

A STUDY ON "CASTE AND CLASS POLITICS  
IN SRIKAKULAM DISTRICT (A.P.): 1967 - 72"

This fellow does not  
deserve the conferred  
M. Phil on him

**A STUDY ON "CASTE AND CLASS POLITICS  
IN SRIKAKULAM DISTRICT (A.P.): 1967 - 72"**

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**Dissertation submitted in Partial Fulfilment  
of the Requirements for the  
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## CERTIFICATE

THIS dissertation entitled "A STUDY ON CASTE AND CLASS POLITICS IN SRIRAKULAM DISTRICT (A.P.): 1967-72" submitted by PILLI ARUN KUMAR for the degree of Master of Philosophy has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University. We recommend this dissertation may be placed before the Examiners for evaluation.



PROF. RASHEEDUDDIN KHAN  
Supervisor



PROF. C.P. BHAMBHANI  
Chairman



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- P. ARUN KUMAR

**INTRODUCTION; THE FRAMEWORK OF STUDY**

## CHAPTER - I

### INTRODUCTION: THE FRAMEWORK OF STUDY

The very title itself indicates that it is a topic of much interest in academic as well as in political circles. The area of study chosen i.e. Srikakulam District, attracts the attention of those who are aware of the Indian history in general and communist movement in particular. Srikakulam district politics (especially politics from 1967-72) had a due place in Indian history. This provided a base for the revolutionary movement as a whole in India.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- (1) The concept of class as defined by Marx and later followers of Marx as applied to Srikakulam district.
- (2) Is there any changed system of caste in the district or is the old system of caste still prevailing in the district at that point of time?

(3) Is there any political loyalty on the basis of caste or money power or is there any alliance between the castes whose identical interests caused to respond to normal procedure of modern institutions like democracy, elections in the district?

### METHODOLOGY

For this study I heavily depended on secondary sources like books, journals, articles in periodicals, newspapers etc. My primary sources are election commission reports, census reports, party documents etc. I have followed empirical method to ascertain facts about Srikakulam movement with a set of formulations. Formulations are the level of class consciousness of the tribals. Causes for the failure of the Srikakulam movement. To know the level of class consciousness of the tribals, I formulated two questions: (1) Why did you join Girijan Sangam? (2) What were the reasons for the success of the Girijan Sangam? To know the causes for the failure of the movement, I formulated one question, "What is in your opinion the reasons for the failure of the movement". The answers were almost synony-



mous. To collect this data Mondemkhal, Peddakharja, Neelakantapuram, Peddagottik, Sappagottiti, Gumma Lakshnipuram, Lakkaguda, Dharm Lakshnipuram villeges were selected. Among the 400 participants who are surviving, I selected 40 on the random sampling method. I stayed in the area for one month and interviewed the samples on the above set of questions. Two surviving top leaders of the movement were also interviewed.

#### A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Before we go to our area of study I would like to deal elaborately on the existing literature.

#### Caste:

The word Caste originated from the Portuguese word Casta signifying breed, race or kind (casta derived from the Latin word 'castus' meaning 'pure').

#### Definition of Caste:

Ketkar defines the Caste as "a social group having two characteristics: (1) Membership is confined to those who are members and includes all persons so born. (2) The members are forbidden by an

inexorable social law to marry outside the group. Each one of this has a special name by which it is called. Several of such small aggregates are grouped together under a common name while these large groups are but sub-divisions of groups still larger which have independent names. Thus we see that there are several stages of groups and that the word 'caste' is applied to groups at any stage. The words 'caste' and 'sub-caste' is not absolute but comparative insignification. The larger group will be called a Caste while the smaller group will be called sub-caste. A group is a caste or sub-castes in comparison with smaller or larger. When we talk of a Maratha Brahmin and Konkan Brahmin, the first one would be called a caste, the latter would be called a sub-caste. But in a general way both of them might be called castes...these divisions and sub-divisions are introduced on different principles. In this way two hundred million Hindus are so much divided and sub-divided that there are castes who cannot marry outside fifteen families."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ketkar, S.V., A Short History of Caste, Rawat Publications (Jaipur, 1979), p.15.

Risley defines caste as a "collection of families, groups of families bearing a common name, claiming a common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine, professing to follow the same hereditary calling; and regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community".<sup>2</sup>

M.N. Srinivas, famous sociologist and expert on caste, defines jati as follows: "...a hereditary, endogamous, usually localised group having a traditional association with an occupation and a particular position in the local hierarchy of castes. Relations between castes are governed, among other things by the concept of pollution and purity and generally maximum commensality occurs within the caste".<sup>3</sup>

One of the famous scholars in Indology, P.V. Kane, characterises the features of jati as "(1) hereditary i.e. in theory a man is assigned to a particular caste by birth in that caste; (2) Endogamy and exogamy;

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2. Risley, H.H., Castes and Tribes (Calcutta, 1891).

3. Srinivas, M.N., Caste in Modern India and Other Essays, Asia Publishing House (Bombay, 1962), p.3.

(3) Restrictions as to food; (4) Occupation; (5) Graduation of Castes; (6) The caste council with powers to regulate the conduct of its member to impose penalties of the fines or ex-communication for lapses".<sup>4</sup>

Most of the British administrators, ethnographers who studied 'caste' identified its role as the functional one pervading the entire Indian political system. Large number of them subscribed to the functionalist school of British social anthropology. They studied functional aspect of the caste only. M.N. Srinivas falls under this category. Their main focus of study is caste, marriage, family and village community. Being functionalists they look at caste as one that can influence everything in present political system.

The cultural Anthropologists concentrate mainly on the symbolic expressions signified in the various rituals performed by various castes. Here they do not attach any importance to the economic concept of status as distinct from both religious (following "dharma"

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4. Kane's definition of Caste, cited in an Article: "Dialectics of Caste and Class Politics" by Sharad Patel, Economic and Political Weekly, vol.7 & 8, Annual Number, 1979.

definition and the social, political category of status. An entirely different kind of study based on the "texts" of various religious schools is sometimes brought within the scope of cultural anthropology which in fact further confuses the issues.

The sociological - functional interpretation of the Hindu social system like the above mentioned theories also fail because they do not take into account the rather simple fact that 70% of the population is engaged in agriculture which rules out functional explanation of hierarchy. The textual codification took place over a long period of history incorporating all the relatively new social changes and hence containing necessarily intrinsic contradictions.

Study of symbolism will have to end up as an exercise in the abstract if it is not adequately informed of social psychology. As Richard Lanoy so aptly points out "it is more fruitful to view the phenomena of caste as distinctive variant of the universal tendency to hierarchisation".<sup>5</sup>

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5. Lanoy Richard., The Speaking Tree, Oxford University Press (New Delhi, 1979).

Thus, Dumont's oversimplified contrast between Homo Aequalis and Homo Hierarchy cannot explain the basic human complexities. In fact, Lannoy tries to take the help of Coisler term the Greek 'Holos' to dispose of the cliches 'whole' and 'part'. The idea is to be able to describe the organismic terms by avoiding the inappropriate Durkheimian of sacred and profane. In Lannoy's own words "one problem always bedevilled analysis of the caste system: finding an adequate terminology with which to translate a multi-dimensional structure into verbal linear sequence".<sup>6</sup> Hence is preference for Holon (from the Greek 'holos') to preserve the unitary nature of Indian hierarchy and avoiding the linear absolutisation. So the social 'Holon' helps us to see the logic of the caste hierarchy rather than considering it as an anomaly. All these concepts, hierarchy, status and pollution should be simultaneously employed in such an analysis.

Louis Dumont who is representing the indological school of thought treats caste system as based on the fundamental social principle of hierarchy. Hierarchy is based on birth. Hierarchy is based on the principle of purity and pollution. The pure is superior to the

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6. Ibid., p.23.

impure, hence should be kept separate. Thus arises the principle of endogamy. According to him caste endogamy is an expression of the principle of separation, marriage, commensality and contact with members outside groups are forbidden, with various degrees of strictness in that order. This system is further complicated by the territorial factor even when the caste and sub-caste are the same. The different territorial group is the basic feature of the operation system. Thus, castes operate in terms of purity and impurity.<sup>7</sup>

This model mainly reflects cultural systems and totally neglects the economic and political dimensions of the Indian society.

Now we have seen the various definitions of caste and various experts and their thinking of exactly what the caste is:

1. Those who made an indepth study of the caste system, attempted only at the functional and integral aspects of it undermining the class differentiation existing in India.

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7. Dumont Louis., Homo Hierarchicus, Paladin (Delhi, 1970).

2. Those who went into the class aspect of the Indian society did not take the caste factor into consideration.
3. Those who have put in some effort like Andre Beteille to study caste, class and politics have confined their studies to the social stratification outlined by Max Weber.

By taking all these gaps into consideration, there is a need for the study of caste, and politics as a separate sphere of study. In pursuance of this argument, I have chosen to study the caste-class interaction in politics.

There are three schools of thought on caste in modern India: (1) The first group led by Sri M.N. Srinivas thinks that Caste remains as it is and as it was with some minor changes in appearance. It is being strengthened instead of weakening after the arrival of modern political institutions like democracy etc. He developed a "dominant caste" model in which he thinks "the centres of power increasingly being captured by the dominant castes like Ajjar (Ahirs, Jats, Gujars and Rajputs) in the Hindi belt,



Landowners in West Bengal, Patidars and Rajputs in Gujara-  
rat, Marathas in Maharashtra, Kammas and Reddis in  
Andhra, Okkalings and Lingayats in Mysore,  
Vellalas, Goundars, Padaiyachis and Kallars in  
Tamil Nadu and Nayanars, Syrian Christians and Izhavas  
in Kerala<sup>8</sup>. Dominant Caste not only exercises prepon-  
derant influence economically and politically but also  
numerically strongest in the village and local area.

This approach suffers from severe limitations. Some studies disproved how the premise of caste as the limit of interaction has not been validated by the studies on social change conducted by some observers belonging to the other points of opinion. The homogeneity of each caste especially that of dominant caste has been largely undermined by the new socio-economic political forces of modern India. The percentage of power holders and power-seekers account for the "dominant caste" according to M.N. Srinivas. Landownership becomes an important factor to the dominant caste whereas only few people got lands among the same caste.

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8. Srinivas, M.N., Social Change in Modern India, Indian edition, 1972, pp. 101f.

(2) Andre Beteille,<sup>9</sup> Yogendra Singh,<sup>10</sup> and Anil Bhat<sup>11</sup> belong to the second group of thought who argue that the new criteria of status have crept in and thereby differentiation developed in each caste group. Modernisation, economic development transformed the structure of each caste and that there is an emergence of class like structure of each caste within the caste. So power can no more be identified with caste. Individual can achieve any position without his caste status. Individuals can change his status irrespective of castes.

The definition of class refers to socio-economic status of an individual as outlined by Max-Weber. The chief drawback of this is that it undermines Marxian class analysis.

(3) The third group of people are led by Rajni Kothari.<sup>12</sup> Theirs is structural, functional approach. Rajni Kothari felt caste as one of the structures in the Indian political system. Politics strive to organise through this structure. He developed entrenched or dominant castes

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9. Andre Beteille, Caste and Class - Old and New (Bombay, 1969).
10. Singh, Yogendra., "Caste and Class: Some Aspects of Continuity and Change", Sociological Bulletin, 172, 1968.
11. Bhatt, Anil., Caste, Class and Politics, Manohar Book Service (New Delhi, 1975).
12. Kothari, Rajni., Caste in Indian Politics Orient Longman Ltd., (New Delhi, 1970).

concept in which ascendant castes compete for power. The 'entrenched caste' may belong to one caste or sub-caste whereas the 'ascendant caste' may include more than one caste or sub-castes. In the process factionalism develops among both entrenched castes and ascendant castes. It may lead to cooptation from other castes finally leading to polarisation of castes. In this way politicisation leading to secularisation of politics and gets integrated into the system.

Important constituent of any society or individual class concept has been thoroughly neglected in this analysis.

### Class:


The concept of class is concerned with the social differentiation of groups. In ancient times, social differentiation was one not of class but of status or rank. Membership in a stratum of society was bound up with privileges in the realm of public and private law. Differentiation according to status was fixed; a man is born into a certain stratum and his membership in it was determined by law and custom and a change was practically out of question.

The writers on the question of what is essential to the concept of social classes fall broadly into two categories: (1) who lay less stress upon the general standard of living holding that in modern societies, the elements around which a class is built up are generally same within a particular standard of living. Other objective factors have been selected as well. Thus Max Weber builds the concept of class upon (a) the possession of economic means, (b) external standard of living, (c) cultural and recreational standards.

(2) Some analysed all societies having mainly two classes. Marx was the first man to follow the method. Classes developed out of social relations of production - mode of production being the basic conceptual framework of Marxian class analysis. Forces of production and relations of production are the two main distinctions made here. For Marx were the basic social groups by means of whose conflict, society developed in accordance with changes in its economic struggles. Thus he gives clearly in the manifesto of the Communist Party "society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other - Bourgeoisie and Proletariat".<sup>13</sup>

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13. Marx, K., Engels, F., Manifesto of the Communist Party, Progress Publishers (Moscow, 1977), p.41.

David Mclellan says: "Marx attempted class  at the end of volume III of Capital (Capital, Moscow, III, 832 f) that there are three classes in capitalist and land owners. Yet he immediately qualifies this by saying that in England, where capitalist society is at its most developed, the stratification of classes doesn't appear in its pure form. Middle and intermediate strata even here obliterate lines of demarcation everywhere, (although incomparably less in rural districts than in cities). However, the development of capitalist society was rapidly simplifying the situation by producing two and only two classes: bourgeoisie and proletariat. Not only were the middle and intermediate classes being squeezed out, the landowners too would undergo the same process. All the workers would essentially become wage labourers and the competition among capitalists would increase the wealth of some and force the rest down into the proletariat.

Marx then asks the second question: What makes the three great social classes. His answer is "At first glance the identity of revenues and sources of revenues. There are three great social groups whose numbers, the individuals forming them like wages, profit and ground rent respectively on the relations of their labour power,

their capital and their landed property. He then puts the objection that this criterion would make for example, doctors and civil servants into separate classes; and the same would be true of their groups inside three classes mentioned above. The objection is unanswered as the manifesto breaks off here.

In manifesto the bourgeoisie are defined as the owners of means of production and employers of wage labourer; the proletariat those who own no means of production and live by selling their wage labour. Thus the criterion for belonging to class is one's own position in the prevailing mode of production."<sup>14</sup>

Lenin gives the definition as follows: "Classes are largely groups of people different from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the social organisation of labour and consequently by the dimensions of the share of social wealth...and the mode of acquiring it".<sup>15</sup>

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14. Mclellan, David., The Thought of Karl Marx: Introduction, McMillan Press Ltd., (London, 1981), 2nd edn.

15. Lenin, V.K., Collected Works, vol.29, p.42.

CLASS ANALYSIS - INDIAN SOCIETY

Marx in his articles on consequences of British rule in India, developed a concept on Indian civilization and of Asian civilization in general. It is not only different from that of Europe but also clearly inferior. He held the view that a certain number of non-European countries were characterised by an economic and social systems qualitatively different from those which had prevailed during all phases which had the development of European phases. This falls under the Asiatic mode of production. In Marx's view, it was having two traits: (1) an economy resting on the foundation of multitude of tiny village communities isolated from one another, engaged in smallscale agricultural handicrafts; (2) at the top of the pyramid, a despotic state which appropriated a part of the surplus produced by the village communities and which undertook public works, especially for irrigation etc., indispensable to the functioning of such an economy.<sup>16</sup> He did not directly mention about the caste system. His description of Asiatic mode of production as stagnant having no private property was the indicator as jajmani economy being run on varna theory. As his view

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16. Ecquse A.C., Sehnan, J.R., Marxism and Asia, Allen Lane, The Penguin Press (London, 1969).

was that there will be a change in the mode of production, he meant that the caste system would disappear with the change in the mode of production.

Some historians like R.P. Dutt,<sup>17</sup> D.D. Kosambi,<sup>18</sup> A.R. Desai, followed Marxian model and interpreted Indian history on the framework of historical materialism and concluded that social development is being guided by changes in the mode of production and hence caste is increasingly getting integrated with social classes.

There are no proper studies in India on caste and class which are being used in both Marxist and non-Marxist sense. Caste and Class are looked upon as mutually opposite entities. There were two studies on caste, class and politics. One was by Andre Beteille who made a micro-study in Tamil Nadu village called Sripuram. He tried to prove the Weberian concept of flexibility of changing classes.<sup>19</sup> He used qualitative

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17. Dutt, R.P., India Today, Manisha (Bombay, 1947).

18. Kosambi, D.D., An Introduction to the Study of Indian History, Popular Prakashan (Bombay, 1956).

19. Beteille, Andre., Caste, Class and Power (University of California Press, California, 1965).



techniques. Anil Bhat tried to prove differentiation as having taken place in every caste after the introduction of modern democratic institutions. Both the studies attempted at proving power politics as social stratification in Weberian concept of class.

#### AREA OF STUDY

With the promulgation of the Constitution on 26th January, 1950, the caste system lost its quasi legal basis. Equality of all citizens before law came into effect.

The principal changes in the society as a whole since the establishment of British rule and later of Indian rule can be summarised as follows: Security of private property and the consequent alteration in the position of the propertied classes; increase in the population and reversal of the ratio of manual labour to cultivated lands from one of labour scarcity to one of land scarcity; the introduction of a comprehensive land revenue system; development of market economy; acceleration in productivity to feed the growing population and create a viable national economy; increase in the circulation money in the rural areas; improvement of transportation and communication; gradual development

of subsistence farming by cash crops; the advancement of technology; increased power for the money lender at the expense of the peasant development of modern professions religiously neutral in character; with consequent scope for increased social mobility accelerated urban development with a mass exodus from rural areas; territorial unification and social mobility, and finally introduction of universal adult franchise.

These gradual improvements have had a greater cumulative effect on the structure of the caste than the various legislative reforms specially designed to abolish social inequality. Despite these changes caste distinctions still exist though they are of greater structural importance in the rural than in the urban areas. Caste continues to determine the function, the status the job opportunity as well as the social handicaps of a very large majority of the population. Caste differentiations also influence the modes of domestic and social life and types of houses and cultural patterns of peasantry. Administrative functions are often divided according to castes.

The changes in the economic sphere disrupted the hierarchy and status. In the political sphere caste continues to hold its sway on the system. Once, second



President of the Indian Republic, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, remarked: "though caste is today ceasing to be a social evil, it has become political evil; it has become an administrative evil. We are utilising the caste loyalties for the purpose of winning our election or getting into jobs, exercising some kind of favouritism or nepotism".

In recent days the term casteism or caste is used to describe any form of political loyalty on the basis of caste, the use of caste influence, nepotism, pressure or bribery to further the ends of a caste body. It may be considered as an innovation within the caste system - a form of pressure groups, usually arising from an alliance between castes whose interest happen to coincide.

There is one plausible argument which attributes a positive role to caste in that it sustains parliamentary democracy. According to this line of reasoning pluralism being the essence of the system of parliamentary democracy, it can be maintained and strengthened with the competitive caste alliances. Caste being intrinsically varied would never allow one group of vested interest to continue to hold political power. Thus the very plurality of caste is turned into the basis of pluralistic polity.



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By the same line of reasoning one can draw a very different conclusion. Caste system is being reinforced by parliamentary democracy as the latter cannot do without a popular mandate which is drawn from the loyalties based on appeal to caste affiliations. The existing vested interests find an expression in the new form of parliamentary democracy.

Thus, we are faced with a paradox; Caste contributing to pluralism and at the same time hindering the secularisation of politics. In other words, it contributes to the weakening of parliamentary democracy,

The structural change took place from hierarchical system of interdependence with a high degree of restlessness and ambiguity of status to a system of massive, impenetrable self-sufficient caste blocks virtually identical in their internal character and in competition with one another for power.

In this district during the period under study there has been a largescale social and political upheaval which atleast according to the leadership was avowedly Marxist. Here we have an opportunity to study the inter-relation of Marxism, Marxist political practice of the leadership and the participants of the movement who had

no knowledge of Marxism or the concepts specially used by the leadership in the course of the movement itself. Thus the Marxist notion of class consciousness as understood and applied by the leadership and the mass of the participants come under the focus of study. That the Marxists had to (and still have to) integrate the concepts of class, caste, tribe and ethnicity.

