao's novel, (some call it just a long story), "Yajnam" which captures the rural scene of Srikakulam quite well, portraying the life conditions from the point of view of the deprived sections, though what is portrayed may not be acceptable to many.

Kalipatnam brings out in this work the entire development process and governmental policies behind that situation which resulted in social inequalities and regional imbalances and exploitation of large sections of the society at various levels in Srikakulam.<sup>40</sup> He does this by portraying the village life and the changes that came about in rural areas during the first three decades of independence. He takes the example of the village called Sundarapalem, which is drowned in illiteracy and impoverishment, where there exist side by side people representing the old feudal links, the new emerging capitalist farmers taking to small time business as well, the small peasants who lost their lands to the money lenders and traders as well as the big landlords. He shows the process of commercialization of agriculture taking place in the plains, with the concomitant effect on expanding surplus grains stock of the big and middle farmers who now try to use it fruitfully in other areas rather than make them available for the poor there. He brings out the various attempts at mobilizing the poor peasant and the landless labour for land reforms and increase in wages through peaceful means, which elicit little favorable response, while the capitalist farmers all through were making demands for more education,

roads, electricity and other facilities. The increasing alienation of poor peasant from the lands and the way they were becoming tenants or landless labour is portrayed. Given the period in which the novel is placed, he only shows the voicing of short term interests and problems by these deprived sections. In this way the writer stands true to the times and conditions portrayed in his work, and does not try to solve the problem posed in it in the light of the later period when the struggle became sharper.

In one of his stories, "*Shanti*" ("Peace"), Kalipatnam interprets many facets of the contemporary political and social reality deftly and shrewdly through his own medium. He wants to question how the freedom movement under Gandhiji could be termed non-violent in spirit given the largescale uprisings that took place. He remarks how long one can continue to be peaceful to the extent of apathy and mute surrender when your protest through peaceful means is overlooked by the government. He wonders why even many peaceful protest movements in post-independence period such as those against rising prices, which are not anti-system movements, too had to be snubbed by the Indian State through use of force,

while all the time deriving its legitimacy by talking about the necessity of non-violence. He shows how the capitalists and the state describe the use of such constitutional means as "strike" too as disturbing peace.<sup>49</sup>

In his story "Chavu" ("Death"),<sup>50</sup> Kalipatnam describes the living conditions in a Harijan village very realistically, with skill and human feeling. Revolving round the death of an old woman in the village, and the difficulty the village<sup>s</sup> face in getting the body cremated - due to lack of money, superstition, lack of cooperation, and other problems - is well made use of to give a microscopic analysis of the lives of these deprived groups, and the human suffering stemming from social exploitation and deprivation.

N.S. Prakasa Rao, whose writing spanned a short period between 1967-73, was a revolutionary writer with a social purpose fighting against the forces of exploitation.<sup>51</sup> His stories provide an interpretation of the nature of India's economic and social development since Independence from the working class point of view. In his story, "Paper-Tiger",<sup>52</sup> he shows what he feels is

the real nature of the middle-class intelligentsia, which is suspicious of everything and chooses to act carefully in its response towards the forces of struggle on the one hand and the forces represented by the state on the other. He tries to show that all the exploiting sections are like paper-tigers whose real nature would be exposed only in the process of popular struggle. He aims at creating in the reader a spirit of hatred and rebellion against the existing system which fails to give their due to those working and contributing to the development of the society through their physical and mental labour.

Kutumba Rao and Rachakonda Viswanatha Sastry tower above all others as prose writers with a social purpose, without surrendering art for ideology's sake. Both of them are realists who were able to skillfully mix the artistic and interpretative dimensions of literature in a balanced way.<sup>53</sup>

Kutumba Rao, as we have seen in chapter III, was one of those writers who was an active member of the Abhyudaya Movement and later joined RWA in 1970s. A common trait of his writings over the years is the stress on using the story-form to influence the consciousness of

the middle-class whom he sees as having an important role to play along side the working class and the rural peasantry in the fight against exploitation. This is all the more important, according to him, as this section is caught between the dilemma of seeking an imaginary prosperity that eludes them and supporting the poor sections fighting for a better system which will benefit them as well. As a result, they are shown in his stories as a class dogged by apathy and self-deception.<sup>24</sup> His stories have as their guiding spirit the belief that the middle-class illusions, self-deception and apathy should be exposed and dispelled through positive criticism, and showing them where and in what direction their real development lies.<sup>25</sup>

