

**LEADERSHIP, FACTION AND RISE OF RADICALISM
IN SRIKAKULAM DISTRICT (A.P.)—
A STUDY OF CONGRESS POLITICS: 1952-72**

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

by

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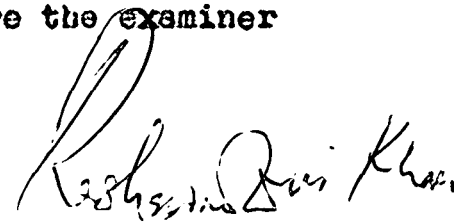
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I certify that the dissertation entitled "Leadership, Faction and Rise of Radicalism in Srikakulam District (A.P.) - A Study of Congress Politics : 1952-72", submitted by Miss Tripurana Venkata Ratnam, in partial fulfilment of the Degree of Master of Philosophy of the University, is to the best of my knowledge, is original work and has not been submitted so far, in part or full for any other degree or diploma of any other University and may be placed before the examiner for evaluation.



(Rasheeduddin Khan)

Chairman & Supervisor

CONTENTS

	<u>Pages</u>
Preface	1
Abbreviations	11
Introduction	1-11
CHAPTER - I	
PROFILE AND POLITICS OF THE SRIKAKULAM DISTRICT	12-48
CHAPTER - II	
PARTY SYSTEM AND ELECTIONS	49-104
CHAPTER - III	
FACTIONAL POLITICS AND THE LEADERSHIP PATTERN OF THE CONGRESS PARTY	105-140
CHAPTER - IV	
RISE OF RADICALISM IN THE DISTRICT	141-174
CHAPTER - V	
CONCLUSIONS	175-186
Bibliography	187-202

PREFACE

The present study seeks to reveal certain dimensions of the Indian political system and the functioning of the party at the local level, based on the method of participant-observation. These are more in the nature of reflection on the working of the Congress party, its leadership and factions at the district politics. It is to be noted that the available studies on the Congress party politics at the micro-level are very few and this led to do research on "Leadership, Faction and Rise of Radicalism in Srikakulam District (A.P.) - A Study of Congress Politics : 1952-'72".

It is not an easy task to acknowledge all the help which one receives in any research assignment. But in the first place, I owe my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Rasheeduddin Khan, who greatly inspired me to take up this topic. He extended his valuable guidance and advice with patience at all times and without whose help it would have been impossible to reach this stage.

It is my privilege to express my appreciation to Professor K. Seshadri whose friendly advice has been a constant source of strength. It is my pleasure to thank Professor C.P. Bhambhri for the encouragement he has offered me in the completion of the work. Last but not the least, is my thanks to all the friends who had shared their intellect in different stages to complete the project.

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(I.V. RATNAM)

ABBREVIATIONS

- AICC** - All India Congress Committee
- AICCCR** - All-India Coordinating Committee of Communist Revolutionaries
- APCC** - Andhra Provincial Congress Committee
Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee
- CFC** - Central Election Committee
- CLP** - Congress Legislative Party
- CM** - Chief Minister
- CPB** - Congress Parliamentary Board
- CPI** - Communist Party of India (Pre-1964)
- CPI(M)** - Communist Party of India (Marxist)
- CPI(ML)** - Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)
- KLP** - Krishikar Lok Party
- KMPP** - Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party
- MLA** - Member of Legislative Assembly
- MP** - Member of Parliament
- PCC** - Pradesh Congress Committee
- PSP** - Praja Socialist Party
- UCF** - United Congress Front
- UDF** - United Democratic Front
- UF** - United Front

INTRODUCTION

(a) The Relevance of the Theme : Some Considerations

Social scientists in India have paid scant attention to the problems of party politics at a very significant micro-level, namely the district level, where identities of caste, religion and region play a dominant role that has a direct bearing on the shaping of national and state politics. In liberal democracies parties are organised to win elections and capture power, and also to shape and fashion the political attitudes and behaviour patterns of the people as the main actors in the political system. Forging an organisational structure, raising funds, recruiting cadres, electing or selecting leaders and fashioning an ideological frame of reference are some of the important ingredients with which a political party in a country like India, committed to the democratic participatory framework, is basically concerned with. The forces working behind the Indian federal polity and the interaction between politics, economic forces and social pressures that make and unmake party politics in India cannot be studied unless we have in-depth knowledge of these forces and pressures working at each level of relevance, but more so at the grass-root level. That is the main reason why the present study focuses attention on the party politics in Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh, which in independent India has been an outstanding example of interplay of various forces and factors.