Previously there were three studies on the district by Shanta Sinha, T.V. Retnam and K.C. Suri.<sup>20</sup>

Shanta Sinha attempted to study the nature of Maoist movement. She presented a logical analysis of the two forms of Maoism as were then present in Andhra. In this attempt she underscored the various similarities and differences between T. Nagi Reddy and Charu Mazumdar and also the course of Srikakulam movement spelling out the socio-economic conditions of the tribals there. So her main focus was on Maoist theory per se hence could not deal the class concept.

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20. Shanta Sinha., "Maoists in Andhra Pradesh", unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 1976.

Venkata Retnam, T., "Leadership, Faction and Rise of Radicalism in Srikakulam District (A.P.): A Study of Congress Politics - 1952-72", unpublished M.Phil. dissertation, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 1978.

K.C. Suri., "The Girijan Movement in Srikakulam (1964-75): A Study of Political Violence", unpublished M.Phil. dissertation, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 1980.

T.V. Ratnam's study deals with the district politics over two decades with Congress as its prime object. The nature and base of the Congress along with the organisational aspects were examined. She finally explains the emergence of various factions and groups in the Congress party on the basis of caste loyalties, money power etc. Thus, the study identified caste as the major factor determining the district politics under the leadership of Congress party for over two decades. In her study she even finds the influence of caste factor even in the Naxalite politics. "It is unfortunate to note that even the radicals could not escape from the evil of caste" (p.167). But this contention of hers is not substantiated by any empirical observations thereby reducing it to a myth. Her another contention that some Congress leaders in the district patronised and protected the naxalites along caste lines also suffers from lack of empirical evidence. Thus her study essentially seeks to study the Congress politics in the district. Hence we can not expect her to focus on the class analysis.

K.C. Suri, holds the view that political violence is justified when it is for the change of society, for, the better. Having adopted Marxian interpretation of

political violence nothing original for him to interpret. Hence he presented descriptive socio-economic conditions of tribals that prompted to take to violence. His implicit appreciation for the pre-1968 movement was an outcome of a political view rather than analytical view. But his study fails to grasp the fundamental issues that are in common to all the tribal revolts. In all these revolts we find collusion of two mutually opposed cultures as the major issues involved viz., Tribal culture viz., modernity - India being no exception. Thus except for the communist leadership, all the tribal movements have much in common. His few observations are only of tactical rather than theoretical criticisms seen in a historic perspective. Given the nature of the study he can not include class concept in it.

The dissertation is broadly divided into VI Chapters. Chapter I deals at length with the various concepts used in the dissertation, and provides a general theoretical framework of the dissertation. The concepts like caste, class, its origin, evolution and opinions of various schools of thought were represented and an attempt is made to give an objective account.

Chapter II deals with the profile of the district after its bifurcation - some parts of it forming a part of newly formed district i.e. Vizianagaram. Details about the population up-to-date (1981 census provisional), resources, cultural features of the district in general and that of tribals in particular have been given. The tribal culture is separate by itself, hence it is attempted to depict their culture in the best way possible. A good part of the efforts were directed to the study on this aspect.

Chapter III discusses the electoral politics of the district during 1967-72. Two general elections (Parliamentary and Assembly) took place under the period of study. An attempt has been made to examine whether Caste, money, individual charisma, group loyalties are helping the candidates or not. Based on these assumptions, conclusions have been drawn.

Chapter IV relates to the factors that led to the birth of revolutionary movement, the prevalent discontent amongst the tribals also to how the movement was started, the stages it underwent.



Chapter V, dissects the Srikakulam revolutionary movement at large and focusses attention on the causes (theoretical as well as practical) for the collapse of the movement.

On the basis of an indepth study into these aspects, conclusions have been drawn in Chapter VI of the dissertation.

I don't claim that it is an extraordinary or outstanding work, but I have tried my level best to do justice to it with all my limitations and shortcomings.

**DISTRICT PROFILE**

# SRIKAKULAN DISTRICT

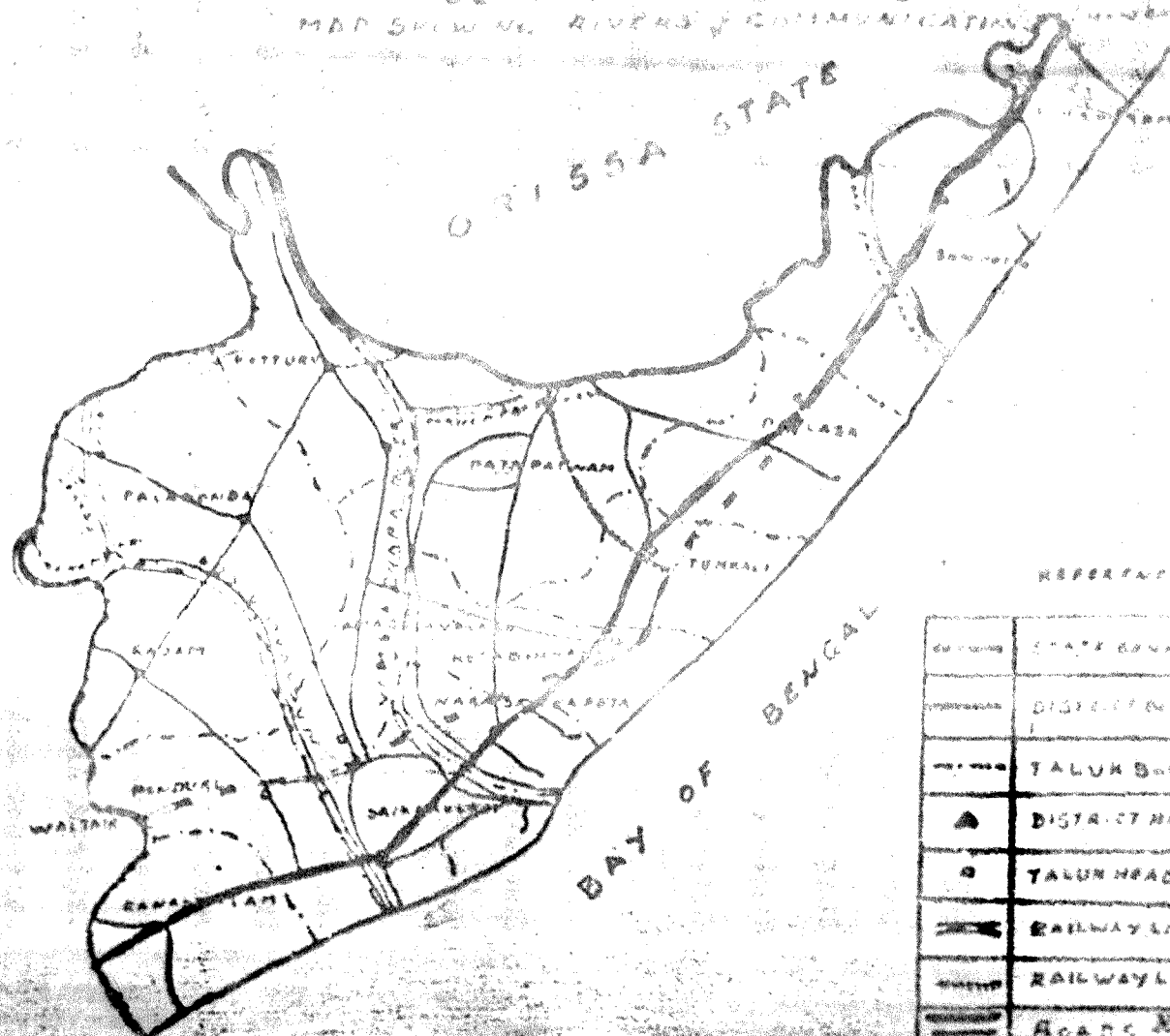
SCALE 1 INCH = 5 MILES

MAP SHOWING RIVERS & COMMUNICATIONS

VIZIANAGARAM DISTRICT

ORISSA STATE

BAY OF BENGAL



### REFERENCE

	STATE BOUNDARY
	DISTRICT BOUNDARY
	TALUK BOUNDARY
	DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS
	TALUK HEADQUARTERS
	RAILWAY LINE (B-G)
	RAILWAY LINE (N-G)
	ROADS

## CHAPTER - II

### DISTRICT PROFILE

Srikakulam district is in the Northern-most part of Andhra Pradesh State bounded on the North by Orissa State and on the West and South by Vizianagaram district and on the East by the Bay of Bengal. Topographically the district can be divided into two distinct regions that is hilly and the plain coastal region. The hilly region consists of parts of Palakonda, Pathapatnam, Tekkali, Sompeta and Kothuru Talukas (Pavathipuram agency which is totally hill area has been made a part of Vizianagaram district in the recent bifurcation). The talukas Ichepuram, Narasannapeta, Srikakulam and portions of Tekkali and Sompeta Talukas are on the Coast. They are mostly sandy and account of its close proximity to the Sea. Uddanam (as it is called) in Sompeta area has been covered with thick Cashew and coconut gardens presently it was under Mandasa Samithi area. Boddapadu was the heart of the revolution. The leaders like C. Tejeswara Rao, Panchadi Krishnamurthy came and settled in this area. The Cashew and Coconut gardens provided as shelters to the revolutionaries.

The district has a total area of 5,843.3 sq. kms., as per 1981 Census<sup>1</sup> which accounts for the 2.11% of the State territory. Total population of the district according to 1981 Census is 19,43,749. According to 1971 Census<sup>2</sup> it was 17,67,938. Total number of male population is 8,69,572 according to 1971 Census population and 9,59,047 according to 1981 Census. Number of females are 9,00,366 according to 1981 Census (provisional). Rural population according to 1971 Census is 16,06,522. Figure regarding 1981 has not been published. Urban population is 1,63,616 according to 1971. 1981 (provisional) Census did not contain this. The rate of literacy is estimated to be 18.99% in 1971 and 24.67% in the 1981 census. The number of literates among males are 24,807 according to 1971 census, 5,32,449 according to 1981 census. The number of literates among females according to 1971 census was 91,537 and 1,47,168 according to 1981 (provisional) census. So total number of literates both males and females put together is 3,39,608 according to 1981 census (provisional) 4,79,617.

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1. Census of India, 1981 (provisional), Srikakulam District of Andhra Pradesh. This was supplied by the Office of the Assistant Director of Statistics, Srikakulam District.
  2. Census of India, 1971, Srikakulam District (A.P.)

For the purpose of administration, the district is divided into three revenue divisions namely Srikakulam, Tekkali, and Palakonda. It was again divided into 14 Talukas, namely, Srikakulam, Amudalevalasa, Ponduru, Hanasthalam, Palakonda, Rajam, Kothuru, Pathapatnam, Narasanspeta, Kotabommali, Tekkali, Palasa, Sompeta and Ichapuram. We will now see the population of the district taluka wise. This is as follows:

TALUKWISE POPULATION STATISTICS<sup>3</sup>

S1. No.	Name of the Taluk	Area in sq.km., as per 1971 Census	# of Census villages (as per 1971 Census)	Population as per '81 Census (Provisional)	Literates as per 1981 Census (Provisional)	Scs as per 1971 Census	STs as per 1971 Census
01.	Srikakulam	293.7	060	1,84,657	67,883	08,442	00,113
02.	Amudalevalasa	331.5	166	1,25,418	34,985	13,241	00,678
03.	Ponduru	409.6	105	1,45,045	31,624	12,611	00,480
04.	Kanatholam	378.9	099	1,12,565	15,663	11,772	00,332
05.	Palakonda	786.2	255	1,85,068	42,372	19,550	28,105
06.	Rajam	415.5	149	1,90,232	38,744	19,155	02,380
07.	Kothuru	504.1	130	0,95,325	21,171	14,798	19,344
08.	Pathapatnam	695.1	361	1,76,379	39,738	18,485	25,468
09.	Narasannapeta	188.5	084	1,01,531	28,261	05,548	00,136
10.	Kotabommalu	361.4	102	1,13,023	25,764	07,276	00,767
11.	Tekkali	397.4	126	1,32,487	33,111	10,646	02,692
12.	Palasa	346.7	181	1,09,238	32,656	07,265	03,677
13.	Sompeta	549.1	182	1,71,721	43,164	08,979	00,906
14.	Ichapuram	225.3	049	1,11,060	24,480	02,829	01,722
<b>T O T A L</b>		<b>5,845.3</b>	<b>2,049</b>	<b>19,43,749</b>	<b>4,79,617</b>	<b>1,59,636</b>	<b>93,892</b>

3. Census of India, 1981, n.1, p.29.

## GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES<sup>4</sup>

### A. Soil, Climate and Rainfall:

The soil of Srikakulam district is mostly sandy clay loams, which constitute 43% of the total villages of the district. The red loams constitute 30% and black soil constitute 20%.

The climate in the district is generally moderate. The minimum, maximum temperature ranges from 17°C to 34°C.

The district gets the benefit of both South West Monsoon and North-East Monsoon. The normal rainfall of the district is 1,086 mm.

### B. Rivers and Irrigation Sources:

The chief rivers in the district are Nagavali, Vamsadhara, Mahendra Tanaya and Bahuda. The river Vamsadhara rises in the eastern ghats of Orissa and enters Srikakulam district in Pathapatnam taluk and travels between Naresannapeta and Srikakulam and enters the Bay of Bengal at Kalinagapatnam. At present it

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4. Ramesh, N., Andhra Pradesh District Gazetteers, Srikakulam (Hyderabad: Andhra Pradesh, 1979).



irrigates large extent of Narasannapet taluks. The river Nagavali rises in the Eastern Ghats of Orissa, enters Palakonda taluka of this district after flowing through Parvathipuram taluk of Vizianagaram district and finally falls into the Bay of Bengal at Kallepalli. The Nagavali provides irrigation for a major portion of Palakonda taluk. River Bahuda rising in the Eastern Ghat of the Orissa state and enters the district, Sesanam of village of Ichapuram taluk. Mahendra Tenaya, a tributary of Vamasadhora rises in the Eastern Ghat and flows through Sompeta and Pathapatnam taluks.

### RESOURCE ENDOWMENT

#### Human Resources:

The population of Erikakulam district as per 1981 census is 19.44 lakhs,<sup>5</sup> according to the 1971 census it was 17.70 lakhs.<sup>6</sup> The declining growth rate of population was only 9.8% which is the lowest in the State.

The district has the lowest Urban population at 2% against the State average of 19.5%.

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5. Census, 1981, n.1.

6. Census, 1971, n.2.

The working population of the district is 7.53 lakhs which works out to 39% of the total population. Of these workers, 37.3% constitute cultivators and 38.20% agricultural labourers. Most of the cultivators are small and marginal farmers.

The following table shows the occupational patterns of workers in the district:

Sl. No.	Occupational Category	No. of workers engaged	% of the total population
01.	Cultivators	2,81,454	37.40
02.	Agricultural labourers	2,87,675	38.20
03.	Livestock, forestry and allied activity	0,30,640	04.07
04.	Mining and Quarrying	0,00,832	00.01
05.	Construction	0,03,061	00.04
06.	Trade and Commerce	0,38,956	05.20
07.	Transport and Storage	0,08,516	01.00
08.	Others	1,02,507	14.08
T O T A L		7,53,651	100.00

### Agricultural Resources:<sup>7</sup>

The total net area shown in the district is 7.58 lakhs acres which constitutes 52.6% of the total area of the district. The gross cropped area is 9.05 lakhs area.

The district has a widely diversified cropping pattern with Cereals, pulses and commercial crops. The staple food crop is paddy; Ragi, Jowar, Bajra are other principal food crops in the district. The principal commercial crops are mesta, groundnut, sugarcane and gingelly.

The following are the normal areas under each food and non-food crops:

Sl. No.	Name of the Crop	Normal extent (in lakh acres)	% of the total gross cropped area
1.	Paddy	4.64	51.20
2.	Ragi	0.73	08.00
3.	Jowar	0.16	01.70
4.	Gingelley	0.16	01.70
5.	Bajra	0.16	01.70
6.	Sugarcane	0.13	01.40
7.	Groundnut	0.79	08.10
8.	Mesta	0.73	08.00

7. This information was supplied by the Office of the Assistant Director of Statistics, Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh.

The following are the average yield rates per crop surveys conducted under different important food and non-food crops during Kharif.

Sl. No.	Name of the Crop	Average yield per acre in kg.	
		Khariff	Raby
01.	Paddy	00,665	1,239
02.	Ragi	00,442	0,560
03.	Bajra	00,365	--
04.	Groundnut	00,298	0,580
05.	Gingeley	00,067	0,059
06.	Sugarcane	25,796	--
07.	Mesta	00,551	--

Land utilisation <sup>8</sup> reorganised Srikakulam District for the year 1979-80.

Sl. No.	Type of utilisation	Area	% to the total geographical area
01.	Geographical area	14,43,879	
02.	Forests	01,73,859	12.0
03.	Barren and Uncultivable land	01,62,544	11.3
04.	Land put to non-Agri. uses	01,57,441	10.9
05.	Permanent pasture & other grazing lands	00,06,289	00.4
06.	Miscellaneous tree crops & crops not included in net areas sown	00,10,795	00.8
07.	Cultivable waste	00,31,030	02.2
08.	Other fallow lands	00,27,337	01.9
09.	Current fallows	00,95,978 <sup>2</sup>	06.6 <sup>2</sup>
10.	Net area sown	07,78,597	53.9
11.	Total Cropped area	09,38,945	--
12.	Area sown more than once	01,60,348	

8. Ibid.

Irrigation:

Nagavali, Vamsadhara are two major rivers in the district. An extent of 84,000 acres is under cultivation by Nagavali river water. The Vamsadhara project is under implementation and is providing irrigation facilities to 60,000 acres at present, when it is completed, an area of 1.48 lakh acres is expected to be irrigated.

At present, the canals of Nagavali and Vamsadhara, rivers, tanks and wells are the main sources of irrigation and the break up under each source is as follows:

1.	Canals	..	1,74,000 acres
2.	Tanks	..	2,39,100 acres
3.	Wells	..	0,06,600 acres
4.	Other sources	..	0,08,430 acres
<hr/>			
	T O T A L	..	4,28,210 acres
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The future agricultural development of the district depends on the completion of Vamsadhara Project.

Forests:

The forest area is only 11,000 hectares which is less than 2% of the total geographical area of the district presently. Previously, the forest area of

the district was 1,550 sq.km., and was only 15% of the total land area. Valuable timber forests are restricted to Kurupam and Seethampet agencies. The important major forest products are timber, bamboo and firwood. The minor forest products are Tamarind, Maduvaseed and Adde leaf. This offers no scope for industrial exploitation.

#### Minerals:<sup>9</sup>

The district is not rich in mineral resources. Manganese, Quartz, Graphites, Kankar limestone and fireclay occur in the following places.

Manganese: At present the Manganese deposits are very scattered and occurring in the Ponduru and Rajam taluks. The deposits are very thin and the resources are not estimated. Sigadam Ponduru taluk and Boddam of Rajam taluk are old working places in the district.

Quartz: Quartz occurrences are seen in Krishnapuram, Canham and Arjunavalasa of Ponduru taluk and Veeraghattam of Palakonda taluk. Mostly Quartz occurrences are in the shape of small crystals which extends down

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9. Preliminary basic report on establishment of nucleus plant in Srikakulam district, District Industrial Centre, Srikakulam (A.P.), 1981.

to the surface.

Graphite: Graphite is available in the district.

Kankar Limestone: The mineral is available in and around Rajam.

Fireclay: Sufficient deposits of fireclay was found at Phisine of Ranasthalam taluk.

Livestock: The district has a good livestock potential for development of animal husbandry and dairying activities. According to census, the position is as follows:

1.	Cattle	..	4.16 lakh
2.	Buffaloes	..	2.13 lakh
3.	Sheep	..	2.72 lakh
4.	Goat	..	1.77 lakh
5.	Poultry	..	7.42 lakh
<u>T O T A L</u>			<u>.. 18.20 lakh</u>

Most of the Milch cattle belong to the non-descriptive low milk yielding varieties. Now under various schemes taken up by the rural development agency in cooperation with the Commercial Banks finances are extended for graded animals which give economic returns.