Rachakonda Vishwantha Sastry, better known as Ra. Vi. Sastry, portrays realistically the people's lives especially of the lower middle classes and the underdogs in the towns and the cities. He describes the quasi-rich commercial classes using the lumpen proletariat for their ends. His stories and novels<sup>26</sup> deal with a variety of problems ranging from an assessment of the parliamentary electoral politics in practice (in "Mosam", cheating"), the money-based profit oriented system where human life

loses its value before the value of money power (in "Maya" "Illusion"), the appropriation of surplus value from work in real-life situations (in "Balla Chekka", "wooden plank") to the process by which poor peasants are being devolved of their lands and the struggle they are waging at the village level in areas like Srikakulam (in "Sommalu Ponayandi", ("Lost our Means")).<sup>97</sup>

A significant feature of his stories and novels is the portrayal of the life of the lumpen proletariat, which is found fault with by some. Such criticism is unwarranted to the extent he does not glorify them but only shows how this section of our cities and towns are a product of the very way capitalist system developed. He shows the way they are made use of by the profit-seeking sections, and points out how easy it is given the large-scale unemployment that dogs them and from which they come out by finding employment in the illegal and anti-social activities sponsored by the rich-classes. He also brings out the link between the lumpen proletariat, the businessmen, the politicians and the corrupt officials (in "Liquor Stories").<sup>98</sup>



Ra. Vi. Sastry also describes the functioning of the constitutional machinery and the judiciary in his novels and stories more than anyone else in Telugu literature. An interesting point to note here is that he is a lawyer by profession. He brings out in his works the darker side of the functioning of the judicial system, the police and the bureaucracy, and the politicians, and subjects them to terse criticism using his natural propensity for wit and satire.<sup>39</sup> He brings out well the close relationship between the judiciary, politicians, money-power and crime in our society.<sup>40</sup> He shows the link between the law enforcing agencies and the rich classes in the rural areas as well. In his story, "Lost our Means", he shows how the poor peasants, who often belong to socially deprived groups as well, are devolved of their lands illegally by the mechanics of the traders, money-lenders and rich landlords. He portrays how the latter groups get the support of the law enforcing agencies and the administrative machinery either through their passiveness or through tacit support in suppressing any signs of collective actions of the former groups. This is brought out to show what he believes to be the class-nature of the existing constitutional set-up and the nature of the state based on it.

Another significant feature of his writings is that, he never preaches anarchist actions towards the constitutional machinery. He only talks of the necessity to replace the capitalist constitution and state machinery with a working class constitution through working-class struggles.<sup>21</sup>

Thus we see that the prose literature in Telugu has definitely improved in quality as well as quantity during the period 1970-80. These works, mostly coming from writers who are members of the RWA, are to be noted for their realistic portrayal of the life, society and politics of the period as seen through the daily lives of the people belonging to different sections of society. A commendable feature of those writings is the way they are linking up happenings in the particular context of Telugu society with the larger social and political tendencies that can be seen all over the country. Thus, they provide in a way an interpretation of the problems common to the country as whole as well. Before we try to see in a separate section how the state has reacted towards this type of literature - prose and poetry together - during this period, throwing some light on what threat the

present system perceives from such literature, we can try to see the nature of the so-called "neural" literature.

#### IV

In the course of studying the relationship between politics and literature till-now, we did not take into account the popular fiction patronized by the commercial magazines and the middle-class readers. This is not because there is a dearth of such literature but because there is too much of it, and it is not possible to analyze the literature of this type in detail in a research like this, nor is it necessary given our purpose. However, it would be helpful to notice the nature of this literature in general and the type of consciousness it seeks to generate and spread.

Most of this type of literature in Telugu comes out in the commercial magazines which have increased tremendously during the period of our study. It is not untrue if we state that in fact these magazines survive only on such literature.

This literature thrives on pure imagination catering to the readers' illusions and dreams, with only a skeletal presentation of social relations resembling the middle-class while the interpretation and solutions to their problems like marriage, dowry, unemployment etc., remain unrealistic.