Parties are instruments of collective human action in the modernizing process of a nation or a country. According to James Walch, "parties are one of the foremost signs of 'modernity' in a political system."¹ In any modern liberal democracy, parties play a special role in mobilising people's participation in politics. James Walch holds the view that political parties perform three important functions namely, generating support for a regime, mobilising and structuring public opinion and recruiting future leaders. H. Duverger holds a different view. He says, "a party is not a community but a collection of communities, a union of small groups dispersed throughout the country (branches, caucuses, local associations, etc.) and linked by co-ordination institutions."² Each political party has its own structure which bears little resemblance to that of other parties. In India the origin of organised political parties in the modern sense of the word, dates back to 1885, when the Indian National Congress was founded.

This study focuses attention on the politics of the Congress party in Srikakulam district during the period 1952 to 1972. The history of the Congress in the pre-independence days, has been in fact, the history of India's national struggle for freedom. To quote B. Pattabhi Seetharamayya, "it was not merely the political forces and the sense of political subjection that gave birth to the Congress. The Congress doubtless had the political objective, but it also was the organ and exponent of a movement of national renaissance."³ The Congress before 1947

was an anti-imperialist mass movement aimed at achieving independence for the country. After independence, when Congress became the ruling party, it transformed itself to the new role, i.e., of the dominant party, in the democratic competing-party system. The dominant one-party pattern under the hegemony of the Congress lasted for the first three decades of independence 1947-77. This is why, a careful in-depth study of such a dominant party at the district level would help to throw some light on aspects like leadership-pattern, factionalism, issue-orientation and behaviour pattern at the election-time, etc.

Neumann enumerates the primary functions of political parties in a democracy.⁴ One of the functions, according to him, is to organise the chaotic public will. Political parties represent social interest groups, bridging the gap between the individual and the community. Secondly, every party has to present to the individual voter and to his powerful special interest-groups a picture of the community as an entity. It educates the private citizen to political responsibility. Thirdly, political parties represent the connecting link between government and public opinion. The selection of leaders is cited as the fourth function of the political parties. These four main functions of political parties, as mentioned by Neumann, are clearly applicable to the study of the Congress party.

The working of the Congress party in the context of these functions in a backward district like Srikakulam needs to be amplified. According to Stanley A. Kochanek, "the Indian

National Congress has been one of the most successful of the Nationalist movements of Asia and Africa and yet has received surprisingly little attention from scholars.⁵ An effective organisation at the national level can be built up with the district as the centre. Hence, party politics at the district level is a matter of basic importance for a researcher of the Indian political scene.

In the present study Srikakulam district in Andhra Pradesh has been taken as the focus of analysis for the undertaking of certain aspects of the politics of the Congress party at the grass-root level. This would help to understand the party building process and its various dimensions at the state and the national levels. The processes of formation of political parties, particularly the Congress party and its techniques to mobilise the illiterate, rural based and economically backward population for political action, their influence on the society at large and the impact of political developments in post-independent phase have not been considered so far for intensive investigations by researchers. It may be noted here that the history of Andhra Pradesh, like that of any society, has been the history of class-struggles. A significant feature of Srikakulam district is the history of exploitation and atrocities on Harijans and Girijans, that had not diminished after independence. These factors among others led to the advent of radicalism in the area under study. Apart from studies which focus attention on the phenomenon of Tribal revolts and Naxalite

politics there is hardly any other work available that seeks to analyse the dimensions of party politics in the Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh.

The main idea of the present study is that major changes in factions, party organisation, implementation of party programmes, pattern of recruitment and techniques were bound to affect the performance of the major national party, i.e., the Congress at the district level. Hence, it was necessary to investigate in some detail the character of the social system and interaction of caste, communal and factional loyalties. It is quite difficult to analyse the phenomenon of conflicts and factions affecting party politics in the district, without putting it in proper socio-economic context.

(b) Hypotheses

In order to examine the nature of politics at the district level, six major hypotheses have been formulated for investigation:

- (1) Affiliations of the leaders to factional groups are determined by four basic factors - caste loyalties, greed for power, opportunity for promoting business interests, and acquiring and maintaining high social and political status;
- (2) Factional pulls in the Congress are essentially reflective of caste affiliations.