At present there are only two milk chilling centres one at Srikakulam, the other at Seethampet with a capacity of 5,000 litres each.

The capacity of Srikakulam plant is now being increased to 2,500 litres per day. The third milk cooling centre is going to come at Tekkali whose capacity is going to be 5,000 litres.

Fisheries and Marine Sources: The district has got a coastal line of 193 kms., forming one-fifth of the total 965 kms., in the sea coast of Andhra Pradesh. There are 104 Marine Fishermen villages with a population of 10 lakhs out of which 20,000 are active fishermen. In view of the vast potentialities of the sea fish, a fisheries harbour is being established near Bhavanampadu village which is 70 kms., off the North East of Srikakulam.

Salt: Srikakulam district is the major salt producing district in the State. Salt production is mainly concentrated in Navpadu, Pendi and Kaligapatnam areas in a total area of 8,220 acres of which 3,500 acres were leased out to H/s East Coast Salt and Chemicals which is the joint venture Andhra Pradesh Industrial Develop-



ment Corporation. Total production is 3 lakh million tons.

Industries: The industrial development in the district has always been at a very low ebb. Out of the 329 medium and largescale industries in the State, there are only three units in the district. The district is lagging behind even in the smallscale sector. There is not a single largescale industry in the district. There are three mediumscale industry with an investment of 195 lakhs providing employment to 1,470 persons.<sup>10</sup>

As on 30 September, 1981, there are 652 smallscale industrial units in the district with an investment of 7,26,66,500 providing jobs to 7,844.<sup>11</sup> These are as follows:

	No of Units	Capital Investment	Employment
I. Agro Based:			
1. Rice mills	116	06,68,000	1,520
ii. Flour mills	032	06,80,000	0,068
iii. Potary oil mills	004	01,00,000	0,012
iv. Oil mills	037	01,08,410	1,218

10. Ibid., p.5.

11. Ibid., p.8.

II. Forest Based:

i.	Saw mills	045	43,00,000	0,344
ii.	Furniture	035	03,34,000	0,173
iii.	Cashew Kernels	037	1,11,00,000	1,400
iv.	Spuntors & Veneerg	001	01,00,000	0,030

III. Textile Based:

i.	Yarn dying	002	03,00,000	0,012
ii.	Screen printing	001	01,00,000	0,003
iii.	Readymade garments	015	02,50,000	0,030
iv.	Thread balls	003	00,90,000	0,018

IV. Engineering:

i.	Stainless Steel utensils	008	17,20,000	0,064
ii.	Aluminium utensils	008	12,00,000	0,064
iii.	Steel furniture	015	12,12,000	0,096
iv.	Gen. engineering	128	71,33,000	0,616
v.	Brass & Bell Metal	007	00,85,500	0,042

V. Food Based:

i.	Bakery and confectionary	010	01,00,000	0,060
ii.	Ice Candy's	014	05,65,000	0,281
iii.	Surag candy	001	00,60,000	0,006
iv.	Aerated waters	001	00,20,000	0,005
v.	Vernicellis	006	08,40,000	0,042

<b>VI. Mineral Based:</b>			
i.	Stone crushing	002	03,20,000 100
ii.	Bricks	010	01,13,000 182
iii.	Lime	003	00,15,000 015
iv.	Cement products	010	05,00,000 060
<b>VII. Marine Based:</b>			
i.	Salt	038	07,60,000 760
ii.	Sea foods	001	15,00,000 030
<b>VIII. Chemicals:</b>			
i.	Wax candles	006	01,50,000 036
ii.	Safety matches	003	01,80,000 060
iii.	Agerbathies	003	00,75,000 060
iv.	Polythin bags	002	03,00,000 010
v.	Soap	003	00,90,000 018
<b>IX. Electric &amp; Electronics:</b>			
		003	06,00,000 045
<b>X. Leather:</b>			
		008	03,00,000 060
<b>XI. Miscellaneous:</b>			
		046	01,93,000 222
<b>T O T A L</b>		<b>652</b>	<b>7,26,66,500 7,844</b>

**Artisan Activity:**

Apart from the artisans engaged in traditional occupations like carpentry, blacksmithing, pottery, basketmaking, footwear, brass and bell metal, a large number of persons numbering about 20,000 are engaged in

coir rope making, of whom, a good many are part time workers in agriculture.

Roads: <sup>12</sup>

The total length of road in Sriekulam district is about 3,138 kms., out of which 682 kms., is of Tor and 894 kms., metal. The Road and Building Department (R&B, A.P. Govt.,) is maintaining 1,426 kms., of roads. The Zilla Parishad 610 kms., and the Panchayat Samithies 1,102 kms., the Madras G.T. Road (N.H.5) passes through the district covering a distance of 180 kms., and touching Ranasthalem, Sriekulam, Narasannapet, Tekkali, Pelasa, Sompeta and Ichapuram taluk Headquarters. One state highway connecting Sriekulam with Parlakimidi in Orissa passes through Patapatnam. A second state highway connecting Sriekulam with Rayagada in Orissa state passes through Amudalavalasa and Palokonde taluks. The Third State highway passes through Amudalavalasa, Hiramandalam and Kothuru connecting Battili with district headquarters. Rajam and Ponduru are connected with district headquarters by another state highway.

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12. Preliminary Basic Report etc., n:9, p.3.

Railways:<sup>13</sup>

The Madras-Calcutta broadgauge line passes through the district covering a length of 100 kms., connecting the following important places in the district Ponduru, Amudalavalasa, Naupadu, Palasa, Ichapuram. The district headquarters Srikakulam is not on the Railway line. The nearest station is Amudalavalasa which is at a distance of 13 kms., In fact the Amudalavalasa Railway station is named as Srikakulam Road. A great need was felt for connecting the district headquarters by Rail.

There is also a narrow gauge of 37 kms., stations from Naupada and passing through Tekkali and Pathapatnam before entering into Orissa.

Power:<sup>14</sup>

The consumption of power for agriculture, industry and domestic purposes is very low and occupied the last rank among all the districts in the state. The district receives its power from Machekand Hydro electric plant in Visakhapatnam district. The distribution is done

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13. Ibid., p.4.

14. Ibid., p.5.

through the sub-station of 33/11 k.v. at Srikakulam, Narasannapet, Tekkali, Palasa, Ichapuram, Sompeta, Ranasthalem, Kothuru, Palekonda and Rajam. Further a 132 k.v. sub-station is under construction at Tekkali and is likely to be commissioned by the end of 1982.

Out of 2,049 villages in the district 768 villages are electrified upto 30 September, 1981. Thus the percentage of the villages electrified works out to only 37.5%. The feature electrification programme envisages electrification of 123 number of villages during the year and the year 1981-1982 and 177 villages during 1982-83.

Water: <sup>15</sup>

In one way we can say that there is no water problem for the Srikakulam district. Srikakulam town is getting its water supply from Nagavali river which is passing through the town. The existing capacity of the Municipal water works is 50 lakh litres. There is proposal to increase its capacity to 60 lakh litres per day. The following are the places where there is protected water supply in the district: (1) Narasannapeta,

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15. Ibid., p.6.

(2) Amudalavalasa, (3) Palakonda, (4) Akkupalli, (5) Savarakota. Besides protected water supply schemes are under implementation in another 14 places which are likely to be completed within a year. Further more, it is proposed to implement the protected water schemes in another seven places by the end of the sixth five year plan.

Communications:<sup>16</sup>

The district has now 525 post offices under all categories including three head post offices and 179 sub-post offices. The Head post-offices are one at Srikekulam, Amudalavalasa and Tekkali.

There are 27 telegraph offices and 27 Telephone Exchanges.

Educational, Medical and Public Health Facilities:<sup>17</sup>

The primary schools in the district numbers 2,252 with the total enrolment of 1,91,150; the upper primary schools are 124 with the total enrolment of 31,000. The secondary schools are 119 with the enrol-

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16. Census, 1981, n.1.

17. Ibid., p.2.

ment of 39,392. Junior colleges are 14 and with the total enrolment of 9,032. There are three degree colleges in which the enrolment is 5,022. There is a professional Training Institute called Industrial Training Institute (ITI) with the enrolment of 120. There is a Post-Graduate Centre for Post Graduate Courses like Economics and Rural Development with the effective strength of 120 students. Number of villages having educational facilities are 1,695.

In the district as a whole, there are fifty one allopathic hospitals. There is one big Government Hospital in the Srikakulam town itself.

#### SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FEATURES OF THE DISTRICT

Srikakulam district is lagging behind in all aspects socially, economically and culturally. The people inhabiting this district may be classified into two categories, namely (1) people of the plains, and (2) people of agency areas. The people of the agency areas culture is altogether different from the people living in the plains. They have remained untouched by outside influences as they live in isolation.



Caste:

Varna is the vedic theory of social organisation which divides society into four broad categories - Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vysyas and Sudras, on the basis of functions discharged by each category. Brahmins used to perform religious or priestly functions, kshatriyas were warriors, vysyas were traders and the sudras were the labourers together with the 'out-castes' or 'untouchables' associated with a variety of menial jobs. Thus there was a rigid but broad categorisation on the basis of the functions entailed. Since power is subject to religious authority it can be said to be a religious and functional categorisation.

Jati is determined by birth, hereditary, endogamous and associated with a definite occupation, while the varna theory divides society into four hard and fast categories with Brahmins and Sudras at the highest and lowest respectively in the social hierarchy, it has no definite place for various other groups within these categories on the basis of traditional occupation. Thus the varna theory attaches little or no importance to the existence of various other groups which constitute the basis of social stratification in rural India. Hence in the present day context of understanding social stratifi-

cation, it is Jati, which should be taken as an equivalent to caste. Hence our view is that Jati was there all along and varna theory got mixed up with Jatis. Jatis were the real groups before the varna theory was applied to them.

In Srikakulam, there are various castes professing a particular occupation and within each caste there are also various sects or ramifications of occupation. In the priestly caste of Brahmins, there are Niyogi Brahmins who are mostly the village officials; the Dravida Brahmins, and Srivaishna Brahmins carrying out ritual duties like solemnising marriages etc. Among the vysayas, we have kalinga komatis and gaureva komatis who are both money lenders and businessmen but differ on the basis of food habits. While the former eat meat etc., it is forbidden in the case of latter.

We have various castes with distinct traditional culture and social habits, who mainly own and cultivate land. There are kintala kalings, borugam kalings, thurupu kepu, koppulla vellam, polineni vellama, telaga.

Among the artisans, we have various castes with distinct professions. Among them we have the Viswa Brahmins, who are Goldsmiths, blacksmiths etc., Agnikula Kshatriyas who are fishermen; Segidis who are toddy

tappers; chakalis who are washermen; mangalis who are barbers; kumaras who are potters; and waddars who are earth-diggers, outcastes; we have malas, madigas and Reibes while Malas and Madigas are agricultural labourers and madigas also cobblers, the Reelis are scavengers.

Being culturally backward, caste system has been continuing in the district. Castes have their share in the district with regard to electoral politics. Leaders thrive on the basis of caste loyalties. People there view the district politics as a competition between Kalings and Kepu castes, in between, Velomas being numerically considerable competing with both the above said castes.

Untouchability is still being practised in the district. Srikakulam town is no exception to this. Interdining, prohibition among various castes has been strictly observed in most of the areas even today.<sup>18</sup>

The category of backward castes work upto 90% of the total population. Most of the castes depend on the agriculture for their livelihood.

#### Family:

The patriarchial family system is being followed in the district. Joint family system which was common

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18. Information based on interview.

at one time is slowly and gradually disappearing. Monogamy is the general pattern among all the major castes, but the prevailing social climate is against it in all castes. Widow re-marriages are not generally favoured among all castes. However, it is not uncommon among some of the scheduled castes and other backward castes.

Houses:

There were 6,05,522 census houses in the district in 1961 of which 5,51,931 houses were in the rural areas and 53,591 houses in the urban areas. Of these houses those used purely for dwelling purposes accounted for 82% of the total number of houses in the district.<sup>19</sup> Clusters of peculiar conical huts with very steep roofs of palmyra thatch are a common sight. These huts are huddled together and the leaves of the thatch almost touch the ground. These constructions are so shaped as to resist the cyclonic weather which is not infrequent in this district. The area abounds in palmyra trees which obviously form the cheapest material available for house construction.

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19. 1961 Census, District Census Hand Book, Srikulam, Government of Andhra Pradesh (Hyderabad, 1976).

Food:

In regard to food, rice constitutes the staple diet of the rich while ragi is the staple food of the masses. The richer section eat finer rice whereas the poorer folk eat a coarser variety of rice and ragi. Except Brahmins and Vaisyas, a great majority of others are non-vegetarians, mutton being the commonest type of meat. Those of the Hindus who otherwise eat mutton, eschew meat on certain days of the week as well as on religious occasions. All the communities, both men and women chew 'pan'. Smoking is a widespread habit in the district and extends to rural women also. A long, pungent cheroot is most widely used for smoking.

Tribal culture:

The areas in which tribals live are Palakonda, Parvatipuram, Pathapatnam, Salar and Sompeta.<sup>20</sup> They have a different culture altogether. They had been cut off from the developments that are taking place in the world by their primitive tribal culture.

Andre Beteille defines "a tribe is in an ideal state, a self-contained unit. It constitutes a society

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20. The Scheduled Tribes in Andhra Pradesh, Director, Tribal Research Institute (Hyderabad, 1963).

in itself. This has to be explained a little further. The Anthropologist, Nadel defines a society in this way: "...Societies are made up of people. Societies have boundaries, people either belong to them or not; people belong to a society by virtue of rules under which they stand, and which impose on them regular determinate ways of acting towards and in regard to one another".<sup>21</sup>

In the agency area, the Savaras constitute by far the largest tribe. The origin of the Savaras is traced to the ancient Sabaras who had migrated to this part of the country from the lower reaches of the Ganges. The Gazetteer on the Vizianagaram district 1970, records that the Savaras consist of two classes, namely: (i) the primitive race which lives on the hills, and (ii) the Kapu Savaras who live on the plains. The hill Savaras also known as the Jati Savaras regard themselves as superior to their counterparts on the plains. The villages inhabited by these people are generally small. The Savaras live on cultivation and hunting besides collecting minor forest produce. Their headmen are known by the name Gomangas. Among the Savaras, there

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21. Beteille, Andre., "Caste, Tribe and Religion" (ed.) Romesh Thapper, The Macmillan Company Ltd., (New Delhi, 1977), p.8.

are certain occupational sub-divisions such as Artists, Kindalo (Kundala) and Coharas. These groups however earn their bread by weaving cloths and making baskets and small iron implements for the men of the community. The Kapu Savaras are still following some of the old marriage customs prevalent in their community. Marriage usually takes place after puberty and the wedding ceremony bears a distinct resemblance to that of the hill Savaras. Though the men among the savaras invariably marry from outside the village under the hill custom, they also take to monariken (within the family claim the hand of maternal uncle's daughter in marriage). After the choosing the bride, it is customary on the part of the bridegroom to send an arrow and some liquor to the father of the bride in the first instance. The bridegroom then pays a visit to the bride's house on an auspicious day. The marriage is followed by drinking, feasting and dancing. Women cannot change her family by marriage who continues to be a member of her own family. Cremating the dead and burying their ashes is one of the custom existing among the Savaras. According to Savara mythology they should not wear much. Women wear a small skirt round the waist tucked at the front. Men wear a loin cloth passed between the legs covering

the genitals hanging down in a flap before and the rear flap being a very long like a tail. They spend little amount in dress. Every kind of wild herbs, roots, wild plumbs, mangoes, jackfruit etc., serve as their food. They also use rice, millet and pulses. Their common dishes are a kind of gruel made of rice-millet together with pulse and vegetables. The palm trees provide them with stimulating drink. They hunt and live on animals meat. Meat is usually boiled with rice or millet cooked with salt, chillies and turmeric. Savaras have three kinds of cultivation i.e. (i) terrace cultivation, (ii) podu cultivation, and (iii) garden cultivation. The shaman (yejjodu usually called is the doctor, priest and psychologist). He reveals the cause of the disease or the death.

The jatapus who call themselves as the khond jatapu doralu speaking a kind of code.<sup>22</sup> The Census of India (Madras) of 1901 calls the jatapus as the civilised Khonds who speak Khond on the hills and Telugu on the plains. They, however consider themselves to be superior to those Khonds who eat beef and snakes. They worship goddess Jakara. Their marriage

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22. For detailed discussion on Jatapus, see, Pareek, K.N., Tribal Culture Influx, B.R. Publishing Corporation (New Delhi, 1977).



ceremonies closely resemble those of the low country Telugu type. A man may lay claim to his paternal aunt's daughter for his wife. They generally bury their dead.

The Konda Doras who are also known as the Kondakapus and Ojas, are a caste of hill cultivators.<sup>23</sup> There are two well defined divisions among the kondā doras, namely, the Pedda kondaly and Chiina Kondalu. The Pedda Konda have adopted totemic divisions as exogamous sects whereas the Chiina Kondalu retain the Telugu system of family name (intiparu). The Konda Doras practice shifting form of cultivation called 'podu' on hill slopes. The agricultural produce is insufficient and, therefore, their supplementing with the minor forest produce.

The Cadabas, who were palanquin bearers and cultivators by profession are yet another found all over the Hill taluks.<sup>24</sup> Like many other tribe, they resort to 'podu' cultivation on hills. They are divided into six sub-divisions and the marriage among the women of the tribe usually takes place after puberty. The usual preliminary presents of toddy and other things are sent to

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23. Ibid., pp.3-4.

24. Ibid., p.3.

bride's people by the parents of the suitor. The wedding is celebrated in a pandal and is followed by drinking and dancing. They erect stone slabs in memory of their dead and offer sacrifices at their tombs now and then. Another important tribe is that of the Kohnds whose origin is shrouded in mystery. The Visakhapatnam Manual 1861, records that the Khonds as a race, are the owners and cultivators of the soil. They inhabit the villages, which are either scattered or closely grouped, according to the facilities available for tillage. The Khond is a husbandman and a hunter. A khond village consists of two streets, each having two rows of huts. One is occupied by the Khonds and the other by the Paidi or Panos, who are weavers and musicians by profession. The Khonds are divided into two groups, namely, the Dondgria (jungle) Khonds and Desya Khonds. The Khond tongue is a tribal dialect similar in construction to Telugu, Tamil and other cognate languages.

Among the Khonds, the parents arrange the marriage of their children. A Khond finds his wife from among the women of any other mutta (village) than his own. Marriages are usually celebrated during the hunting season, which commences from April. The Khonds are very fond of dancing and in every village, there is a house called Dhangada which is set apart for that purpose. Their dead are cremated.

The Manne Doras, Mukha Doras, Yerukelas and Bagetas also have their concentrations in this district.

The religion of the tribals consists of animism and totemism.<sup>25</sup> The tribal pantheon included numerous deities and also devils. They rely mostly on magical charms and oblations for relief from sickness and epidemics and for success for hunting expeditions and good crops. The sowing and harvesting of various crops and the first eating of various agricultural products are also associated with a series of rituals and sacrifices. The tribals also observe numerous festivals in honour of different village deities.

The traditional tribal councils play an important role in the social and religious life of the people. The village headmen controls the social behaviour of the inhabitants of the village. He takes initiative in the celebration of various religious festivals. He arranges the marriages of the boys and the girls in his village and also settles cases of elopement and divorce. The priest is the religious head of the village.

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25. Elwin, Warrior., Religion of Indian Tribes, Oxford University Press, (Delhi, 1955), p.46.

All the tribes of the district are patriarchial. There are various methods of acquiring mates. Marriages by capture, service, elopement, mutual consent and negotiations are practised by the tribal people. They marry either the maternal uncle's daughter or the paternal aunt's daughter. At times, a man may marry his deceased elder brother's wife. He may also marry his wife's younger sister.

Monogamy is the most common form of marriage among these people though polygamy, divorce and widow remarriages are also permitted.