There has also emerged during this decade one significant trend that took the popular literary scene by storm, basing on themes surrounding the occult but packed with pretensions of science-fiction. They seem to put the occult on the same pedestal as science.

Most of the popular fiction appears in a serialized form, a form created completely by the needs and interests of the commercial magazines. Besides, the readership itself is created by the magazines rather than the readers influencing the type of literature to come. This is a typical example of the influence of the capitalist logic on the form and content of literature.<sup>42</sup>

Some critics explain the popularity of this type of literature by pointing out the inability of the 'socially conscious' and progressive literature to make a dent into

the middle-class readership who mostly afford and read this fiction. As such, this vacuum has only been filled by this fiction. To an extent, we cannot discount the ingenuity of some writers who used their exceptional skill and technique to catch the readers' attention.<sup>43</sup>

Coming back to the fiction surrounding the bizarre and the occult parading as science fiction, we have to note that some critics have labelled it 'pseudo-science fiction' and 'Black-Magic' genre. These latter descriptions are more apt, as this type of fiction dwells mostly on the art of black-magic and tries to create a suspense and fear built on superstitions already widespread in our society. This was started by Yendamuri Veerendranath through his novels "*Tulasi*" and "*Tulasi Dalam*", and later followed by writers like N. R. Nandi and Hari Kishan.<sup>44</sup> The worst part with this type of fiction is the way they try to mix up certain amount of imaginary instrumentation, which for them makes science, though they defy the laws of science themselves. They try to create the impression that science and black magic stand on the same level, and that while the former is said to be fully understood the latter is not - a grave misunderstanding and ignorance of a fact already

established through the history of science and human civilization.<sup>43</sup> And it makes a sad reading of the state of the readership, mostly the middle class intelligentsia, who despite being the most literate sections continue to believe these writings drenched in superstition.<sup>44</sup> It, in a way, reflects the social weakness of these groups with their frustrated psyche in an alienated environment, wanting to attain an escape from reality and seek their fantasies and illusions in imagination.

In this sense, this type of popular fiction is only strengthening false-consciousness by failing to place before the reader the social reality and concrete social problems affecting their lives. By being able to divert their attention from 'real issues' to 'non-issues' in their search for quick money that the commercial press offers them, the writers of this fiction are indirectly accepting even the negative aspects of our society. Implicitly, these writers too are not ideologically neutral nor non-political to the extent they, by ignoring the real issues and offering false solutions, are accepting that all is well with the present system.

v

Before ending this chapter, it is essential to take a look at the State response towards the Revolutionary genre of literature, both prose and verse.

The response of the State towards the revolutionary writers during the period 1970-80 was basically of two types. One was to impose bans and restrictions on the distribution of the works in this genre; and secondly, to conduct raids on writers' houses, imprisonment of writers under various acts like MISA and filing conspiracy cases on them. In all this the State indirectly recognized that literature has a strength and capacity to influence popular consciousness if allowed free circulation.

All this can be seen from the series of events since 1970, when the RWA was formed. Even as early as December 1970, we see police raiding the houses of several important writers in Telugu. In January, 1971, the Government banned the circulation of the anthology of poems titled "March", and arrested Mr. P. Krishna Rao, a writer who edited that anthology on grounds of "anti-State" activities. In the same year in March another

anthology "Jhinjhi" edited by K. V. Ramanareddy was banned, and a writer Dr. M. V. Ramana Reddy who edited "Prabhanjanam" was arrested.<sup>67</sup> Several writers and cultural activists like Cherabanda Raju, Nikhileshwar and Jwalamukhi were arrested under the Andhra Pradesh Detention Act, clause-6, section A. Under this rule, any person could be arrested by the State without showing any reason. However, the state High Court gave a ruling against the entire clause of the Act and got the writers released.<sup>68</sup>

In 1972, the anthology of stories titled, "Today's Pulse" ("*Ippudu Veesthunna Gali*") had been banned.<sup>69</sup> And the reason most of the writers and critics pointed out behind the ban is that this anthology contains one story, "Chiranjeevi" which is based on a real "encounter-killings" scene in the Srikakulam struggle.<sup>70</sup>

All the anthologies of poetry and verse that followed during the year-"*Hail Revolution*" (Telugu version), "Rise" ("*Le*") "*Bhandook*" - were banned successively.<sup>71</sup>