- (3) Factions are the real units of political action both within and outside the Congress party organisation;
- (4) Instability of the Congress party at the district level has been due to conflict between leaders whose caste-loyalties were stronger than party loyalties;
- (5) Politics at the district level is influenced less of ideology and idealism and more of power, personal and caste consideration; hence both opportunism and populism gets in-built in the pursuit of electoral politics, legislative politics and party politics;
- (6) The rise of radicalism (Naxalism in particular) in Srikakulam is the result of the failure of the Congress party to win over the have-not strata - the Girijans and the Harijans.

(c) Method and Sources

The focus of the study is the district Congress party as the local unit. During the three months in which field research was conducted for this study, attempt was made to study the papers and documents available in the district Congress organisation, and to conduct formal interviews and in-formal meetings with few important personalities of the Congress party, including freedom fighters, Members of Parliament and Members of the State Legislature, as well as persons engaged in party's organisational work, including the Youth Congress, and certain district officials. Since this is not meant to be an exhaustive study but a probing preliminary exercise it was decided in the

very beginning not to select statistically typical units of the party organisation. Attending the Congress party meetings formed a part of the field programme. The main concern was to examine as a participant-observer how the Congress party at the district level operated in the midst of political instability mostly caused by the fight between factional groups.

(d) Area of Investigations

Research on this problem is largely focused on the peculiar conditions obtaining in the Srikakulam district particularly with regard to factional politics in the Congress party. In order to comprehend the theme in the proper setting, it was necessary to examine the socio-economic conditions, major political developments in the district during the pre-independence period, the impact of political change in the country after independence on the leadership pattern of the district, as also the pattern of changing election results from 1952-1972.

However, greater attention has been paid to the study of the party system in the district, the way in which the masses extend their support to factional groups and to the party organisations and the relationship of district leaders with the State and national leaders, as well as the impact of all this on the electoral politics. The way in which the masses followed the leaders during the struggle for independence and the manner in which they have followed them when they changed their loyalty

to various parties in the post-independent era have also been taken up for investigation.

Attempt is also made to study the Congress party's struggle for political power through local institutions like Panchayats, Samithis and Zilla Parishads. Emergence of some of the local politicians bereft of any political ideology but actuated by personal, communal and caste considerations on monetary factors, has also been studied. The conditions under which social cleavages at the grass-root level occur and reflect on factional politics, and also the factors external to the area that determine and influence the organisation are some of the other aspects investigated here. A study like this cannot be completed without looking into the socio-economic and educational background of the leaders involved in the formation and continuance of the factions.

The period 1952-1972 for this study has been chosen because it covers the two decades from the First General Elections of 1952 to the State Assembly Elections of 1972. During the period of twenty years a lot of changes have taken place in the political situation of the district. Apart from the Congress, many other parties have emerged on the scene, like the Praja Party, the Krishikar Lok Party, the Socialist Party, the Swatantra Party, the CPI and the CPI(M). Their political alignments and activities in the district require a close study.

(e) Conceptual Framework

The conceptual image adopted for this study has three dimensions - "contextual", "structural" and "operative". The contextual dimension has a deterministic impact on the structural and operative aspects of a political system which in its turn tends to influence and modify the context itself. Caste which is an important contextual determinant of State politics in India has been taken as an important variable for exploring various regional and local dimensions of party politics in Srikakulam district. Economic development which is another crucial element in the contextual dimension is also briefly sketched. Human complex, the level of education and urbanization are some of the other important factors in the contextual dimension. The role of education in articulation of people, in making them politically conscious of their interests and in converting them into a potential pressure group are significant areas of political analysis in the context of politics of a district.

Under structural dimension, the structure of the party and the process of interaction between democracy and bureaucracy, between party politics in the district and administration are studied. One party dominance and the role of opposition in party building are matters that are highlighted. In the operative dimension, some important aspects like leadership pattern, political alignments, electoral pacts for nominations of candidates and patterns of election strategy and campaigning, demands and

pressures are studied.