Tribals have some customs and taboos. The customs relate to dress and ornaments (Girijan Sangham led by Vempatopu Satyanaraya took lot of time to convince the tribals to change their attitudes towards dress), house building, moral behaviour, family relations and the like, its violations results in a fine. For example, uttering a lie, stealing an article or murdering a woman is the violation of the custom, whereas lying in the name of God, stealing food offered at a sacrifice and killing a dedicated animal is a taboo. Violation of custom relates to his conduct as seen by his fellow-men whereas taboo relates to his conduct as seen by his

ancestors. Diseases like paralysis, insanity, lameness are caused by God, whose motive is supposed to be malice. Diseases like malaria, small-pox and cholera are supposed to be inflicted upon human beings by their ancestors. In order to appease Gods, one has to offer sacrifice. They celebrate seasonal festivals like Aggam, Madikothe etc., depending upon the season. They celebrate Gangamma Panduga (River Goddess) as she has been giving water throughout the year without any interruptions and making them to live. Girijan Sangham formed by Vempatapu Satyanarayana used to ask its new entrants to take oath in the name of water at the time of admission into the Sangham.<sup>26</sup>

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26. Information based on interview

**ELECTORAL POLITICS OF THE DISTRICT (1967-72)**

## CHAPTER - III

### ELECTORAL POLITICS OF THE DISTRICT (1967-72)

Elections is the cardinal principle regulating the complex mechanism of parliamentary democracy. The notion of power as understood in liberal democratic political theory is fundamentally different from that of the Marxists (we are including here all the schools of liberalism as well as Marxism). For our purpose, we can not go into the subtleties of the theoretical debate over the notion of power. To be rather simple it is only change of the government, merely handling the state power that we are referring to here. The relation between the electorate and contestants is only with regard to the particular political party bent upon forming the government. Again, given the complexities of the Indian situation (which is by no means unique in the world) Political party is only the largest (or the largest possible) parameter available to us. Thus very often we will be forced to take individual contestants on their own and here once more, many other indicators have to be included. The caste background, the very individual personalities,

and particular candidates' standing within the respective political party and last but not the least money. These are all the factors we will have to work upon in making electoral studies. Section-III of the Peoples Representative Act "prohibits appeal by candidate or his agent or by any other person with the consent of the candidate or his election agent to vote or to refrain from voting for any reasons on grounds on his religion, caste, community or language".<sup>1</sup> Studies on electoral behaviour proved that caste, religion, money etc., are playing a significant role in the electoral politics.<sup>2</sup> Caste is being used to further the political interests of individuals. Caste "now assumes the new role of regulating political behaviour".<sup>3</sup> The decentralization of power with the introduction of Panchayat raj system in the country resulted in one caste ranged against another for power. Our period of study falls between two general elections 1967-72. So, naturally taking only an overall view of the electoral politics of this period. We should keep in mind that the revolution is precisely both an offshoot of and breakaway from the CPI(M) which did take part in both these

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1. The Representation of the Peoples Act, 1950, as amended in 1962.
  2. Myron, Weiner., and Rajni, Kothari., Indian Voting Behaviour, K.L. Mukhopadhyey (Calcutta, 1965).
  3. V.M. Sirsikar, "Caste and Politics", Tribe, Caste and Religion (ed.,) Ramesh Thaper, Macmillan (New Delhi, 1977), p.74.



elections. Tables I and II gives a detailed picture of 1967-71 and 72 elections.

Congress party had a long history in the district and it was faction ridden before and after independence. The leadership struggle in the Congress party in late fifties and early sixties resulted in group politics and factions. Factional loyalties were more often than not along caste lines.<sup>4</sup> By 1967 there was severe infighting within the congress party. Factional leaders of Congress party in 1967 were G. Sreeramulu Naidu, Kapu by caste, B. Raja Gopala Naidu, Kalinga by caste, V. Krishna Murthy Naidu, Vellama by caste, and L. Lakshmana Das, Kapu by caste.

There was a series of changes and the country was going through a period of economic crisis, Srikakulam district being no exception.

Congress party had put up three candidates for the three parliamentary constituencies in the district in 1967 elections. Srikakulam constituency was traditional returning Congress party in general. B. Rajagopala Naidu in particular voted against the party. Despite the use of money and caste influence, B. Rajagopala Naidu was defeated. The lone seat retained by Congress party was

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4. For details on Congress factions, see, Venkate Ratnam, T., Leadership, Faction and Rise of Radicalism in Srikakulam District (A.P): A Study of Congress Politics 1952-72, Unpublished M.Phil. dissertation, JNU (New Delhi, 1978).

Bobbiti. It returned K.N. Rao, Kappu by caste.

Coupled with the general resentment against the government internal bickerings, sabotaging techniques adopted by one government against the other led to the debacle of the Congress in the parliamentary elections. The lone seat was retained due to personal charisma of Bobbite Mahoraje, who joined Congress. Being a Kappu by caste, he got the highest number of votes for his caste men.

Though it had put up 19 candidates for 19 assembly seats in 1967 election, it could win only 4 seats. Among those who won from the Congress one belonged to Kalinga, one to Kapu, one each to SC and ST. T. Peps Rao, Kalinga by caste won from Nagarikatekam Constituency by a margin of 8,000 votes. His individual contacts with his castemen helped him to overcome the obstacles created by another leader B. Rajagopala Naidu belonging to his own caste - money comes second and party third for his victory. N.A. Naidu, Kapu by caste won from Etcherda constituency since Kapus constituted a sizable section in this constituted a sizable section in this constituency and also because he was quite popular among his castemen he could win. Of course, party affiliation to some extent

did play a role for his success. But in the case of P. Gunnaya who won from Potapatnam constituency, it was party affiliation that played a more important role than money and caste factor. In 1971 mid-term parliamentary elections were held. The Congress was divided into Congress (O) led by Kamaraj, Congress (R) led by Mrs. Gandhi. The district Congress en bloc sided with Congress (R). It had put up 3 candidates for the 3 seats and got all the 3 seats with thumping majorities. By caste-wise, one was Kapu, one was Kalinga and one was ST.

Added to their caste and personal influence, Mrs. Gandhi's slogan, "Garibi Hato" reached the ears of the people even in Srikakulam district. People enthusiastically voted for the party as such rather than for individuals. Thus the Congress wrested back two seats from the Swatantra party.

In 1972 assembly elections, Congress (R) was in power with Brahmamanda Reddy as the Chief Minister. It got 12 seats out of the 19 seats it contested. Among them 3 belonged to Kapu caste, 2 to Kalinga, 2 to Velama, 1 Gangam Reddy, 1 SC, 1 Brahmin, and 2 STs. Indira Gandhi's image as a champion for the cause of the poor and downtrodden helped Congress to regain ten seats.

At that time, Mrs. Gandhi's Congress was well entrenched at the Centre.

Swatantra Party's roots were the Kissan Sabha in the Congress party. N.G. Ranga and G. Rachanna who were in the Congress, leaders in the district. Latter joined the Swatantra party which was formed in 1959. It continued upto 1967 elections. The main base of the Swatantra party was G. Lachanna who is known for his selflessness and leadership qualities. He organised all backward castes in the district. Even today many people hold him in high esteem (information based on interview). By 1967 Swatantra party was holding fifty per cent of the village panchayats and some panchayat samithis in its hands. It was sharing power along with Congress.

It got 2 seats out of the 3 it contested in the 1967 parliamentary elections. The Srikakulam parliamentary constituency was bagged by C. Lachanna belonged to Orisainn caste, which enjoyed a numerical majority in the constituency. Other reasons for his success were his personal charisma and party affiliation. In Parvathipuram (C.T) constituency it could win due to the negative vote against Congress party and it being an alternative.

In 1967 assembly elections, it got 10 seats. S. Jagannadham of Narasannapet was a strong leader of Vellama. He mobilised all his caste people and got elected. C. Satyanarayana, father of C. Tejeswararao, Sriekulam revolutionary movement leader, got elected from Ponduru constituency defeating L. Lakshman Das, Kapu by caste. The numerical strength of his caste besides party affiliation accounts for his success. It was massive negative vote against Congress. The castewise breakup is as follows: 3 vellamas, kapu, kalinga, Gangam reddy. In Ichapuram constituency Swatantra party's candidate was Gangam Reddy whose caste constitutes majority in the constituency. This was the major reason for his victory, party affiliation being secondary.

The 1972 assembly elections reversed the trend of the 1967. Swatantra party failed to secure even a single seat. Indira's wave washed away the Swatantra party. The resource mobilisation of the Congress (R) was high. Swatantra party's failure in 1972 assembly elections could be understood in the light of the fact that while 1967 caste other such factors played a vital role, in 1972 it was the party affiliation. Thus Indira's wave - Garibi Hatao - was responsible for the routing of the Swatantra.

Now we have to turn our eyes to independents. In 1967 assembly elections, independents took the second position. There were 5 independents. Among these 2 were Kapus, 2 were Vellamas and one S.T. while some were rebel Congressmen. Some were put up by the factional leaders of the Congress party. Besides factional loyalties caste and money were the reasons for their success.

In 1972 elections, independents' positions improved to 7. Among them 3 were Vellamas, 1 Kalinga, 2 SCs and one Reddy. Besides caste, money and loyalties to a particular factional leader in the Congress party accounted for their success unlike in the case of others.

Like any other Indian village, the village system in the villages of Srikakulam district was governed by the caste system in the new form. As we have seen in the first chapter many castes could be identified with the occupation. Apart from Kapu, Vellama, Kalinga landowning castes, the rest of the castes are dependent upon agriculture and allied agriculture sectors in the village. In every caste there is a headman and whatever he decided, the caste people followed. Caste

groups were often divided. But invariably, majority of the caste people followed their leader's advice. The base for any party either Congress or Swatantra was this. This was more so till the 1972 elections to the assembly. In the Panchayat elections, it was more glaring. Srikakulam being an agriculture dominated area with no industrial development, rich peasants of three castes dominate the electoral politics of the district - Kapus, Kalingas and Vellamas.

But another interesting feature of the caste politics in the district should be observed. There are many instances where the leaders of various castes within the Congress cut across caste loyalties. When the interests of one caste coincided with the interests of another caste. To quote one such instance: G. Sreeramulu Naidu who belongs to Kapu caste was supported by V. Krishnamurthy Naidu, a Velama to get elected as the Chairman of Zilla parashad against B. Narasinga Rao, brother of B. Rajagopala Rao Naidu, who was Kalinga by caste. While in this case leaders of two castes joined together to defeat a third caste, there are also instances where candidates belonging to a particular caste were defeated as a result of their castemen supporting their rivals.

One such instance is T. Papa Rao, Kalinga by caste, was defeated by P. Srirama Murthy, who was supported by B. Rajagopala Rao Naidu, who also belongs to Kalinga Caste.

Thus we can clearly identify caste along with considerations playing the major role in the district electoral politics.

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TABLE I: Parliamentary Elections - 1967<sup>5</sup> and 1971<sup>6</sup> (Constituency-wise)

Sl. No.	Name of the Constituency	Year of Gen. Election	Name of the Candidate	Party	No of votes secured	% of votes	Total votes	Elected or defeated
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.	Srikakulam	1967	G. Lechanna	Swatantra	1,89,771	56.37	3,36,648	Elected
			B.R. Rao	INC	1,29,413	38.44		Defeated
			K.S. Rao	Independent	0,17,464	05.19		Defeated
		1971	B.R. Rao	INC	2,33,171	63.48	3,35,617	Elected
			M.G. Ranga	Swatantra	0,95,710	28.82		Defeated
			C. Vanajanabhan	Independent	0,06,736	02.01		Defeated
2.	Parvathi-puram (ST)	1967	V.N. Rao	Swatantra	1,61,009	56.21	2,86,438	Elected
			K.S. Rao	INC	1,25,429	43.79		Defeated
		1971	B. Satyanarayanan	INC	1,90,975	73.80	2,58,699	Elected
			V. Narasimha Rao	Swatantra	0,38,847	15.02		Defeated
			B. Lakshminarayana	CPI	0,28,817	11.16		Defeated
3.	Bobbili	1967	K.N. Rao	INC	1,46,553	44.29	3,30,872	Elected
			C. Subbinaidu	Swatantra	0,71,356	21.57		Defeated
			C.S. Rao	Independent	0,57,128	17.27		Defeated
			A.A. Rao	Independent	0,55,835	16.88		Defeated
		1971	K.N. Rao	INC	2,23,043	84.51	2,63,917	Elected
			R. Chandrasekhar Rao	Swatantra	0,40,274	15.50		Defeated

5. Report on the 4th Gen. Elections in India, 1967, vol.II (Statistical) Election Commn., India  
6. Report on the 5th Gen. Election to Lok Sabha, 1971, vol.II (Statistical), Elec.Comm., India

TABLE II: Assembly Elections - 1967<sup>7</sup> and 1972<sup>8</sup> (Constituency-wise)

Sl. No.	Name of the Constituency	Year of Gen. Election	Name of the Candidate	Party	# of votes candidate secured	% of votes	Total votes	Elected or Defeated	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
1.	Ichapuram	1967	L.K. Reddy	Swatantra	26,571	53.24	49,910	Elected	
			K. Deo	INC	20,138	40.35		Defeated	
			A.K. Reddy	Independent	03,201	06.41		Defeated	
		1972	U. Ranga Babu	INC	26,956	52.36	52,459	Elected	
			B.V. Sarma	Swatantra	24,503	47.62		Defeated	
2.	Sompeta	1967	G. Lechanna	Swatantra	28,524	52.35	54,490	Elected	
			M. Tulasidas	INC	25,966	47.65		Defeated	
		1972	Tulasidas	INC	35,316	56.85	62,118	Elected	
			G. Lechanna	Swatantra	26,802	43.15		Defeated	
3.	Tekkali	1967	N. Ramulu	Swatantra	20,749	43.63	47,490	Elected	
			B.L. Narayannamma	INC	11,802	24.81		Defeated	
			Y. Viswanadham	Independent	07,873	16.65		Defeated	
			B.M. Reddy	Independent	07,146	15.02		Defeated	
		1972	S. LokanathanNaidu	INC	29,502	57.98	50,884	Elected	
			S. Bhemeswara Rao	Swatantra	14,998	29.47		Defeated	
			D. Krishnamurthy	Naidu	Independent	04,881		09.59	Defeated
			B. Ramana	Independent	01,503	02.95		Defeated	

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
4.	Harichondrapuram	1967	K. Krishna Murthy	Swatantra	16,060	40.85	39,311	Elected	
			K.A. Bhukta	INC	10,388	26.43		Defeated	
			R. Satyanarayana	Independent	07,494	19.06		Defeated	
			C. Suryanarayana	Independent	04,404	11.02		Defeated	
			B.S. Rao	Independent	00,965	02.45		Defeated	
	1972	K.A. Bhukta	INC	30,035	74.47	40,333	Elected		
		K. Venkataramulu	Independent	10,298	25.43		Defeated		
	5.	Narasannapeta	1967	S. Jagannathan	Swatantra	21,866	49.76	63,938	Elected
				M.V.V.A. Naidu	INC	12,756	29.03		Defeated
				T.V.K. Gupta	Independent	07,841	17.84		Defeated
K.V. Murthy				Independent	07,430	13.37	Defeated		
1972				B. Sarojamma	INC	19,441	42.58		41,149
		S. Jagannadham	Independent	16,987	37.20	Defeated			
V. Lajapathi Rai		Swatantra	09,230	20.22	Defeated				
		6.	Patapatnam (SC)	1967	P. Gunnayya	INC	13,419	42.19	31,804
S. Rajayya					Swatantra	13,025	40.95	Defeated	
P. Dondeti					Independent	02,264	07.12	Defeated	
R. Chandrabah	Independent				01,734	05.45	Defeated		
K. Papa Rao	Independent				01,962	04.28	Defeated		
1972	S. Pagadamma	INC	24,162	58.72	41,149	Elected			
	S. Rajayya	Swatantra	16,076	39.07		Defeated			
	G. Apparao	Independent	00,911	02.20		Defeated			
7.	Kotturu (ST)	1967	M. Subbanna	INC	13,735	37.35	36,333	Elected	
			M. Lakshminarayana	CPI(M)	12,487	34.37		Defeated	
			M. Sundarnarayana	Swatantra	10,111	27.83		Defeated	

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		1972	V. Narasimha Rao N. Gopal Rao Lakshminarayana M. Subbanna	Independent INC CPI Independent	15,223 12,138 07,158 03,048	40.93 32.41 19.04 08.11	37,562	Elected Defeated Defeated Defeated
8.	Naguru (ST)	1967	P.R.R. Sethruchlu C.C.D. Wyarichela S. Biddike	Swatantra INC CPI(M)	18,460 16,669 11,264	39.79 35.93 24.28	46,391	Elected Defeated Defeated
		1972	C. Chudamani Dev Sethuchla P. Raju	Independent INC	22,435 21,718	50.81 49.19	44,153	Elected Defeated
9.	Parvathi- puram	1967	V. Raminaidu Ch. ParusaramNaidu L. Paruvada V.R. Kothapalli	Swatantra INC Independent BJS	23,096 16,190 04,016 02,186	50.77 35.59 08.83 04.81	45,485	Elected Defeated Defeated Defeated
		1972	Ch.Parusaram Naidu Marisela V. Naidu	Independent INC	32,027 21,467	52.87 40.13	53,494	Elected Defeated
10.	Salur (ST)	1967	B. Lajayya J. Mutyalu D. Surendra P.V. Swamy	Independent Swatantra INC CPI	17,679 10,323 07,692 05,318	43.11 25.11 18.76 12.90	41,012	Elected Defeated Defeated Defeated
		1972	Muthyala Janni Annana Raju	INC BJS	24,787 12,132	67.14 32.86	36,919	Elected Defeated
11.	Bobbili	1967	S.R.K.R. Rao L. Thenthu	Independent INC	42,065 13,504	75.70 24.30	55,569	Elected Defeated .../-

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		1972	G.V. Krishna Rao K.V. Kurminaidu R. Suryarao	INC Independent	29,925 27,578 01,937	50.34 46.40 03.26	56,440	Elected Defeated Defeated
12.	Pedanna- pura	1967	V.N. Appala Naidu V. Krishnasurthy Naidu	Independent INC	27,725 26,668	50.97 49.03	54,393	Elected Defeated
		1972	T. Lakshmi Naidu A. Yeruku Naidu	Independent INC	31,812 30,635	40.94 39.06	62,447	Elected Defeated
13.	Unukuru	1967	H.B. Parankusam P. Senganna Naidu V. Raja Rao H. Appala Naidu K. Satyanarayana	Independent INC Independent CPI(M) Independent	22,047 11,545 09,556 03,992 01,505	45.32 23.73 19.64 08.20 03.05	48,654	Elected Defeated Defeated Defeated Defeated
		1972	P. Rukminamma H.B. Parankusam P. Balarama Swamy	INC Independent Independent	28,572 15,020 01,280	48.32 25.40 02.16	59,133	Elected Defeated Defeated
14.	Palakonda (SC)	1967	J. Jogi K. Narasaiah P. Jammaiah	Swatantra INC Independent	17,184 15,289 06,850	43.70 38.88 17.42	39,323	Elected Defeated Defeated
		1972	K. Narasaiah P. Jammaiah B. Narasimhulu	INC Independent Independent	25,544 06,044 04,355	71.07 16.82 12.12	35,943	Elected Defeated Defeated
15.	Nagarikata- kam	1967	T. Appa Rao D. Jagannadha Rao S.S. Appa Rao	INC Swatantra Independent	29,186 20,821 03,009	50.37 43.36 06.27	48,016	Elected Defeated Defeated

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		1972	P. Srirama Murthy T. Papa Rao. V. Satyanarayana Naidu	Independent INC BJS	28,467 23,921 00,722	55.00 45.04 01.36	55,110	Elected Defeated Defeated
16.	Srikakulam	1967	T. Satyanarayana A. Thavitaya D. Suryanarayana Murthy L. Krishna Rao	Swatantra INC Independent BJS	27,764 18,276 02,416 01,261	55.85 36.76 04.85 02.54	49,713	Elected Defeated Defeated Defeated
		1972	Ch. Lokshminara- yana T. Satyanarayana	Independent INC	27,627 24,944	52.55 47.45	52,571	Elected Defeated
17.	Etcharla	1967	N.A. Naidu Btteriysappaduraddi G. Sanyasilingam D.S.A.V. Raju	INC Independent BJS Independent	20,802 17,904 03,458 03,377	45.68 39.31 07.59 07.42	45,541	Elected Defeated Defeated Defeated
		1972	B. Hariappadu A. Redminte	Independent INC	36,013 24,944	70.08 47.45	51,390	Elected Defeated
18.	Ponduru	1967	G. Satyanarayana L. Lakshmana Das S.P.S. Appalacha- ryulu H. Veeranna	Swatantra INC Independent BJS	20,773 17,708 02,262 01,749	48.89 41.67 05.32 04.12	42,992	Elected Defeated Defeated Defeated
		1972	L. Lakshmana Das T. Akkala Naidu C. Satyanarayana H. Veeranna	INC Independent Independent BJS	22,011 17,581 01,399 01,365	43.16 34.48 02.74 02.68	50,994	Elected Defeated Defeated Defeated

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
19.	Cheepuru Palli	1967	T.R. Rao	Independent	24,502	60.30	46,683	Elected
			K.S. Appala Naidu	INC	07,976	19.61		Defeated
			M.A. Naidu	CPI	05,191	12.76		Defeated
			B.S. Naidu	Swatantra	02,984	07.33		Defeated
		1972	S. Pydapa Naidu	INC	23,485	53.51	44,005	Elected
			N. Satyanarayana Raju	Independent	20,520	46.63		Defeated

7. Report on the Fourth General Elections in India, 1967, volume II (Statistical), Election Commission of India.

8. Report on the General Elections to the Legislative Assemblies in India (1970-72), volume II, (Statistical), Election Commission of India.

**REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS OF THE DISTRICT (1967-72)**



## CHAPTER - IV

### REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS OF THE DISTRICT (1967-72)

The five years between 1967-72 are eventful years in the politics of this country. Several historic events like the emergence of non-congress governments in several states, split of the CPI(M) and formation of Revolutionary party in 1969. Incidentally the Congress party also split in 1969.

Now we will try to portray a picture of economic and political situations of the country during this period.

### ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS IN INDIA IN 1967-72

Despite the planned economy, poverty had been on its usual increase, with reports of starvation deaths pouring in from rural areas. Much talked-about reforms especially land ceiling legislation proved to be a big farce. Many of the land holders escaped ceilings in the name of benami, and effectively made use of the loopholes inherent in the legislation itself. There were famine conditions in 117 districts of Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan covering 46.6 million

people. Agricultural production in the country was slashed down substantially. The official estimate of the food production is 76 million tonnes in 1966-67, far less than the required quantum, thus forcing the government to import food grains. The target for subsidiary foods, fish, meat etc., was to be raised so as to ensure a per capita availability of 2,300 calories a day as against 2,100 calories which was regarded available.

The urban situation was no better. Workers were badly affected by the industrial recession of 1966-67 and over 23,000 workers were laid off in 95 establishments in West Bengal alone between January and March, 1967. An additional 1,000 workers were retrenched in 49 establishments. Still another 700 became unemployed as a result of concerns closing down. In Bombay 3,000 workers were laid off by the end of June 1967. 1967 was the tag end of the third five year plan. Industrial production in the third five year plan was increased by 39% against the planned target of 70%. The national income in real terms has gone up at the rate of about 2.5% per annum. There was hardly any increase in the per capita income of the country.

The defence budget of India was enhanced from Rs. 500 crores to about Rs. 1,000 crores as a natural corollary of the two major wars fought in 1962 and 1965 against China and Pakistan respectively. This could be done obviously at the expense of the flow of funds to other sectors of our economy.

There was heavy rise in the prices of essential commodities. In their attempts to tone up the economic position, the government resorted to deficit financing and borrowing from other countries resulting in a greater economic chaos. The position in February 1967 was the government having deficit financing to the tune of rupees 150 crores and the state governments rupees 300 crores a year.

There was growing unrest among the students especially in the states of U.P., Bihar, Punjab, A.P., and Bengal. All sections of the population - peasants, workers, employees - gave vent to their frustration with the government's futile policies in the form of strikes, Bandhs etc.

In 1967, fourth general elections were held. As Michael Brecher commented "the fourth general elections

constituted a watershed in the politics of independent India".<sup>1</sup> The Congress party which till then enjoyed power in all states was weakened with the emergence of eight non-congress governments in the states of Kerala, Bengal, Orissa, Tamilnad, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. The once absolute majority in the Parliament had been reduced to a slender margin. The death of Nehru and the process of choosing a successor resulted in the emergence of collective leadership in the Congress party. The decisions were based on consensus and unlike the centralised pattern under Nehru, the period from 1963-69 had been marked by divergence. The tactics of veteran Congress leaders to pressurise Mrs. Gandhi for delegation of greater power to them could not cut much ice culminating in the formal split of the party in 1969. Thus the internal squabbles has weakened the political system of the country at large.

Srikakulam revolutionary movement had passed through several stages before it was finally liquidated in the year 1972. The undivided communist party came into existence in the district with M. Padmanabham,

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1. Michael Brecher, Political Leadership in India, Vikas Publication (Delhi, 1969).

B. Cavarial et.al., as its leaders. T. Venkateswara Rao (present mayor of Vijayawada corporation) was CPI district secretary in mid-fifties. Subsequently, the party decided to concentrate its operations in the agency area as there was good response from the tribals. Also the general socio-economic conditions of this area made it politically expedient for the party to seek influence over the people there.

The agency area was under Muttahar and Mokhasa system. Under these circumstances, the cultivators got only occupancy rights. As the lands were not surveyed, the plough tax was collected at the rate of Rs.2 per plough. Sometimes uniform tax was levied according to the quality of the seeds sown. Many plainmen migrated to the agency area. Prominent among them were Sondhis, who were toddy tappers, vysyas, kalingas and mohantias. They established 'kirana' shops and grocery besides money lending and cultivation. They purchased their merchandise at wholesale rates from the cities. They bought the various forest products from the tribals at a very low price and sold them in shops at large profits. The tribals procured their daily requirements like kerosene, salt, chillies etc., mostly by bartering their minor forest produce and also by

mortgaging their fields thereby incurring heavy losses at the time of harvest. The merchants collected grains and forest produce in much more in quantity and value than that of the goods they sold earlier. With the same profit motto, while selling their merchandise they encouraged the tribal folk to buy various fancy clothes, cosmetics and other things which they really did not need. The moneylenders made tribal farmers pledge crops for seeds etc., and claimed a large share from the harvest. For instance, they gave 2 bowls for two measures of corn; gave a logn of ten measures of seeds for sowing and claimed 15 measures at harvest. The tenancy practices were known as "kandagutta" and "pallu". Under the "kanda gutta" the landowner leases out his land for a specified period to a cultivator for certain agreed payment in cash or kind. In the "Pallu" system the produce is equally shared between the tiller and the landlord after deducting expenditure on account of labour, land revenue and seed charges. In these systems tribals were deceived.

Poor tribals worked in the farms of non-tribals as labourers. For this they were paid annually in kind by way of corn, cloth and customary payments at the time of harvest. The annual payment comprises

cereals of kinds between three to twelve puttis or measures and pulses fourteen to sixteen puttis.<sup>2</sup> For this the tribals had to work for the entire day. This is some kind of bonded labour. The labourers were allowed to borrow cash or grain in advance from his landlord at exorbitant rates of interest which could be 100% more than the market rate.

The non-tribals lent them money for agricultural purposes and finally seized the lands of tribals exploiting their ignorance and illiteracy. Majority of the tribals are landless labourers. Even the rich tribals held only 3 or 4 acres at the most. Those lands were also taken over by non-tribals. Money lending flourished as compound interests were charged from the tribals.

The life of the tribal is tagged to the forest produce. Introduction of conservation and reserved forests set made the life of tribals miserable. For everything they had to depend upon the forests. 'Podu' cultivation is the prime source of their livelihood which had been banned under the law. Forest officials threatened them with new laws and in order to escape the law the tribals were forced to pay the bribes to the forest officials. They borrowed more and more loans from money-

lenders. Forest officials forced these tribals to work as labourers at their residences. Forest contractors who were supposed to cut and transport wood etc., in the reserved forests cheated tribals by paying them very low wages. These wages ranged between 4 annas a day to 6 annas a day.

The British tried to extend their revenue administration even to the agency area. To collect taxes from the tribals, they appointed revenue officials such as karnams and munsiffs. They levied taxes on arrack, toddy, hempdrug etc. Drinking had become a part and parcel of the tribal life. Given their limited income they could not pay the taxes on abhkari hence they were forced to borrow from money-lenders. Taxes other than these taxes were collected by karnams. More than what was due was collected from the tribals exploiting their illiteracy and ignorance. For example "In Falakonda agency tamarind tree tax which was supposed to be collected was rupees two to four varying according to the land one has, whereas the amount collected was rupees fifty or sixty".<sup>2</sup> Corrupt officials manipulated land records

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2. V. Ramlingachari's court statement, Janasakthi Prachuranalu (Vijnyawada, n.d)



in favour of money lenders, harrassed tribals in the event of delay in paying the taxes by forcibly taking away their sheep, buffaloes etc.

Almost all the lands of the tribals were taken away by merchants and moneylenders. They were totally pauperised. Even though 1970 Act, 1957 scheduled areas Land Transfer Regulation Act prohibited non-tribals possessing tribal lands, poor tribals mortgaged their lands with the landowners and money lenders worked as labourers in their own fields. Traders and moneylenders controlled the economy of tribals. Tribal customs and traditions added to their increasing debts. Birth, death, marriage, fever etc., resulted in heavy expenditure. For all this extravagant expenditure they borrowed money from the money lender and were thus caught in a vicious circle of debt.

Girijan Corporation was created to give a new lease of life to the tribals and to avoid middlemen. It was the sole purchaser of farm and non-farm products where its employes also cheated the tribals with wrong weights and measurements. The sales depots which was supposed to have essential items like Kerosene contained only luxurious items like cosmetics, soaps, hair oils etc., which they never used. It also appointed contrac-

tors the majority of whom were moneylenders to purchase the produce from the farms. It got exclusive right over minor forest produce of the tribals. The corporation which was supposed to lend loans "gave Rs.50/- but obtained a receipt of Rs.200/-" taking advantage of the illiteracy of tribals.<sup>3</sup>

The movement was first started by P. Ramulu, a teacher in the Nanda, Seethammamet agency area, who fought against all these forms of exploitation of the tribals by organising tribals in the name of Sangans. As a result he was transferred to Peddakarja village.

Vempatapu Satyanarayana who hailed from a village called <sup>SOPERU</sup> Soper, near Rajam was working as a school teacher in Kondabaridi village near Mondemkhali. He already started organising the tribals. He came into contact with P. Ramulu, who was the first leader to champion the cause of the tribals and member of the communist party. V. Satyanarayana married Jatapu and Savara women. He and P. Ramulu started labour contract societies in 1956 and in 1958 they compelled the block development officer to give all government work to their contract societies. Thus they gained grip over the tribal labour. In 1958, V. Satyanarayana joined communist party.

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3. Ibid., p.21.

In 1959 Girijan Sangam was formed with V. Satyanarayana, P. Ramulu, G. Yendu Dora, Arikal Somulu, N. Krishna Murthy et al., as its executive members. Though in the initial stage several hurdles such as superstitions of the tribals came in the way, it could overcome them very soon and reached every walk of life of tribals right from cutting the hair of tribals down to the formal education. It achieved significant breakthrough either in enrolling membership or breaking the ice of tribals in their superstitions.

Against vetti (a kind of bonded labour) it released pamphlet in 1959 enabling contacts between them and more and more tribals in the areas of Neelakantapura, Mondernkhal and Perula.<sup>4</sup> Sangam gave the call not to pay the interests to moneylenders and also to resist physically if necessary; not to give bribes to forest officials and to deal firmly with them if they demanded, to defy the forest conservation and preservation Act and to use the land as freely as they used earlier. This was implemented in Uridiguda and some other villages, the moneylenders were thrashed. On defiance of forest laws they were implicated in criminal cases yet on Sangam's advice

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4. Ibid., p.17.

they refused to attend the Courts. Finally it was settled in favour of tribals by setting some portions of forest lands aside for them. Sangam fought against the corrupt revenue officials. Finally, it gave a call not to pay taxes and levies resulting in the scoring off old arrears. In November, 1960, Sangam gave call to seize the harvest as the lands occupied by money-lenders on the pretext of non-payment of debts was contravention of 1917 Act and 1957 Act and also to occupy the Kandagutta lands under the control of the landlords when the produce in 200 acres of land between panasabhadra and Dandusura was seized. Police intervened. A compromising agreement envisaging one-fourth of the harvest to them and three-fourths to the landlords was in the process of negotiations which later bogged down as the leaders were arrested. Then the Sangam organised the paleru strike as a consequence of which wages were increased from 3 puttlu to 25 puttulu a year. Also the legal cases against Sangam leaders were withdrawn. Sangam continued to wage rise struggles during harvest cuttings and wages were enhanced from Rs.5 to Rs.18 in Mendekhal area. Other areas of agency wage increase was effected. In 1961 first Girijan conference was held. 4,000 tribals attended.

Sangam fought against wrong measurements of Girijan corporation employees; kept vigilance at corporation sales depots. It forced corporation to give more and more loans. It ran shandies in 5 areas of the agency. It fought with landlords and opened grains depots. The grain was purchased cheating in the exchange of forest produce was curbed by the sangam. The Sangam also organised peoples courts in which cases of all sorts were decided.

In 1964, CPI was split into CPI and CPI(M). In the next chapter we will see the reasons for the split. The district leaders joined the CPI(M). In response to the Satyagraha call led by CPI(M) against high taxes and for the distribution of banjar lands, 3,000 tribals from parvathipetram agency went to Kurupam and staged a successful demonstration.<sup>5</sup> Such was the spirit inculcated among the tribals.

CPI(M) leader A. Kailasam came and established contacts first in and around villages of Gummalakshmi-purem. V. Satyanarayana and A. Kailasam worked in close liasion with each other. Subba Rao Panigrahi prepared

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5. Ibid., p.22.

"Janukula Katha" depicting politically the woes of tribals in the form of 'burrakatha'. It hit against money lenders, landlords and state machinery.

From 1964 to 1967 there was an increase in the number of violent incidents while seizing crops, taking back the illegally occupied lands of tribals etc. Meantime the state increased the number of police outposts with the additional enforcements to deal with the Sangam militant activities. The landlords organised themselves under Rytu Sangam banner and their leaders were Medida Setyam and Gudla Setyam.

Sangam contested in 1964, Panchayat elections for two panchayats, namely, Seethampeta and Bhadrasiri and got Seethampeta panchayat. In this election, the Sangam won 40 Gram-panchayats and could not do much what they desired. It had put candidate in 1967 assembly elections from Kothuru (ST) constituency and polled 10,000 tribal votes out of 10,350. It works at 90% votes in the agency area. Such was the hold of the Sangam on tribals by 1967.

As Biplab Das Gupta commented "The movement achieved remarkable success within a short-time. It secured a five-fold increase in the wage rate of farm servants, forced

the distribution of two-thirds of the produce to the tiller, about 1,500 - 2,000 acres of mortgaged land were wrested from the landlords, about 5,000 acres of waste land were made available to the Girijans free from the restrictions imposed by forest officials, and loans amount to about Rs.3 lakhs were annulled by 1968.<sup>6</sup>

The district Committee of CPI(M) put forth a 10-point agrarian program of occupying lands held by the landlords and seizing of the crops. The landlords with the help of the government and police started to reassert themselves and resisting the Girijan attempts to secure wage rise and seizure of lands. Even then they were forced to increase the wages of labourers and concede two-third of crops to the share croppers. Section 144 was imposed in 200 villages from July 24 to August 25, 1967.<sup>7</sup> As the situation continued a conference was called in Mondemkhal on October 31, 1967 to decide the future course of action. When some Girijans were on the way to conference, they were fired at by Medita Satyam, killing 2 girijans namely Koranna and Mansanna at Levidi. N. Prasada Rao, CPI(M) Central Committee member visited

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6. Biplob Das Gupta, The Naxalite Movement, Allied Publishers (New Delhi, 1974), p.47.

7. Sumanta Banerjee, In the Wake of Naxalbari, Subarnarekha (Calcutta, 1980), p.141.

the area, condemned the violent attack and advised the district leaders to take the struggle in non-violent forms. Some district leaders strongly disagreed with his view.

After Levidi incident, militant activities of the sangam were increased. They decided to seize the properties of the landlords and at times there were armed clashes between landlords and girijans. There was an incident in Peddakharja village where police took to firing and two girijans were killed on March 4, 1968. These armed clashes brought about a special armed police force to the area.

The Naxalbari struggle and its aftermath caused some debate in the CPI(M) party. Naxalbari leader Charu Mazumdar besides some staunch advocates of Naxalbari were expelled from the party for advocating new line against official line. CPI(M) Central Committee met at Madurai in August, 1967 prepared draft for the Burdwan plenum. In that draft it criticised CPSU on peaceful transformation to socialism and revisionist tendencies in its but it pleaded for the Unity in action between USSR and China in Vietnam.



In November, 1967, the naxalbari supporters formed All India Coordination Committee of revolutionaries CPI(M) in order to win over the majority of the party members.

Andhra Pradesh State CPI(M) was struggling hard to contain the spread of Naxalbari line of thinking here whereas the things happened the other way round. The Madurai draft resolution of the CPI(M) was rejected at State plenum held at Pallakollu. The alternative draft stood in the name of T. Negi Reddy, C. Pulla Reddy, K. Venkaiah, passed with overwhelming majority. It declared its opposition to "a whole series of basic questions concerning the Indian revolutionary movement",<sup>8</sup> and asked the Central Committee to prepare a new draft based on the two major themes exchanged between the CPSU and CPC in June-July 1967. The resolutions read "there could be no unity between revisionism and Marxism-Leninism, two antagonistic contradictions and that the CPI(M) leaders were directly compromising with Soviet revisionism and its Indian agent, the CPI", "tended to agree with the Chinese assessment of the Indian situation, including the need for armed struggle".<sup>9</sup> They carried on their ideological fight upto Burdwan plenum in April, 1968.

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8. Andhra Plenum rejects Neo-Revisionist Draft, Vijayawada, 1968.

9. Mohan Ram, Maoism in India, Vikas Publications (New Delhi, 1971).

At the Burdwan plenum, Sushil Roy Chowdary met and held discussions with the Andhra dissidents led by T. Nagi Reddy. They found out a common ideological ground and the Andhra dissidents were invited to join AICCR CPI(M). But they refused the invitation by maintaining that they would carry on an ideological struggle within the party for which there was still enough scope. They agreed to be in touch with the AICCCR CPI(M).<sup>10</sup> Having gone to Andhra, they continued to propagate their views and were expelled from CPI(M) in June, 1968. They then formed the state level coordination committee of revolutionaries with T. Nagi Reddy as its Convener.

Burdwan plenum of the CPI(M) adopted a new ideological document upholding "essentially correct" stand of the CPC on peaceful co-existence, peaceful economic competition, peaceful transition to socialism. Criticising the CPCs "assessment of the current situation (in India) and tactical line worked out on that basis completely incorrect and contrary to realities and life".<sup>11</sup>

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10. Asit Sen, An Approach to Naxalbari, Institute of Scientific Thoughts (Calcutta, 1980), p.47.

11. Stand on Ideological Issues - CPI(M) Publications (Calcutta, 1969).

In April, 1968 AICCR, CPI(M) met in Calcutta and decided to rename itself as All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (AICCCR) and cut off its connection with CPI(M). In May, 1968, AICCCR gave a call for the unity of the all Maoist forces. It said, "we take this opportunity to urge all the revolutionaries who have faith in Chairman Mao's thought and have rebelled against the leadership as revisionists and neo-revisionists, but who are still maintaining separate groups to liquidate groups and consolidate themselves within the AICCCR."<sup>12</sup> It reviewed the situation and called for a "true" party through Naxalbari struggles, and for boycott of elections and for "revolutionary class battles under the banner of Chairman Mao's thought" leading to peoples democratic revolution.<sup>13</sup> At this time C.Mazumdar Group forwarded the idea of immediate formation of a new revolutionary party which was rejected by other groups. The formation of the new coordination was welcomed by CPC. CM wrote that the main contradiction in the countryside between the feudal landlords and peasants armed forces under work-

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12. Charu Mazumdar, "One Year of Naxalbari Struggle", Liberation, vol.1 (June, 1968).