In 1973, during the period of President's rule in Andhra Pradesh, several writers like Cherabanda Raju,



Varavara Rao, M. T. Khan etc. were arrested under the MISA, but were released by the High Court.<sup>72</sup>

Soon, the Government's policy changed and began to implicate these writers in various conspiracy cases on grounds of "anti-State" activities and also on grounds that they were indoctrinating the students and unemployed youth in the villages and towns. Thus, in May, 1974 writers like Cherabanda Raju, Varavara Rao, M. T. Khan, Ranganadham and K. V. Ramana Reddy were implicated in the Secunderabad conspiracy case, while T. Madhusudhana Rao, Siva Reddy, Bhuman and Jyothi were implicated in the Chittoor conspiracy case.<sup>73</sup>

In 1975, when the state government organized the "World Telugu Conference", and on that occasion released several prisoners from the jails but failed to release the writer Varavara Rao, the RWA under Sri Sri's leadership issued a call to all writers to boycott the conference. This led to the arrest of Sri Sri and Cherabanda Raju.<sup>74</sup>

During the National Emergency, as many as thirty five writers were arrested and released only towards the end of March 1977.<sup>75</sup>

In March 1980, the state government dismissed Cherabanda Raju and Lochan from the Government services; both worked as teachers in government schools.<sup>76</sup> Incidentally, Cherabanda Raju was at that time suffering from a cancer and later died in the hospital, while still under detention.

One can gather from such information that there is a confrontation between the State and the revolutionary writers, in their attempts at creating a counter-hegemonic culture denouncing the legitimacy on which the present system is based. The way the State tried to tackle such activity reveals that the State recognized the power, capacity and force that the literary sphere developed over the period, which is not in the interest of the system it maintains. Hence, the natural response of the Indian State to suppress the emergence of such a counter culture that threatens its legitimacy if allowed to spread freely - a perfectly predictable response any State representing any system the world over would come

up with in such a situation. And it needs more than merely grudging such a State response on the part of these cultural activists with specific political goals, for it has to be understood as being part of the difficulties they will have to face in any long term political struggle and have to overcome those difficulties in the praxis of struggle.

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## CHAPTER VI

## SOME CONCLUSIONS

The study of the interaction between politics and literature in Telugu society during 1960-80, as attempted in the preceding chapters, throws light on certain aspects surrounding the nature of the Srikakulam Movement, the processes of communication and mobilization that emerged from such interaction, the attempts by those drawing inspiration from that movement to build a counter hegemonic culture, and response of the state towards such activity. The fruitfulness of a study of this nature lies in extending our understanding of these aspects, which are otherwise neglected usually, and which are as much political so that a neglect of these aspects hinders us from gaining a complete knowledge of such movements. Perhaps, this statement has been repeated once too often in the course of this dissertation, but it is essential recalling here.



In this chapter, which is an exercise in conclusion, we will try to draw certain summary conclusions on the aspects mentioned above, basing on what has been studied in the preceding chapters.

(1)

The specific case of interaction between politics and literature we looked into revealed what the literary and cultural spheres can achieve in working for a political cause. Working to further the cause of the struggle has enriched the Telugu literary scene of the period both in form and content. The literary and cultural sphere could fruitfully become political weapons or means in the mobilization process. By turning their attention towards the hardcore problems of the underdogs in our society, the writers and artists came in close association with the people whose cause they were espousing. The necessity to reach an illiterate mass of people, who at the same time were potential revolutionary sections, forced them to experiment with new forms, especially the oral song forms as also the visual forms like dance and street plays, thereby ensuring that what was written also reached the people for whom it was

intended. In the process, there emerged the concept of a writer who was a revolutionary activist on the cultural plane as part of the larger political struggle.

(2)

The impact on the form and content of literature, and on the image of a writer as a revolutionary, extended into new literary trends and movements that emerged since 1970, drawing inspiration from the Srikakulam struggle. This is what we see in the understanding of literary movements like those under Revolutionary Writers Association and their attitude towards politics when they talk of the necessity to create a counter-culture which in the long run is to extend its influence on larger sections of the society, dispelling the grip of the establishment oriented culture on their consciousness and thinking.