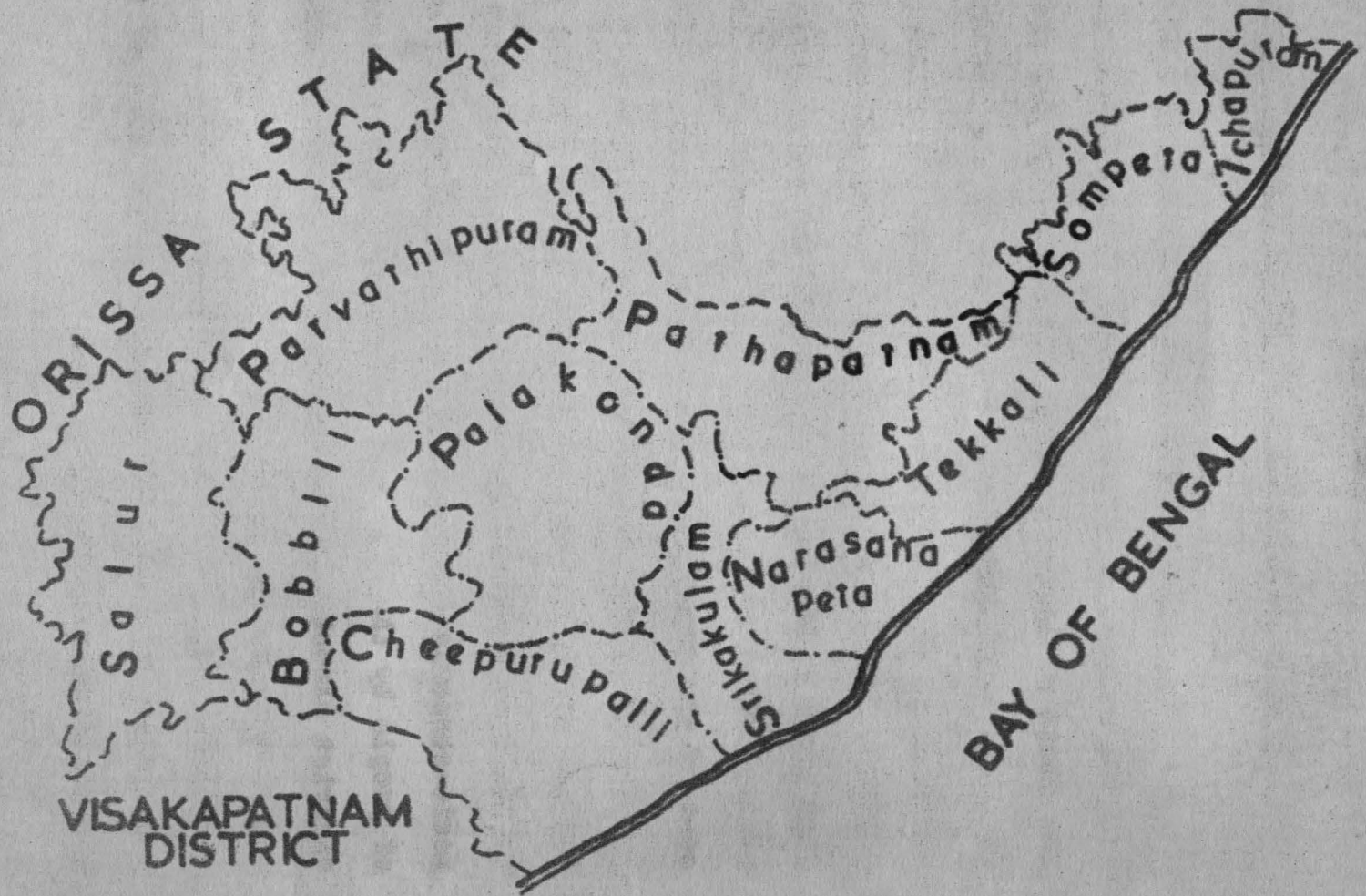
The dissertation titled, "Leadership, Faction and Rise of Radicalism in Srikakulam District (A.P.) - A Study of Congress Politics: 1952-72" consists of five chapters including conclusions. The first chapter presents the profile and political background of the Srikakulam district. The second chapter - party system and elections is concerned with the Congress party building and the party's performance in the General Elections. Factionalism and the leadership of the Congress in the district are investigated in the third chapter. The reasons for the rise of radicalism in the agency area is the main issue of the fourth chapter and the fifth chapter covers conclusions.

(f) Limitations

This study has been undertaken despite severe limitations, in order to stimulate more rigorous and systematic studies. Within the requirements of an M.Phil dissertation, attempt has been made to at least highlight certain major aspects of the political problems at the district level. Two grave limitations have been lack of sufficient published data, and lack of a model of study on the Srikakulam district. The District Congress Committee and the Congress Party office at the State level do not maintain sufficient records which could be helpful in such a research work. Hence, one had to largely depend on formal interviews and informal meetings and on available party publications, and newspaper reportings. In spite of

it, an attempt has been made to make the study as exploratory as possible, as a first level exercise for deeper probing by more competent scholars.