13. Ibid., p.4.

ing class leadership can this contradiction be resolved. All of the Indian parties have turned out to be enemies of revolution, while "the new democratic revolution can succeed only following the Maoist path. A revolutionary party can not be built merely with the defection from the two communist parties and "such a party will be formed with the youth, of the working class, the peasantry and of the toiling middle class, who not only accept the thought of Chairman Mao but also apply the same in their own lives, spread and propagate it among the broad masses and build bases for armed struggle in the countryside. Such a party will not be a revolutionary party, but it will be at the same time the peoples armed force and peoples state power.<sup>14</sup>

Srikakulam district CPI(M) broke away from CPI(M) in April, 1968. It expressed dissatisfaction with the State Coordination Committee of revolutionaries led by T. Nagi Reddy. T. Nagi Reddy's State Coordination Committee proclaimed that Mao's thoughts were the Marxist Leninism of the present epoch and stressed the need for intensifying ideological struggle against the CPI(M) neo-revisionists and declared that it would shortly launch another movement in Telengana on the lines of the

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14. Ibid., p.5.

previous Telengana armed struggle of 1948-51. This was the programme of action of T. Nagi Reddy's state Coordination Committee declared on 2 August, 1968. In pursuance of this policy, Warangal and Khammam were chosen as areas of operation.<sup>15</sup>

In August, 1968 Sushil Roy Chowdary and Asit Sen established Andhra unit of AICCCR with the youths who established Naxalbari Sangibha Committee in Guntur. T. Nagi Reddy sought clarification from AICCCR and was told that they have right to form the unit because they were two independent organisations.<sup>16</sup>

In August, 1968, Srikakulam district Communist Revolutionaries met at Baddapadu. There was a difference of opinion between T. Nagi Reddy Committee and Srikakulam district Committee regarding timing and launching of armed struggle. Hence they bitterly criticised State Committee and had decided to send Panchadi Krishna Murthi and C. Tejeswara Rao to hold discussions with the AICCCR directly. They met AICCCR leaders and reported back. In the third week of September, Srikakulam

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15. Indian Express (Hyderabad), 3 August, 1968.

16. Asit Sen, n.10, pp.55-56.

district Communist revolutionaries met and decided to intensify the struggle which was called off in May, 1968. It joined AICCCR. It also decided to resist the landlords and the police and stressed the political dimensions of the campaigns to seize crops, and lands from the landlords.

In October, 1968, T. Nagi Reddy's State Coordination Committee joined AICCCR. In the same month to AICCCR meeting both groups i.e. Srikakulam group and T. Nagi Reddy's Committee were invited and attended. In November, C. Tejeswara Rao was sent to Calcutta on behalf of Srikakulam district AICCCR. He returned back from Calcutta and district AICCCR meeting was held at Soddapadu on November 20, 1968. It was resolved that an armed struggle should be launched immediately. Guerilla squads (or dalems) were formed in the agency hills as well as in the plains of Srikakulam, with the ultimate object of capturing state powers by overthrowing the existing government.<sup>17</sup> It elected a three-member Secretariat consisting of P. Krishna Murthy, C. Tejeswara Rao and H. Appala Suri. C. Tejeswara Rao was elected as Convener.

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17. Sumantha Banerjee, n.7, p.136.

The armed struggle was heralded by the 'action' followed at Peddagottilli on landlord and moneylender namely Theegala Narasimhulu.<sup>18</sup> He was attacked by 400 tribals armed with bows, arrows and guns on 24 November, 1968. V. Satyanarayana led the attack. Promisory notes were burnt and paddy was taken away. On November 25, 1968 money lender of Doddukallu Ramulu, was attacked. Promisory notes were burnt, foodgrains were distributed amongst the local people. This was followed by another money-lender in Dandusura and in many other villages of the agency this was followed. Hundreds of tribals participated in the movement.

A. Kailasam and M.V. Ramana Murthy hailed from Bobbili which is plain area, M.V.R. Murthy worked in this area. Both A. Kailasam and M.V.R. Murthy organised the cutting of crops in Reddivalasa and Ramayanpet villages. In Lakshmpurem and Kamnandavalasa people seized hoarded grains from the house of landlords. With these incidents police camps were set up. Thus it became inoperative for the revolutionaries, who retreated back to the Parvathipuram agency.

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18. Naxalite Conspiracy Case Charge Sheet-cum-Complaint, p.4.

Sompeta area is important in the revolutionary politics of the district. There is a need to briefly sketch the conditions prevailing in the area upto 1967. In Uddanam area revolutionary politics had its origins in the plains since it was abundant with Cashew and coconut trees. Because of its trees and proximity to sea, it was called "udayanavanam" (means garden) and it slowly became Uddanam (information based on interview). Boddapadu was the key-centre to the revolutionary movement.<sup>19</sup> T. Ganapathi leader of the revolutionary movement hailed from this village. Next to Parvathipuram Uddanam was the place where revolutionary movement took place but in low key and that too was confined to the Mandasa agency pocket only. P. Krishna Murthy, Subba Rao Panigrahi, who inspired tribals through his burrakatha "Jamukula Katha was a revolutionary poet of that time came from Orissa and settled down here. P. Krishnamurthy, T. Ganapathi, S. Panigrahi were the backbone to the movement in the area. They organised peasant associations, agricultural labourers associations and some youth associations.

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19. Statue erected in the memory of the martyrs, who lost their lives in the movement, stands in the midst of the village till day.



The Zamindari system was abolished in 1948. Few people who owned large tracts of land leased the lands by auction. The middlemen who had money took these lands on lease and sub-let to the poor peasants. These middle men fixed the amount to be paid by poor peasants and in the process he got the double amount. For example a middleman gets a particular piece of coconut tree for Rs.50/- and sub-leased for Rs.100. For cultivating the crop, some investment was needed. He advanced some amounts whenever the peasant needed money and prepared a list of these debts. The peasant had to pay the required amount irrespective of whether the crop was a bumper or a failure. The money lender tampered with the prepared list taking advantage of illiteracy and ignorance of the peasants. Some middle peasants who owned pieces of lands were lent money by the middlemen to cultivate those lands by charging compound interest ultimately appropriated their lands for not having repaid the debts. T. Ganapathi and P. Krishna Murthy fought some struggles against the collection of taxes during drought conditions in the Uddanam area in 1967.<sup>20</sup> Abject drought conditions prevented the people from cultivating their lands. Despite the land ceiling legis-

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20. Information based on interview.

lation in Kambariga village of palasa division, one landlord owns 300 acres of land even today.<sup>21</sup> There were few instances like this. Agnikula Kshatriyas, Kintala Kalingas, Yadavas, Borugas Kalingas live in this area. Majority of the people are agnikula kshatriyas (fishermen). They live on fishing and borrowed money from the money lenders to invest in their profession. The money lenders exploited them by charging exorbitant rates of interest. Most of the people from this caste in this area joined the movement. T. Ganapati also belonged to this caste.

The coconut and cashew trees played a role driving some people to join the movement. Most of the land was owned by some of the Marwaris who came from Orissa and settled there. Some middlemen took the trees to "Gutta (means lending the gardens for a fixed period) and in turn sub-let them to others. These middlemen by providing necessary investment demanded fixed returns and when the people failed to pay the rent owing to drought conditions, whatever little property they had was seized.

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21. Information based on interview.

By November, 1968, poor peasants' discontent was widespread. In the organisation, P. Krishnamurthy was in charge of the area. He was ably assisted by his wife P. Nirmala. She led an operation involving the cutting away of crops of money lenders. The first armed struggle in the area was on 24 November, 1968 at Garudabhadra in Kasibugga police station limits,<sup>22</sup> led by P. Nirmala and S. Panigrahi with some 10 youths participating in it from the villages of Marripadu, Boddapadu, Rejam. Earlier to this P. Nirmala organised a procession in which she was humiliated by the landlord.<sup>23</sup>

The armed actions brought in direct confrontation with the police. On December 10, they clashed with the police at Athli hills of Parvathipuram agency. On 12 December, police opened fire killing two tribals in the Pulpati hills. On 20 December, when police entered Ballerugude village hundreds of tribals fought with the police and forced them to retreat. The tribals were taught to follow guerrilla warfare and not to confront the police directly. When police again entered the Aviri area tribals fired from the bushes killing one constable.<sup>24</sup> The struggle

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22. Crime No.68 of P.S. Karibugga, FIR of 20 December, 1968.

23. Information based on interview.

24. "Srikakulam Comrades Report", Liberation, vol.II, no.2 (December, 1968).

embraced 100 to 800 square miles of the district.<sup>25</sup> From November, 1968 to February, 1968, armed struggles continued in Parvathipuram, and Pathapatnam areas.

In January, 1969 Charu Majumdar who visited Srikakulam to meet the leaders described Srikakulam as the "Yenan of India". He considered Srikakulam to be a base and said that start had been made for the liberation of the country. He accused the state leadership of having undermined by not giving enough encouragement.

Meanwhile, on 7 February, T. Nagi Reddy's group was disaffiliated from AICCCR led by Charu Mazumdar. Three reasons were assigned (1) Nagi Reddy and his followers are not loyal to CPC. (2) They were at most according lukewarm support to the struggle of Srikakulam instead of owning and glorifying it. (3) T. Nagi Reddy failed to comply with the coordination committee's resolution seeking his resignation from the A.P. assembly within two months. Ashis Kumar Ray and Marcuse Frandas, who opined that the severing of relations with T. Nagi Reddy was an outcome of a

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25. Biplab Das Gupta, n.6, p.49.

tussle over the leadership, is not wholly true.<sup>26</sup>

AICCCR met between February 2-7, passed two resolutions (1) "basic differences" between itself and Andhra Committee. (2) There was a need for a party - "without a revolutionary party, there can be no revolutionary discipline and without revolutionary discipline the struggle can not be raised to higher level".<sup>27</sup>

Srikakulam district committee which met between 11-13 February, 1969 decided to extend the movement to plain areas and to snatch arms and ammunition from the police. It also divided Srikakulam district into four areas of operation of guerrilla squads. Those were (1) Bobbili area covering Bobbili Salur taluka; (2) Parvathipuram area consisting of the forest tracts of Parvathipuram, Palakonda, Pathapatnam Taluks. (3) Sompeta area covering the entire Uddanam region from Polasa to Ichapuram.<sup>28</sup>

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26. Roy Asis, S. Kumar, The Spring, Thunder and After Minerva Associates (Calcutta, 1975), p. 145.  
Marcuse Franda - Radical Politics in West Bengal, MIT Press (London, 1977), p. 139.

27. "Resolution of the AICCCR" - Liberation, vol. 11, no. 3, (March, 1969), p. 6.

28. Naxalite Conspiracy Case, n. 18, p. 17.

The house of a money lender was raided under the leadership of P. Krishnamurthy, T. Ganapathi, on 24 March, 1969 in Bathupuram and promisory notes worth one lakh were burnt.<sup>29</sup> In Padmapuram near Mandasa another landlord named V. Mutyanandan's house was attacked snatching away Rs.5,000 and a gun on 19 April, 1969. Bethuna Bhima Rao of Boddapadu was attacked and killed as he was suspected of being police informant.

A. Kailasam and HVR Murthy went back and made an abortive attempt to kill a landlord in Gouripuram in Bobbili area. In Badevalessa they planned to snatch away the properties of three local landlords but could not do so as the police got prior information. Since the police repression was let loose in the area, it became inoperative for the guerrilla squads and they retreated to the agency.

Meantime in the Parvathipuram agency area, the movement surged forward with many attacks against money-lenders, landlords and shop-keepers. Property of the landlords were seized and distributed amongst the tribals on February 1969, Vittal Prasad a money lender and also a

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29. Crime No.17/19 of P.S. Baruva, FIR of 24 March, 1969.

police informant was killed. Thus the revolutionaries killed or attempted to kill all those who were suspected of collusion with the police. They attacked police camps at Bollivada and Vobanga on April 11 and May 3, 1969 respectively.

Charu Mazumdar visited Andhra in February. The meeting took place at Guttikonda on 2 February - 2 March, 1969. State Coordination Committee was formed with C. Tejeswara Rao as the Convener, P. Krishna Murthy and N. Appala Suri were put in charge of the Srikakulam district.<sup>30</sup> State committee did not include the leader of the Srikakulam movement, V. Satyanarayana, as he was having some differences with Charu Mazumdar on the nature of armed struggle.

In pursuance of its earlier resolution to form a revolutionary party, the AICCCR met between 19 and 22 and formed Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist). (The loopholes in the formation are discussed in the following Chapter). It announced the dissolution of the Coordination Committee after setting up a Central Organising Committee to hold the first

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30. Naxalite Conspiracy Case Charge-sheet, n.18, p.15.

Congress of the party at an appropriate time".<sup>31</sup> Formal announcement was made in the 1 May, 1969 in Calcutta May Day rally by Kanu Sanyal, the Naxalbari leader and Charu Mazumder was its Chairman. In a political resolution adopted, the Indian state was characterised as the state of big landlords and comprador bureaucratic capitalists and that its government was a lackey of US imperialism and Soviet Socialist imperialism. It was also stated that the Indian revolution at the present stage was the people's Democratic revolution, the main content of which was the agrarian revolution, the abolition of feudalism in the countryside. It described its Chief responsibility as that of organisation of peasantry and advancing towards seizure of power through the armed struggle; the basic tactic of the struggle would be guerrilla warfare. It firmly rejected parliamentarianism. It will be a secret and underground party. Keeping its main cadres underground, it will utilise all possible legal opportunities for struggles but under no circumstances function openly. It would be rural based so that it can rouse the peasantry to wage guerrilla wars unfold the agrarian revolution build liberated rural bases, use the countryside to encircle the cities

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31. "Communique of the AICCCR", Liberation, vol.II, no.5, (May, 1969), p.3.



and finally capture cities".<sup>32</sup> A number of revolutionary groups opted out of the new party and maintained separate existence. Those include Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Maharashtra.

In the meantime, Srikakulam movement was making headway progress as the attacks were being continued. AICCCR provincial Committee meeting was held at Visakapatnam from 14 to 16 May. It decided to extent the armed struggle from the hill areas to the plains. It also decided to seize landlords' property lands and crops. Lastly it decided to annihilate landlords (until then there were stray incidents of landlords being killed) police personnel and police informants and also to affiliate the committee to the newly formed party of Charu Mazumdar - CPI(ML). V. Satyanarayana and A. Kailasam were absent in the meeting. Reported differences over nature of armed struggle stated to be one of the reasons for their abstention.

In carrying forward the new tasks set up by the CPI(ML) district unit, the Sompeta area delams led by P. Krishnamurthy executed two notorious moneylenders, who happened to be brothers in Broivanka and rupees

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32. Political Resolution of the CPI(ML), Liberation, vol.II, no.5 (May, 1969), p.5.

two lakh worth promisory notes were burnt.<sup>33</sup> After five days other incident, P. Krishnamurthy one of the founders of the party and a member of C.O.C. was killed. Police claimed that he was killed in an encounter whereas CPI(ML) alleged that P. Krishnamurthy and his associates were murdered.<sup>34</sup> Sompeta area guerrilla squads were reorganised under the leadership of T. Ganapathi, Dr. Chaganti Bhaskara Rao and P. Vasudeva Rao, T. Ganapathi was elected as new area secretary. Five squads operated in the area. The annihilation programme was carried on in Akkupalli, Goundapuram, Bhavanipuram. In all these villages, landlords were publicly trialled. Dalan leader used to punch the body of the landlords which was followed by the squad members killing them for their misdeeds.<sup>35</sup>

Parvathipuram agency implemented the district committee's decision by conducting attacks on Thumbali, Lohayola and Palukonda killing of moneylenders landlords continued. They distributed money and property among the people there.

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33. Crime Nos.31 and 32/69 of P.S. Ichapuram

34. "Flames of Peoples' War Burn Brightly in Srikakulam", Liberation, vol.II, no. (August, '69).

35. Information based on interviews.

This was the mass phase of the Srikakulam revolutionary movement. Hundreds of people participated in the armed actions.

The State machinery immediately plunged into action to curb these activities. Top level committee headed by Andhra Chief Secretary, M.T. Raju, Home Secretary, A. Krishna Swami and Inspector General of Police, Atma Ram was formed. Atma Ram visited the Parvathipuram agency and suggested strong measures to curb rebel activities.<sup>36</sup> On June 7, 1969 Parvathipuram agency was declared as disturbed area. By August, the whole area comprising Pathapatnam, Sompeta, Tekkali, Ichapuram, Palakonda and Parvathipuram were covered under the act. Joint operations of Andhra Special Armed Police, the CRPF and Orissa military police, were taken up. Police started combing operations in the disturbed areas especially Parvathipuram and Sompeta. Indiscriminate arrests were made.

Repression mounted by the police forced them to declare the police personnel defending the reactionary landlords and government. Hence the attack was shifted from attack on landlords to the attack on police personnel. By June 1969 activities of the revolutionaries

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36. Indian Express (Delhi), 19 May, 1969.

centred around attacking police. The months of May, June and July witnessed physical clashes between the police and revolutionaries. In some areas, police were forced to retreat back temporarily. By June, 1969, there were 300 guerrillas in the central squads.

Charu Mazumdar praised the Srikakulam movement as "the forerunner of the Indian liberation". He said that the class struggle was at its peak police were protecting the reactionary state. Taking cue from the movement, by June, 1969, he theorised that the "annihilation of the landlords is the highest form of class struggle. He wished to create more and more Srikakulam in every part of India.

After mid-July, 1969, the movement showed the signs of decline. The direct confrontation with superior police cost them. On the one hand stepped up raids on the villages, arresting suspected persons, filing cases etc., and on the hand government took some developmental projects like construction of roads, bridges, culverts, building schools etc. Rice and wheat were freely distributed, several loans were given and they were subsequently converted into grants. Lands, bullocks, seeds, fertilisers, agricultural implements

were distributed. Housing schemes were taken up. Intense police patrolling forced guerilla squads to step back. From 22nd July to 4th August, Kanu Sanjal and Souren Bose visited the agency area addressed the squads meetings. By this time the difference between original Srikakulam movement builders V. Satyanarayana and A. Kailasam on the one side and C. Tejeswara Rao, Nagabhusham Patnaick etc., new entrants on the other side were developed. V. Satyanarayana opposed the individual annihilations by conspiratorial method and small squad actions. However, the difference were patched up.

A meeting was organised by COC, CPI(ML) between September 8th and 9th in Calcutta which was attended by C. Tejeswara Rao and M. Appala Suri. It firmly stood by Srikakulam movement and asked the revolutionaries to intensify the guerrilla warfare and annihilation of class enemies. In October, 1969, a conference of squad commanders and party organisers was held at Megada hills of Parvathipuram agency. V. Satyanarayana became secretary of the reconstituted agency committee. It expressed strong resolve to carry on the determined fight. After three months of stagnation, they attacked landlords of Pedda Buddidu village under the personal supervision of V. Satyanarayana and A. Kailasam.

In Sompeta area attacks were conducted on Banjara Yuvarajapuram bordering Mahendragiri hills and killed a landlord named S. Appanna by the guerrilla squads led by T. Ganapathi and P. Vasudeva Rao. In Parvathipuram agency H. Hohen Rao, President of Seethampet Panchayat Samithi was killed as he was suspected of helping police. Fourteen policemen were killed eight at Nidagallu hills, three at Barlagi and two at Bandalaguda.