(3)

The Srikakulam example also showed the limitations of the role of the literary and cultural spheres. It proved that these spheres can only serve to hasten the

slowing of a revolutionary consciousness, while the nature and level of such consciousness should coincide with ground reality. Literary and cultural spheres by themselves cannot bring about large scale social and political changes. They can only help in bringing about such changes by working alongside the social and political forces that set the direction and pace of changes. Inevitably, as we see in the case of Srikakulam movement, a failure on the political plane also reflects on the literary sphere associated with it. But, then, the failure on the political plane - of course in immediate rather than long term- does not mean the literary sphere failed in its task completely. As we have seen, the literary sphere seems to have had more role to play in the days preceding the peak of the struggle than during the thick of the struggle. This is understandable since it had more role during the process of mobilizing the target sections, and in shaping their consciousness and prepare them for the struggle. This lesson seems to have been learnt by the literary trends and movements that emerged in the 1970s.

(4)

The close intertwining of the political struggle with the literary and cultural sphere on the ideological plane in the whole course of the movement throws light on certain aspects of the movement which should be of interest to the social and political scientists. The existing analyses on the Srikakulam struggle, meagre as they are, fail to give us a full understanding of the movement. Of course, this is because they are interested in looking at Srikakulam struggle merely as a Naxalite movement. This mistake is not avoided even by those who agree that the Srikakulam movement grew from local conditions even in the 1950s, attracting the attention of the Communists for a time, while it turned towards naxalism only in the last two years, i.e., between 1968-70, before it was put to an end.

All of them continue to analyze this movement in terms of the professed ideological leanings of the leadership. Given such an approach, since the local leadership in Srikakulam right from the beginning came to have links on the formal level with the communist party,

and later with the CPI(M), and then the naxalites of the Charu Mazumdar line, the common streak that is highlighted is their profession of Marxist-Leninist ideology, and later on the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideology.

Understanding through such ideological prisms makes us see what the leadership expresses about their theoretical analysis of the society and politics in terms of base and superstructure, whereby the latter is described as determined by the former. This does not show how in practice the leadership themselves realized the autonomy and significance of the superstructural sphere. Ofcourse, that the significance of political action has been accepted by them- as did Lenin and Mao- itself shows that they had in practice granted the autonomy and ability of the so-called "superstructural" elements to change the "determining" economic sphere.

But, none of the writings on this movement - as, perhaps, in the case of many other such movements- try to see how praxis has diverged from theory. Some works do provide material that allows such an interpretation, without attempting it, when it comes to political action.

On the other hand, it is fully ignored when it comes to the role of 'ideas' and 'culture' in influencing 'politics' and other forces of social change. This proves to be a grave omission. In Srikakulam Praxis has forced the political sphere to take the assistance of the cultural sphere, bringing about the link between consciousness (existing as well as necessary), mobilization and political action. This means that through their own practice, the significance of subjective consciousness too has been recognized and given equal attention in building the political movement. This becomes evident, at least, when attention is paid to study the point where politics and literature (or any other cultural medium) interact in concrete situations. Not surprisingly, those involved in the political and literary spheres too carry forward the lessons of Srikakulam Movement as the study of the interaction between politics and literature during 1970-80 reveals.

(5)

Thus, the decade that followed the suppression of the Srikakulam movement shows the emergence of conscious literary and cultural movements like the RWA and JNM,

which made attempts to further the prospects of popular struggles. There can be seen in them an optimism, effectively projecting the revolutionary reality to the downtrodden and exploited sections of our society. However, the literary and cultural sphere is seen as having the role of an active catalyst hastening popular struggles and strengthening popular politics. Besides, the way this sphere developed during the decade points to the realization of the need not only to reach the rural and urban poor but also the urban middle-classes, all of whom are seen to have a role in future struggles. The experiences during the Srikakulam struggle, a historical reassessment of the Telengana struggle, and the decade 1970-80 made those involved in the literary and cultural spheres realize the necessity to fight the establishment oriented culture and consciousness by spreading a counter-hegemonic consciousness side by side the attempts to contribute towards popular politics and struggles.

(6)

That the State perceives a threat not only from the political struggles but also those involved in creating a revolutionary consciousness is evident from the State

response towards them. The last decade saw the rise of State attacks on the literary and cultural movements professing to spread anti-establishment culture. This happened in Telengana, it repeated in Srikakulam, and is continuing today. But, then, those who point to the partisan nature of the present system should not be very surprised about the nature of state response which has been the same towards the political and literary spheres which in practice, given their goals in the long term, cannot be clearly distinguished. Yet, both the political and literary spheres stood to gain from the particular type of interaction that evolved over the years. While the literary sphere was politicized, politics enriched the content and form of literature too, in as much as the literary and cultural medium provided a means to reach and communicate with the illiterate mass of potential revolutionary groups and help mobilize them. But then this interaction could not go beyond what the objective conditions would allow as can be seen from the fact that the literary sphere cannot build political ~~struggles~~ <sup>struggles</sup> on its own; ~~political strategy affects~~ <sup>political strategy affects</sup> that faulty political struggles and the literary spheres intertwined with them; that attempts to break the



stronghold of hegemonic culture by spreading a counter hegemonic culture have to face the same response from the State machinery as do the parallel popular struggles.

(7)

Overall, we can say that here<sup>s</sup> an interaction between Politics and literature (as part of culture) that is Politically significant. It is a situation where the Political and the cultural spheres<sup>t</sup> are closely intertwined through the prism of popular struggles and attempts to mobilize and further such struggles. As a result, a study of such interaction in specific cases in the Indian context also throws light on aspects that are of interest to students of political movements, of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic processes, and those studying the nature of Indian State. Such a study, as we have seen, becomes all the more interesting for it can show the divergence between theory (professed ideology) and praxis of political movements and struggles, an aspect which can hardly be ignored.

## NOTES

1. In the course of this dissertation such terms like political sphere, cultural sphere, literary sphere etc. have been used. This gives an impression that all these refer to separate processes. On the contrary, they all form part of the same process. These divisions are only on the level of analysis, not in practice. Similarly, the terms like economy, polity, society, culture, ideology etc. are used, and the 'influence' or 'impact', or 'determining' of one by the other(s), and vice versa is described. In practice, again, one may not be able to make such a clear-cut distinction, or describe the relationship between them through the use of terms noted above. But using such terms in this study became unavoidable. Given the nature of this research it is not possible to evolve new terminology, or borrow and adapt terms from other fields beyond a particular point, that can better explain the relationships and processes being described. But, then, that is to be done on a different level and larger scale in other areas of the social sciences. Perhaps, such a search has to be go side by side attempts to study deeply, and to draw from, the complex Indian reality itself.

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A NOTE : The bibliography provided here is divided into four parts : I Theoretical; II Society And Politics; III On Politics And Literature in Telugu Society (1960-80); IV Telugu Literary Works A (upto 1960 in brief) and B (1960-80).

In Part III, the titles of books and articles are provided in English translation, while the original title in Telugu follows in the brackets in a transliterated form. The list of Telugu literary works provided in Part IV is by no means exhaustive. It is only to provide the broad trends in Telugu literature. Besides, the list includes not only those works from which examples have been cited in the course of the dissertation but also others considered important representatives of the various trends and period. Regarding the bibliographical details of place, Publication and date of works listed in Part IV : Some books do not contain place of publication, while some do not have date of publication, while some others do not provide both; hence, wherever these details are not available they are not a lapse of the researcher.

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#### IV Some Representative Works in Telugu Literature

##### A

#### [i] Social Reformist [Early 20th Century]

Apparao, Gurajada., Kanyasulkam (play) (Vijayawada : Visalandhra)

Veeresalingam, Kandukuri., Sweeya Charitra Sangrahamu (Abridged : Kutumba Rao, K.) (New Delhi : National Book Trust, 1972).

- Rajasekhara Charita (Novel) (----)

#### [ii] Romanticists (1930-40)

Chalam., Musings - 1 (Vijayawada, Desi Kavita Mandali, 1957)

- Maidanam (Novel) (Vijayawada : Aruna Pub.)

- Atma Katha (Vijayawada : Aruna Pub.)

Krishna Sastry, Devulapalli., Krishnasastry  
Kritulu : Krishna Pakshamu; Pravasamu :  
Urvasi (Poetry) (Rajamundry : Routs  
Chandrayya and Sons, 1967).