T. Ganapathi and Dr. Chaganti Bhaskara Rao were killed on 19 December, 1969. In the same month, C. Tejeswara Rao was arrested.<sup>38</sup> He had second thoughts over the annihilation of landlords. P. Nirmala and S. Panigrahi were killed on 3rd August. This was a big blow to Sompeta area committee. Dr. Mallikharjunudu shouldered the responsibility of the area assisted by squad leaders D. Appalaswamy, U. Malleswara Rao. By January, 1970, the entire movement was restricted to the Parvathipuram hills area. With the death of front rank leaders of the district, the full responsibility of the movement had fallen on V. Satyanarayana. He continued to lead the movement with his reservations on annihilation line and

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38. Presently he is in the Visakhapatnam Central Jail and applied for the admission into CPI(M).

so small squad actions profounded by Charu Mazumdar. Police Charge Sheet showed "altogether from 24-11-68 to 30-3-1970, 34 murders, 83 dacoities and several abductions were committed."<sup>39</sup>

The casualties of leadership were on an increase by June, 1970. In April, 1970, first first CPI(ML) Congress was held. In that Charu Mazumdar was elected as the Chairman of the party. Central Committee was formed. A. Kailasam, V. Satyanarayana and M. Appala Suri were elected to the Central Committee CPI(ML). In early June, 1970 MVR Murthy shot dead in an encounter with the police. This was the first death of real police-squad encounter.<sup>40</sup> In Sompeta area in Attukote village on 10 June, an attack was made on a landlord and property worth Rs.90,000 was seized. This was followed by two annihilations in the agency area one at Tulasivalasa, another at Nandivalasa on 11 June. On 10 July, 1970, V. Satyanarayana and A. Kailasam were killed in the Boru hills. V. Malleeswara Rao, Dr. Mallikharjibunu, D. Appala-swamy were killed on 15th July. With this entire Sompeta area was liquidated. on 24 July, 1970, D. Nagabhushan Patnaik and M. Appala Suri Erikekulam leaders, went to plead with Charu Mazumdar the mood of the local cadres.

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39. Naxalite Conspiracy Case Charge Sheet, n.8, p.5.

40. Information based on interviews.

But they were arrested. After the death of V. Satyanarayana, Rajaram Reddy (alias Krishna Reddy) was elected as CPI(ML) Peruvathipuram area Secretary. Squads were organised. Arika Somulu who was the squad leader led daring attacks in the agency area.

Some attacks were conducted in the agency area in the early 1971 under the leadership of Arika Somulu and Krishna Reddy. With their death, the movement came to an end.

Meantime, the differences arose among the close associates of Charu Mazumdar. Culminating in overt dissensions in the ranks of CPI(ML) at the Party's 1st Congress in May, 1970. Sushil Roy Chowdary and Karu Sanyal reported differed with Charu Mazumdar on annihilation line, they that mass struggles and political consciousness among the people as precondition for taking up annihilations. By July, 1970, dissident activity was on the increase with Charu Mazumdar being subjected to scaling attack through circulation documents by Ashish Chatterjee and S. Narayana Singh. With the expression of discontent and conflicting views by more and more state committees, Charu Mazumdar was reduced to a minority in CPI(ML) Central Committee. 1971 Bangladesh war brought about further divisions. Charu Mazumdar



was expelled from the party by the CPI(ML) Central Committee in November, 1971. Satyanarayana Singh was elected as Secretary in his place.

In August, 1971, Srikakulam revolutionaries, regional plenum was conducted under P. Vasudeva Rao's leadership.<sup>41</sup> It reviewed the situation and opined that the heavy losses were result of an adventurist sectarian military line and neglect of organisation. It sided with CPI(ML) led by Satyanarayana Singh.

Thus the Srikakulam movement which was guided by Charu Mazumdar turned against his line by 1972.

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41. Passing - Self Critical Report, Srikakulam Regional Plenum CPI(ML) (August, 1973).

**SRIKAKULAH REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT - AN ASSESSMENT**

## CHAPTER - V

### SRIKAKULAM REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT - AN ASSESSMENT

Revolutionary movement had many facets to it in Srikakulam. It was led by a breakaway group of CPI(M) thus forming a part of the Maoist movement proper.

Apart from this, was the fact that Maoism as an ideology and strategic and tactical framework did not penetrate Srikakulam from the very beginning. The struggles led by the local leaders belonging to CPI(M) could be said to be merely extending a more militant version of CPI(M)'s programme. It is only when the militants were sought to be curbed by the CPI(M) leadership, that the Srikakulam area became an independent Unit of the Maoists. Though there were initial contacts between Srikakulam leaders and those leading the Naxalbari struggles, but by no means the radical struggle in Srikakulam could be described as a continuation of the Naxalbari episode.

The initial contacts however were exploited by Charu Mazumdar and other leaders of the Naxalbari movement to defend the cleavage already existing between the Srikakulam district committee and the Andhra

State rebel committee led by T. Nagi Reddy.

Hence we witness that almost all the attempts, in this rather brief period, though not well planned and clearly thought out, were meant to be propaganda ploys to exaggerate the success of the Naxalbari leadership.

In this background it seems rather ironic that the entire movement in Srikakulam had come to be known as Naxalite. The fact is that it was Srikakulam glorified as the Yenam of India which really provided a strong base to the proper "Naxalites", who it would be remembered were forced by circumstances to give up their original liberation struggle from the country side of the Naxalbari itself.

However, if we take a deeper and a more organic view of the situation it is not all that ironic. Firstly, Srikakulam movement was in its main thrust and organisational form independent of what was happening in Naxalbari. Even the split within the CPI(M) leadership was also independent. It would be recollected that the leaders from the Andhra State Committee led the powerful radical dissident factions at the CPI(M)'s Burdwan Plenum.

Even in terms of history of the application of the ideas of the Mao Tse-tung to Indian conditions, the first attempt was rather made in Telangana around 1946-52. Mohan Ram provides ample evidence to support the contention that the history of a "Maoist line for India" began with the Telangana peasants armed struggle, though the later Naxalite leadership prominently among them Charu Mazumdar never overlooked 'this' part of history. It should be noted however that it was a self-contradiction to talk in terms of continuing the 'glorious tradition of Telangana' and at the same time talk about a 'clean break with the past' by leading the struggle in Siliguri.

To briefly recapitulate the history of the controversial Indian Maoist movement, it was only in the second phase of Telangana struggle that Mao's ideas were sought to be applied, certain leaders of this movement around 1948 made a serious study of the essays by Mao Tse-Tung and particularly of those written by Liu Shie Chi. Essence of this line consisted of the multi-class alliance, giving a significant role to the peasantry and an emphasis on the 'protracted armed struggle' as against classical Russian insurrectionary



path. The controversies in this period within the Central leadership of the Communists were not only marked by a genuine mutual misunderstanding but also gross opportunism among them. Some of them, even claiming originality, had no serious revolutionary past apart from an experience within the party bureaucracy.

At the root of this controversy was the hesitation of the Soviet leadership in providing clear and unambiguous strategic and tactical guidelines to the colonial people struggle for national independence, especially so in the case of India. By the end of the war though it was clear that Mao was heading for a victory, Moscow it seems never took it as a serious possibility and much less gave serious attention to its likely implications in the future. By now it is an established fact that Mao's success came as a fait accompli to a bewildered Stalin, who almost consistently ignored the importance of the radical Leadership in China. The 1927 debacle was shocking enough to the Chinese communist leadership, who never again depended on outside guidance.

After the War there were two distinct experiments in the world communist movement apart from the classical Russian movement. The People's Democracies in Eastern Europe and New democracy of Mao Tse Tung. Precisely,

during this period the Russians for the first time realised in actual practice the theoretical-ideological significance of Lenin's long standing warning against any mechanical copying of the Russian model. But this realization did not give birth to any new problematic guidelines immediately. In other words, this is also a brief period of Moscow's hesitation - more precisely - indecisiveness in shaping its own foreign policy as well as the ways and means of maintaining its leading role in the world communist movement.

In global terms, that USA came to occupy a leading role within the world capitalist system after the Second World War. The colonies which were exploited by the British or some other European colonial power gained political independence, in the mid-twentieth century. But their political economy continued to remain closely linked to the metropolitan capitalist powers. But with the emergence of the USA as a dominant World Power, a new situation developed. The USA became a seriously influential factor in determining the domestic as well as external policy of the newly liberated colony. The term "Anglo-American imperialism", though a coinage of an earlier origin became a pet theme in the communist movement with all its political and ideolo-

gical ambiguities. The CPI for instance did not recognise 1947 as the year of Independence and continued to brand the Nehru government not only as a British puppet but also as a stooge serving the American interests as well. It is not at all surprising against this background of "militant anti-imperialism" that there was a possibility of the co-existence of divergent and often mutually contradictory ideological-political currents within the CPI.

B.T. Konadave, who replaced the allegedly reformist P.C. Joshi, started propounding his own scheme of Indian revolution which was more or less on the lines of the classical Russian revolutionary model. Hence his emphasis on the working class and on insurrection as the tactical line of armed struggle. By now the discredited jail-breaking incidents resulting in largescale loss of human life especially in West Bengal were carried on as a part of this on-going insurrection. At the same time E.A. Dange was propounding his own theory of multi-class framework against the Konadave's leadership. Telangana peasants armed struggles had begun in 1946 with an entirely localised strategic scheme. It is no surprise that all the three dominant currents were not only co-existing within the CPI, but also firececy clashing with



each other.

During this entire period we should note that the CPI did not have any clear-cut programme what so ever. There were only contingent plans without becoming part of an overall strategy. In 1948 there was the Police Action in Hyderabad, but this along with the Transfer of Power in Delhi, did not alter the course of Telangana armed struggle and within one year came the victory of Mao Tse Tung in China which gave boost to the Telangana leaders who had then sought to apply Mao's ideas. Rane-dave was forced to condemn the Andhra leadership and for some reason or the other launched an attack on Mao himself. Moscow's connivence in these antics cannot be specially located. Some Soviet theoreticians did support the attack on Mao but their main emphasis was in any case against an attempt at the universal application of Mao's ideas. It was taken to be only a local experience which can enrich the understanding of the colonial revolution but can never be implemented as such.

In the summer of 1950, the Cominform endorsed the Chinese line and that led to the downfall of Rane-dave and his replacement by C. Rajeswara Rao, the Andhra leader. The new leadership officially apologised

to Mao and also declared New Democracy as the model for India. The former General of the CPI, P.C. Joshi with the implicit support of the British communist leaders, R.P. Dutt began his attack on Ranadive line as well as on the new enthusiasm for Mao Tse Tung.

We can summarise the ideological debate in this period with three dominant themes: (a) the importance of the demand for linguistic provinces vis-a-vis the CPI's strategy; (b) the differentiation within the bourgeoisie; (c) differentiation within the peasantry. All the three themes would be viewed as groping towards a redefinition of multi-class alliance as the basis of the transitional democratic stage of the revolution.<sup>1</sup>

As we have already said this is only an attempt at redefinition of what is called the colonial question as debated in Comintern at its second Congress in 1920. The original draft thesis was presented by Lenin and after private discussions with M.N. Roy, Lenin felt that certain inadequacies may be removed and ask the latter to prepare a set of supplementary thesis. With

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1. For clear discussion of this period could be found in Harrison N. Selig., India - the Most Dangerous Decades, Oxford University Press (Madras, 1968). Also, Ray Hemen, Peking and the Indian Communist, Jaico Publishing House, (Delhi, 1980).

some modifications both were accepted by the Congress.<sup>2</sup>

The Police Action in Hyderabad had its impact. The human toll compelled the CPI leadership to have second thoughts, and delegation consisting of S.A. Dange, Ajoy Ghosh, C. Rajeswara Rao and M. Basava Punniah left for Moscow to have consultation with the CPSU. N.A. Suslov led the Soviet side with occasional interventions on the part of Stalin. As a result of this confabulation the armed struggle in Telengana was withdrawn (arms were also surrendered) and communists were allowed to participate in the first national general elections, 1952. A statement of policy was issued in 1951.<sup>3</sup> That this is the first ever programme of the CPI has been largely ignored by everyone almost in all the studies on communist movement.

Thus the brief experiment in Maoism has been abruptly folded up, though this continues to be a central point in the inter-communist controversies. The entire experience in the parliamentary democracy led only to

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2. Ecausse, H.C. - Schran, S.R., Marxism and Asia, Adhikari, G.C. Document of the History of the CPI, vol.I, 1917-1922. And, Joshi, Leel., Ideological Origins of the CPI, 1920-25, unpublished M.Phil. dissertation, CHS, JNU (New Delhi, 1977).
  3. Mohan Ram, Indian Communism - Split Within a Split, Vikas, (Delhi, 1969). Also, Maoism in India, Vikas (Delhi, 1971).

the recognition of what can be called Right deviation. Coupled with the Sino-Soviet split largely around the same themes there was a split in CPI in 1964. Once again the new party did not conduct a full fledged ideological discussion for three long years. The year 1964 was only a broad divide between Right and Left taken as a whole. The three year ideological confusion inevitably led to a second split within the Left, that is the CPI(M). The three year gap and its practical political impact on the shaping of ideological struggle and actual content of the ideological position held by the dominant CPI(M) leadership is still an interesting point to be debated here. Mohan Ram and Manoranjan Mohanty though in partial agreement, give otherwise two different views of this problem. We should come back to it at a later stage when we discuss the formation of the CPI(ML).

Now we will take a quick survey of the ideological struggle within CPI(M) and various factors which have influenced this struggle. The Sino-Soviet split very soon went beyond ideological terms, and China emerged as a third force to be reckoned with by both USA and U.S.S.R. The Communist Party of China's (hereafter it would be mentioned as CPC) interventions in the internal

struggles of other communist parties had more dimensions than mere ideology. It is the same case with CPSU. Thus the need of foreign policy and ideological domination were so closely intertwined that more often than not ideology is only the idiom to express concerns of real politik, including various diplomatic manoeuvre dealing with foreign governments and foreign communist parties. Thus nationalism proved to be more powerful both in terms of emotional appeal and socio-political as well as economic content. Here we shall confine ourselves to that period of world communism and Soviet and Chinese foreign policies which is directly relevant to our studies. Thus though we are clearly aware of the significance of the pre-Second World War period - especially Lenin's last phase, the interlude, the rout of the left opposition and its physical liquidation and consolidation of Stalin; the parallel developments in China climaxing in the dominance gained by Mao; we should only deal with the post-Second World War phase of this continuous and uninterrupted history of communism which will have an immediate bearing on our study.

As we have already noted, the Sino-Soviet Conflict has a long history - the mutual distrust of Stalin and Mao was a significant factor in the deepening of this

rift. The early Soviet hesitations and often contradictory views with regard to the assessment of the relevance of Chinese model to the other newly liberated countries were partly the result of the inner party struggles in the Soviet Union in the wake of the imminent death of Stalin and problems of succession - given of course the fact that there was no single personality who could confidently take over from Stalin. The latter developments like "collective leadership" were only part of the weak response to the rise of the dominant personality in the Asian part of the communist movement, that is Mao-Tse tung. In the beginning of this period both Soviet and Chinese communist parties (after overcoming their initial condemnation of Nehru) advised their Indian counterpart to support the "anti-imperialists" and "peace-loving" Nehru government. Some of the more pronounced statements to this effect, it is now widely accepted within and outside the communist circles, led to the rout of the Andhra Communists in the by-election.

The Liberation of Tibet and the initial border clashes between India and China did give rise to some doubts about Nehru governments' class character. The Soviet Union supported the Chinese position initially and in fact warned the Indian communists against the

intrusion of alien ideologies like bourgeois nationalism. But precisely it was this sentiment which eventually gripped the majority of the CPI while Soviet Union also firmly decided in favour of the position of the Indian government.<sup>4</sup> The border war when it finally broke out on a largescale in 1962, resulted in the split in the CPI. By then the Soviet efforts to unite both the factions turned out to be a fiasco despite Soviet intervention at 1961 CPI Congress at Vijayawada and finally split in 1964.

Though there were significant and explicitly argued out differences between the two sections, yet the CPI(M), the new party did not come out with an ideological document until 1967. This gap provides even now an interesting theme for a debate among various scholars. There is a consensus on at least one point.<sup>5</sup> It is also noted by some scholars that the 1964 split witnessed quite a few curious combination. Like the earlier Maoists, C.R. Rao and a definite centrist having radical leanings remained with Dange. On the other hand, P. Ramo Murthy who was arguing for a "national platform for

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4. For this we have to see Bhabani, Sen Gupta - Communism in Indian Politics, Young Asia Publications (Delhi, 1978), pp.53-58.

5. There is a calculated move to keep the moderate and the centrists who broke away from the CPI but continued to vacillate. Two such personalities are E.M.S. Namboodripad and Jyoti Basu.

peace and freedom<sup>6</sup> openly in the Parliament, the anti-Maoists B.T. Ransdove and the staunchly anti-China Muzzafer Ahmad (who branded China aggressor) - all these joined the new radical section.<sup>6</sup> But Manoranjan Mohanty says that there were acute ideological differences between these two sections and 1964 could not be termed a factional split. He also notes that despite the Tenali convention explicit stands to exclude any ideological debate from the proposed congress at Calcutta, there were already sufficient polemics and explicatory articles by CPI(M) leaders clarifying the ideological line.<sup>7</sup>

But the important issues raised by Mohan Ram that the Burdwan plenum document (ideological issues) was predictably and was even inevitably to be "a poor show of ideological acrobatics", could be endorsed only if one accepts his view of the period 1964-67. Paradoxically Manoranjan Mohanty approvingly quotes Mohan Ram

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In fact there was an article in Peoples Democracy, August 29, 1965, stating to the effect that many members in CPI(M) hesitated to openly commit the party either to the Chinese or to the Soviet positions. For this see, Mohan Ram, n.3, p.211.

6. Bhabani Sen Gupta, n.4, pp.62-63.

7. Mohanty, Manoranjan., Revolutionary Violence - A Study of the Maoist Movement in India, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., (New Delhi, 1977), pp.71-73.



to characterise this document as anti-Soviet but not pro-Chinese. The document quite obviously examined only the Soviet positions and accepted the Chinese view. The solitary exception was regarding the "unity in action" in the case of Vietnam, where CPI(M) disagreed with Chinese. As Mohan Ram put "it was anti-revisionism sans Maoism because the draft generally took positions which lays somewhere between Soviet general line and Chinese general line", "...examined from the Soviet positions the draft can be termed as anti-revisionist but viewed from Chinese position it might still be revisionist".<sup>8</sup>

Apart from the generally accepted fact that there were contradictory if not an entirely incompatible ideological currents continuing side by side within CPI(M), only one scholar Asish Kumar Roy ventured to suggest that some important members of the CPI(M) leadership "not merely shut their eyes rather indulgently to the Maoists in the party but actually encouraged them by taking an anti-Soviet posture in international communist movement by posing as an ultra left within the party".<sup>9</sup>

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8. Mohan Ram, Maoism in India, n.9, Chapter IV, p.78.

9. Roy, Asish Kumar., n.26, Chapter IV, p.49.

But our view is that this indulgence was forced on the leadership and not due to the radical postures of the leadership itself. Given the background of ideological confusion and airing of individual opinions often contradictory, inevitably led to the growth of radicalism. In fact the CPI(M) document "On Left Deviation" adopted at Madurai, August 1967 took note of the 'dangerous' growth of desperate trends which might lead to in the first instance to the confusion then disruption and finally into a break. It also gave quite a few details of the existence of such parallel centres working on the basis of trends. Then a firm decision was taken to hasten the process of freezing the trends and the result is central committee's draft for ideological discussions. The CPI(M)'s equidistance was from the beginning a hopeless but concerted attempt not to take radicalism in all its political, practical implications and consequences. The 'trends' mentioned in the document were only a manifestation of the plausible implications of the 1967 split. The concessions to moderates, logically speaking, have to be at the expense of radicalism.

Quite a few organisational irregularities preceded the Burdwan plenum. The West Bengal could not hold a

State level plenum at all while nine out of sixteen districts were allowed to hold district level plenums. And even in those states where regular plenums were held, the official leadership got a thin majority, especially in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. By then CM's own alternative document issued in the name of CPI(Mao group) dated 30th August, 1966, had been rejected by state leadership and quite a few parallel centres and newspapers started running rather regularly.