Lakshmi Narayana, Unnava., Malapalli (Novel)  
(Vijayawada:Jayanthi Pub, 1986)

Satyanarayana, Vishwanatha., Veyi padagalu (Novel)  
( ) Cheliyali Katta (Novel)

Subba Rao, Raya prolu, Kanne patalu (verse)  
(Hyderabad: Andhra Saraswata Parishat) -  
Andhravali (Guntur:Navya Sahitya Parishat)

[iii] Abhyudaya (1940-60)

Kutumba Rao, Kodavatiganti., Chaduvu (Novel) ( )

Narayana Babu, Srirangam., Rudhira Jyothi (Verse)  
(Guntur: Navodaya Pub., 1976).

Ramana Reddy, K.V., Angara Vallari (verse)  
(Vijayawada:Abhyudaya pub, 1959)

- Bhuvana Ghosha (verse) (Vijayawada:  
Visalandhra, 1966)

Telengana Porata Patalu (1946-61), (AP:  
Virasam, 1972)

B - I

(1960 - 80)

(Note: Arrangement here is by and large chronological)

Verse:

Digambara Poets, Digambara Kavita (Madras: M.  
Seshachalam 8 to, 1971)

Tirugabadu poets, Tirugabadu: Swachchanda Kavita  
Sankalanam (Warangal: Swechcha Sahiti, 1969).

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- Cherabanda Raju, Diksoochi (Hyderabad: Writer, 1970).
- Muttadi (Hyderabad: Writer, 1972)
  - Gouramma Kalalu (Hyderabad: Writer, 1975)
  - Janma Hakku (Hyderabad, Writer, 1978)
  - Kathipata (Also English Trans available: "Sword Song) (AP: RWA, 1983)
- Siva Sagar., Udyamam Nela Baludu (Warangal: SRJANA Pub. 1983).
- Prasada Rao, Vangapandu., Yeruvaka (Visakhapatnam: RWA, 1974)
- Polikeka (Karshaka, Karmika Geyalu) (Visakhapatnam: RWA, 1977).
- Vara Vara Rao, Swetchcha (Hyderabad: Yuga Prachurana, 1978).
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- Ramana Reddy., K.V., Mahodaya (Vijayawada: Visalandhra pub, 1969).
- Erra pidiKili (Tirupati: Balaji pub, 1972)
  - Jailu Kokila (Nellore: Jhinjhi pub, 1977).
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Janam patalu (Jana Sahiti Sanskritika Samakhya,  
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Le (Chittoor: RWA, 1971)

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P. Krishna Rao) (A.P. RWA, 1970)

Guerilla (Viplāva Geetalu) (Warangal: Srjana pub.,  
1972)

Shankharavam (Viplava Geyala Sankalanam) (Guntur:  
Socialist pub., 1972)

Kiranalu (A.P.: RWA, 1977)

Nethuruterulu Parina (Hyderabad: RWA, 1980)

Maro Jhinjhi (A.P.: RWA, 1980)

## B - II

(1960 - 1980)

### Prose And Some Popular forms

Cherabanda Raju., Hiranjeevi (and other Stories)  
(A.P.: RWA)

Kutumba Rao, K. (ed.), Ippudu Veesthunna Gali  
(Anthology of Revolutionary Stories) (A.P.:  
R.W.A., 1971)

Prakasa Rao, N.S., N.S. Kathalu (Stories)  
(Visakhapatnam: Sagaragrathamala, 1974)

Prasada Rao, Vangapandu, Bhoomi Bhagotam (street play) (Warangal: Srjana Pub., 1978)

- Sikkolu Yuddham (Kanjara Katha (Hyderabad Jana Natya Mandali Pub., 1983)

Rajayya, Allam, Agnikanam (Novel) (Nellore:

Rama Rao, Kalipatnam., Kalipatnam RamaRao Kathalu (Stories) (Visakhapatnam: Sagaragrاندhamala)

Veerabhadram, Perugu., Bhooswami (Political Street Play, Yakshaganam) (Kakinada: Praja Bookstall, 1981).

Viswanatha Sastry., Rachakonda, Jaree Anchu, Tella Cheera (stories) ( )

- Katha Sagaram (Stories) (1955)

- Alpa Jeevi (Novel) (1952).

- Vachche Kalam (Play) (1957)

- Rattalu Rambabu (Novel) (Vijayawada: Aruna Pub., 1983)

- Sara Kathalu (Stories) ( )

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