At Burdwan, the Andhra alternative was rejected. Almost on all the points of the official programme, a clear deference of opinion was expressed: (a) on the class analysis of the country, feudalism was no more considered a vestige or dragging burden to be got rid of, but was now regarded as the main feature of the Indian society; (b) from this it follows that the State power was supposed to be located in the hands of the compradore bourgeoisie and feudal land lords; (c) Agrarian revolution combined with militant working class activity should be the main form of struggle; (d) Greater emphasis was laid on the extra-parliamentary forms of struggles; (e) Any kind of cooperation with all shades of revisionists should be strictly avoided. This can be said to be just an Indian application of the Chinese general line of 1963. In this context it is

interesting to note that CPI(M) was holding on to the same general line at least on the international issues, and it still does so. CPI(M) in fact did not, or one should even say, could not come up openly against the application of this general line to the internal situation. But they continue to harp on 1951 statement of policy could be termed as their desperate measure like holding on to the last straw. Curiously Mohan Ram in both of his studies dismisses as a mere figleaf the call to take to parliamentarism. Manoranjan Mohanty does devote atleast two pages<sup>10</sup> but only to show some difference between the CPI(M) and the Maoists. But some inherent ambiguities in the document are ignored. A consistent scrutiny would show that it was more of an opportunist compromise heavily indulging in jargon-ridden and self contradictory semantic game.<sup>11</sup> But the programme of 1951 and especially the tactical line was no more taken seriously. Sunderiah's book<sup>12</sup> strangely reproduces certain passages omitted from the published version of the statements.

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10. Mohanty, Manoranjan, n.7, pp.68-70, 80, 82.

11. A large part of the document is reprinted now as an appendix attached to the CPI(M)'s programme.

12. Sundarayya, P., Telangana Struggle and its Lessons, (Calcutta, 1972).

Thus talk about the betraying of the Telengana struggle will be a self-defeating exercise unless one seriously analyses and then discards the 1951 document which had originated in Moscow. Curiously enough Manoranjan Mohanty's study is one such clear self-contradictory product of such an analytical exercises which did not take the origins of an error seriously enough. For instance, he notes "even today CPI(M) and M.L. have these ideological points in common (oppositions to the peaceful transition line)".<sup>13</sup> On the other hand Biplob Das Gupta mentions from within the 1967 document only one point that is the unity in action and mixes it with the characterisation of Soviet Union as social imperialist not being accepted by CPI(M), to jump at a conclusion that the CPI was from the beginning far from pro-Chinese. The debate on social imperialism did not figure in the document. It is of later origin in any case. He also cites CPI(M)'s position on the cult of personality and on Lin Piao being appointed 'heir apparent of Mao' (he takes of course some care to add the words "in later years") to clarify the distance between CPI(M) and China.<sup>14</sup>

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13. Mohanty, Manoranjan., n.7, p.72, 77 & 78.

14. Biplob Das Gupta, n.6, Chapter IV, p.25.

This is an excellent illustration of what Isaac Deustcher would have called "confusing the cadre of the revolution" for whatever reasons.

That both CPSU and CPC changed their attitudes to the Indian government more in keeping with their respective foreign policy interest than in their efforts to help the Indian communists is quite evident. The pre-1959 and post 1959 CPC's characterisation of the Nehru's government had much to do with the incidents in Tibet as well as on the border in the east. The Chinese attitude towards the Government of India in 1965 was also out of their own fears regarding probable U.S.-Soviet rivalry using the sub-continent to score a point against China. That in this period there is an obsession about an anti-China combine is too obvious. And this resulted in advocating Maoist path for all the newly liberated countries. This is the game of real politik being played too literally. It is bound to be misadventurism and realisation comes in always a little too late.

With the help of "solidarity committee for Naxal-beri peasants liberation struggle" formed in Cuntur by group of educated young men, the AICCCR succeeded in preventing any further cooperation between Sriekulam committee and T. Nagi Reddy. AICCCR's leaders visited

Guntur as well as Srikakulam. The leaders from Srikakulam fell into the hands of AICCCR not only due to their youthful militancy but also due to such contingent problems like T. Nogi Reddy's attitude to the Guntur committee. In this kind of an atmosphere mutual suspicions based entirely on subjective evaluation could be fostered in the young minds leading to the Srikakulam struggle. Even the experienced and senior colleagues of Charu Mazumdar were not entirely free from the subjectivism, as the confession or rather candid admissions made by those very same leaders at a very later stage, makes it clear.<sup>15</sup>

The CPC itself gave rather mixed blessings to the Indian manifestations of Maoism. Originally "Spring thunder" was confined to Naxalbari and preceded in the formation of AICCCR itself and after this struggle there was no peasant movement in West Bengal worth the name. Extending 'Naxalbari' type struggles into other areas was only a slogan with lot of emotional connotation but devoid of any political content. The Srikakulam struggle as we have seen in the previous chapter was an outcome of long drawn

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15. "Open letter to Party Comrades" written by six leaders from Jail. Asit Sen, An Approach to Naxalbari, n.10.

struggle. Some Telangana district of A.P. were also carrying on armed clashes. All these were independent of Naxalbari. Charu Mazumdar writing "On the one year of Naxalbari" June 1968 asserted that the struggle was not for lands or crops but for seizure of political power. But the CPC's views on the 'objectives' of Naxalbari types struggles' ran counter to Charu Mazumdar's. In an article published in Peking Review as late as January 31, 1969, the Chinese saw the fight against the brutal repression of fudal lords and state machinery and seizure of land as the content of such struggles. Political power was simply not mentioned at all. But CPC was clearly aware of the fact that there was a gulf of political understanding dividing the Telangana, and Naxalbari and also the latter was not a continuation of the former. But by its endorsement of the Naxalbari uprising, the "CPC was symbolically challenging the peaceful transitional line and underlying the compromise with opportunism implied communal participation in the parliamentary system under bourgeoisie constitution".<sup>16</sup>

Charu Mazumdar himself was not consistent and sometimes quite brazenly self-contradictory both in theory

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16. Mohan Ram, n.9, Chapter IV, pp.85-86.



and practice while calling it struggle for political power he waited for the period conducive to seizure of crops. Thus in the name of highest level of class struggle, Charu Mazumder was patently advocating and indulging in sheer economism as Mohan Ram rightly observed "from armed struggle for political power peasant movement during the expected period of upsurge was to be whittled down to the level of seizure of crops not even seizure of land."<sup>17</sup>

Main difference between T. Nagi Reddy and Charu Mazumder was on the nature of and aims of armed struggle. T. Nagi Reddy stood for seizure of land and armed resistance against landlords and police machinery. That is to say it was an armed self-defence making a very qualitative difference to the economic struggle. T. Nagi Reddy also had differences over legal forms of struggle.

According to the resolution on the party organisation, it was meant to be secret and underground party of a new style committed to evolving a mass line but it was formed in India's biggest metropolis and public rally.

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17. Ibid.

It was committed to mass line "on the basis of taking and giving to the masses" but it was formed from above by the AICCCR which was dominated by the leaders of one state West Bengal. It was meant to be an All India Party. The very decision to launch the party was taken at an AICCCR meeting on the very next day after the decision to disaffiliate T. Nagi Reddy was passed. Thus the totally limited character containing the dangerous seeds of bureaucratism had rather deep roots mobilising the masses on various questions including state power was supposed to be conducted secretly. Thus a mass line in utter isolation from the masses was evolved in secrecy verging on mysteriousness. Asit Sen, one of the close associates of Charu Mazumdar in his belatedly published self-critical study<sup>18</sup> tries to come to grips with some of these paradoxes. For example, even regarding the formation of the coordination committee he makes a point that this was based on the professed allegiance to Naxalbari movement. Except for the very few old experienced members, the rest were all young zealots who had no past but only a lot of verbal commitment to the cause of Naxalbari. Even this was confined to the seven

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18. Asit Sen, An Approach to Naxalbari, n. 10, Chapter IV.

states. The ideological-cum-political training required for participation in a revolutionary process was ignored and a hasty coordination of exuberant cadres was undertaken with formal allegiance as the sole criterion. It was only a physical coordination lacking in any politics all this could naturally lead to the dominance by few aggressively vocal individual leaders like Charu Mazumdar. Asit Sen cites an example of the great organisational loop-hole, while efforts to merge T. Nagi Reddy's group with the AICCCR were being made, Charu Mazumdar granted affiliation to Srikekulam and Guntur Committees by passing T. Nagi Reddy's group. As these two committees were manned by young and inexperienced cadres as compared to the experienced ones in T. Nagi Reddy's group, the failure of the movement was attributed to this.

That the Chinese supported the movement for their own reasons is quite clear. Their criticism came rather later. But an unconditional endorsement of Chinese internal and external policies was one of the distinguishing features of the CPI(ML), and it cost the entire movement a lot. There is to-date no explanation from any quarter as to why Chinese dropped Charu Mazumdar like a hot brick and even the dearth of the seriousness of the suggestions

they were supposed to have sent through Souren Bose. This precluded any possibilities of divergence between the self-proclaimed Indian revolutionary and CPC. Ironically it was China that had strongly criticised the CPSU for trying to become the centre of the World Revolutions. The Chinese denied the very notion of a Centre. While pleading for a coherent revolutionary line and unity of all revolutionary sections, they demanded completely equal status for each fraternal party, simultaneously allowing for such parties to work their revolutionary strategies independently. Fraternal suggestions and criticisms were welcome but not interference of any sort. The negotiation of all these within a few years turned out to be one of the worst weaknesses of Maoism the world over.

The CPI(M) leadership sought to establish Srikkulam as a liberated zone through guerrilla warfare. And then by converting Srikkulam into a base, they thought of extending the process of liberation to the other parts of the country, "encircling the cities" in a bid to seize state power. Cheru Mazumdar in his speeches and writings also emphasized guerrilla warfare through armed squad actions. But then his views were not consistent and also shifted

from one tactic to another as was evident in the course of the struggle. He was opposed to mass organisations and economic and legal struggles. Thus in mid-1969 mass-actions were replaced by guerrilla squad actions in Srikakulam following Charu Mazumdar's thought. This resulted in the party losing its extensive mass base. Its zone of influence was restricted to 200 small villages of Srikakulam agency only. It was reduced to terrorist activity due to lack of mass participation by early 1970s. Charu Mazumdar's theory of annihilation proved a costly affair. While the Srikakulam committee undertook certain annihilations as reaction to the severe oppressive methods by landlords, Charu Mazumdar theorised annihilations and held it as an essential precondition for the liquidation of feudal class. He said that once the landlords are killed "state will be deprived of ears and eyes".

But the course of events took the other way. When repression was let loose, people feared not only from the police but also from the guerrilla squads. Thus rejection of mass organisations, United Front, economic and legal struggles adversely affected the Srikakulam movement.

The party was built on the young and inexperienced people who came from petty bourgeoisie background. They had no revolutionary background so as to lead a revolutionary party. Recruitment to the party cadres was defective. People joined and left as they wished. No proper class consciousness was inculcated in the minds of the cadres. The organisation was quite loose without proper guiding principles. Proper military training and modern equipment was not given to the cadres. They heavily relied on conventional weapons like bows and arrows though sometimes countrymade pistols were used. Top ranking leaders too did not have modern ammunition. .303 gun was the only superior ammunition available for the revolutionaries.<sup>19</sup>

They failed to estimate the strength of the enemy, and the potentiality of the state power was grossly underestimated. The superior fire power of the police along with heavy repression on the people as such, forced the revolutionaries to retreat to the hilly areas of Parvathipuram around early seventies. Repression was such that tribals in the agency area refused to talk with any strangers even today.<sup>20</sup>

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19. Information based on interview.

20. Information based on interview.

The answers given to questions by the respondents were that police repression was the main cause for the failure of the movement.

Torture of cadres who were caught by the police unravelled many secrets of revolutionaries. Most of the leaders were killed due to leakage of hideouts to the police who used to cordon off the entire hideout preventing arms and food supplies.<sup>21</sup> Thus there was no thorough and planned preparation for the movement of the revolution for a prolonged fight.

The tribals were mobilised by mainly playing on their primitive customs and rigid sentiments without giving them proper kind of class analyses. The tribals were made to realise that the forests and lands belonged to them since they are girijans and that they can be restored from the "outsiders" only by this kind of movement. Some of the customs of these tribals also helped the revolutionary leaders in their efforts, for instance, swearing secrecy in the name of waters which was considered Goddess (Gangamma) etc. As they were mobilised on the question of land, the movement centred around local problems like tribals versus non-tribals. Also, the government could win over the minds of many

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21. Information based on interview.

people by distributing lands amongst the tribals. It also gave room for conflicts among the tribals themselves which is true even today.<sup>22</sup> Thus by keeping the tribals ignorant of the United Front tactics as well as of an understanding of the communist movement, the revolutionary leaders caused a set back to the movement.

The analysis of the main contradiction between feudalism and peasantry was totally wrong since the mode of production in the area was tribal which had obviously not reached the level of feudalism, leave alone, mercantile capitalism. Hence, their categorisation of landlords in the agency area was confined to petty merchants, petty vendors, etc., who hailed from plain areas with peasant background. Few people had hundreds of acres of land. But majority of the people who were identified as the class enemies were petty merchants and petty vendors. Most of the people killed as police informants were from middle and poor peasant background.

Sriekulam movement as a whole revolved round one personality that was V. Satyanarayana. His death greatly demoralised the party ranks, who considered him almighty, who could steer the movement in the right direction. By

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22. Information based on interview.



early 70s, the movements' connection between Porvathipuram agency and plains was cut off. Divisions within CPI(ML) began to have its repercussions on the Srikakulam movement. As a result of heavy losses, rethinking started among some of the leaders about the tactics. Divisions centred around "annihilation line" and "mass organisations" finally leading to a split into pro-Cheru Mezunder and anti-Cheru Mezunder with Srikakulam district CPI(ML) finally joining the Szya Narayana Singh CPI(ML) in 1973.

Thus Srikakulam movement which was started in 1968 crumbled under its own heavy weight of theoretical misguidance and tactical errors by 1972.

## CONCLUSIONS

## CHAPTER - VI

### CONCLUSIONS

An attempt has been made in the present study to examine some aspects of the role of caste in a southern district within the framework of parliamentary democracy in India. We have also tried to assess as to how class analysis had been applied by the revolutionary Marxists in Erikkulam district.

Caste system as a political phenomenon, as different from its ritualistic aspects, plays a significant role in the working of parliamentary democratic system in India. It is being reinforced in its political role due to the parliamentary electoral system and continues to survive with vigour. The very selection of the candidates of political parties are being made keeping in view the major caste composition in a constituency. Along with other factors, caste background of the candidates is helping candidates to win the elections. This is evident from our study as well (Chapter III). In most of the constituencies, candidates were chosen from the dominant caste in their respective areas. In 1967 elections, the Swatantra

party could win 10 seats in the district because it could successfully catch most of the backward castes' votes in these constituencies. Caste was also one of the key factors (apart from money, factionalism and personal influence) responsible for the success of 5 independent candidates in the 1967 elections. In 1972 elections, Mrs. Gandhi's Congress party was able to get 12 seats out of the 19 it contested. Mrs. Gandhi's charisma and the "Garibi Hatao" slogan were the main causes. But the strength of independents (7) and their victory could be attributed essentially to the factor of caste playing a prominent role coupled with free flow of money and factional politics within the congress party.

The Peoples Representation Act explicitly prohibits "the candidate or his electoral agent to vote or to refrain from voting for any reasons on grounds of religion, caste, community or language". But, not only the candidates, but also the parties are following this injunction, more in its observance. "Why don't you vote this candidate, he is our man" would be one of the important campaign tactics in the elections. If one goes strictly by law, almost all the candidates and parties will be liable for punishment, due to their

open infringement of the existing electoral rules and procedures. Srikakulam district, not being an exception, the phenomenon is indeed more glaring and blatantly obvious there. As we have already mentioned, people there view the district politics in terms of competition among Kapu, Kalinga and Vellamas.

Loyalties to political leaders are most on caste basis, though there are some instances where people of different castes join some particular leader's camp for either personal considerations or due to coincidence of other kinds of interests. The politics of leaders like V. Krishna Murthy Naidu, G. Sreeramulu Naidu, B. Rajagopal Rao, L. Lakshman Das substantiate this hypothesis. In the first instance, G. Sreeramulu Naidu was brought into the district level politics with the support of V. Krishnamurthy Naidu to counter B. Rajagopala Rao in the district. But both of them could not pull on for too long. G. Sreeramulu Naidu turned against V. Krishnamurthy Naidu very soon and used his influence to get V. Krishna Murthy Naidu defeated in 1967 elections. V. Krishna Murthy Naidu and G. Sreeramulu Naidu belong to different castes. But though G. Sreeramulu Naidu and L. Lakshman Das belong to the same caste, they are at loggerheads. The latter was defeated by the former using his personal influence. All these leaders belong

to Congress party which is faction ridden along various lines of rivalry, caste being one of them. These leaders are for most of the time compete among themselves though they sometimes form alliances when the interests happen to coincide. But whenever a person gets a chance to outbeat the other, they break relations. G. Lachanna is supposed to be free from all this caste hang-ups. He seeks to establish his main base among the backward castes. Recently he organised the Backward Castes state conference in Hyderabad.

The class-oriented politics in Srikakulam, has been considerably influenced by the 'ideas of Mao-Tse tung'. The Srikakulam radical movement reached its penultimate stage by 1967-68 as we have already noted in Chapter-IV. The immediate split within the CPI(M) in 1967 led the Srikakulam district revolutionaries, who broke away from CPI(M) to follow an independent path. As we have mentioned in Chapter-V, it took an independent path notwithstanding the state CPI(M) dissident leaders led by T. Nagi Reddy joined AICCCR, it followed its own policy undermining the state leadership led by T. Nagi Reddy. The movement of Srikakulam as we have pointed out is independent of Naxalbari. It was a long drawn struggle led by V. Satyanarayana in the beginning and later whenever the leadership switched parties in the splits it went

along with those leaders. Srikakulam was described as the "Yenam of India". Building "more and more Srikakulams" was the slogan by Charu Mazumdar. Chinese compliment to Srikakulam ran like this: "Like a beacon of light, the red revolutionary area which has come into being in Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh is shining brightly on the woe stricken land of India". Thus Srikakulam was considered as the base area from which the liberation of India could be achieved by 'encircling the cities from countryside'. Suffice it to note that wrong characterisation of society was evidently proved. Sharpening of the contradiction between feudalism and the mass of people was a totally unfounded assumption. The Srikakulam area in which this radical movement took place was a tribal area. The introduction of the monetary economy had disrupted the tribal way of life, but instead of going into mercantile capitalism, it got stultified (due to lack of any policy by the government) resulting in the deterioration of the material conditions of the tribal inhabitants. No proper class consciousness was inculcated. Instead, they were organised on local problems that readily appealed to the tribal consciousness. Annihilation cost them heavily and most of the leaders realised it only after suffering heavy casualties on the part of both the leaders and the cadres. Obsession

with strategy and tactics and notions like 'warfare through warfare' would not simply drive any theory but roundly end up in militarism. That is why after all, annihilation came up not as a natural ongoing revolutionary process but as a sporadic abortive aimless activity turned into a tactic and which developed as a method of guerrilla warfare, very soon replaced finally all theory of revolution itself. They underestimated the state power to the point of treating it as a 'paper tiger' - a strange mix of Right Revisionism and Left Adventurism. But as Lenin had astutely cautioned these trends are just like twins cropping up in a revolutionary movement from time to time. As we have mentioned in the Chapter-V, it is logical that the movement which was led by a leadership which was confused and with no definite theoretical and ideological background would inevitably collapse. It was proved completely in the case of the failure of the Srikakulam radical movement.

Thus one might even add that the class analysis as applied to Srikakulam by certain theoreticians is quite inapt and approximate. Hence one might conclude that neither the duplication of Russian model nor the Chinese model of revolution is the main problem. The



main problem is the proper assessment of Marxism itself in its application to concrete situations in diverse colonial and ex-colonial situations in Asia, Africa and Latin America. There is also an urgent and profound need for the re-evaluation of the framework of class analysis as a dependable basis for a meaningful analyses.

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