SRIKAKULAM DISTRICT MAP



Source: Executive Engineer, Panchayat Raj, Srikakulam (A.P.)

CHAPTER I

PROFILE AND POLITICS OF THE SRIKAKULAM DISTRICT

Srikakulam district has an area of 3,901 square miles (10,104 sq.kms.). It is situated in the northern-most part of the State of Andhra Pradesh. The district was established in the year 1950 having been carved out of the Visakhapatnam district of the old Madras Presidency. According to the census of 1971, Srikakulam district had a total population 25,89,991 that means a density of 266 people per square mile, in a predominantly tribal and rural region of the country. About 10.65 per cent of the population, i.e., 2,75,720 persons live in the towns, and the remaining persons, i.e., 23,14,271 live in the jungles and the villages. There are only 16 towns in the district. It is the most backward district on practically every count of socio-economic development. The exploitation of the poor mass of people by the rich and influential upper classes has made the district almost a feudal stronghold. Various forms of oppression resorted to by the ruling class on the impoverished common men made party politics in the area inevitably more radical as a consequence of political education in the wake of the working of the democratic electoral system.

This area was a part of the Kutubshahi Sultanate of Telang-Andhra, with its capital at Golconda (Hyderabad) in the 15th and 16th century. Later, briefly it came under the control of the Moghuls under Aurangzeb (d.1707) and then of the Nizams

of Hyderabad, until it was ceded to the British East India Company, and became part of the Madras Presidency. The chief officer under the Nawabs of Golconda was the 'Faujdar' of Chicacole who was incharge of Ganjam and Visakhapatnam areas. He had governed through the local chiefs or the Zamindars to whom the collection of revenue from various divisions was delegated on a commission of 10 per cent.⁶ Before the British rule most of the areas of the present district remained under the control of the Nawabs. There is a story regarding the district's present name. The word 'Srikakulam' is derived from 'Sikha' and 'Khol' which means 'seal' and 'opening', respectively. As this place had been the centre for the collection of revenue, where seals were affixed and opened, they had named it 'Sikkhol' which got anglicised into 'Chicacole' under the British rule. After India became independent the word was officially changed to 'Srikakulam', a Telugu word.

The district lies between 18°- 20' and 19°- 10' northern latitude and 83°-5' and 84°- 50' eastern latitude. It is bounded in the north and west by the State of Orissa, in the east by the Bay of Bengal, and in the south by the Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh. The district lies elongated from north-west to south-east and is narrow in its northern-most part.

The district now consists of three revenue divisions - Srikakulam, Tekkali and Parvathipuram and eleven taluks namely, (1) Ichapuram, (2) Sompeta, (3) Tekkali, (4) Pathapatnam,

(5) Narasannapeta, (6) Srikakulam, (7) Cheepurupalli, (8) Palakonda, (9) Parvathipuram, (10) Bobbili, and (11) Salur. The first four taluks are in Tekkali division, five to seven in Srikakulam division and eight to eleven in Parvathipuram division.

The district may be roughly divided into two geographical divisions, namely, (1) the hilly region and (2) the plains. The hilly region consists of parts of Palakonda, Parvathipuram and Salur taluks. The hilly areas of the above taluks are known as agency tracts. The district has a landscape with hills, rivers, plains, forests, tanks, large coconut tops and 120 mile long sea coast.

The people are socially and economically backward. Lack of voluntary agencies to impart education and the negligence of the government to spread literacy among all sections of the people are among the factors responsible for educational backwardness. Education of women is almost totally neglected. Compared to other districts in Andhra Pradesh, Srikakulam is far behind in education. The following table shows the literate population in the district according to the latest 1971 census.

TABLE I
LITERATE POPULATION - SRIKAKULAM DISTRICT⁷

No. of Literates			% to total population of the category		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
3,53,935	1,25,645	6,79,580	27.67	9.58	18.52

Social Structure

The major castes in Srikakulam district are Kalinga (Kinthali), Kapu (Thurupu), Velama,⁸ Brahmin, Vaisya, Kshatriya, Telaga, Sristakaranam, Burugam Kalinga, Sale, Devanga, Srisayna, Kammari, Kummari, Pondari, Telaka, Chakali, Agnikulakshatriya, etc. Of them 90% constitute backward classes whose main occupation is agriculture. The remaining 10% are comparatively better off, they include the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas. Many castes are in the list of forward communities though they cannot claim a better life than most of the backward communities.

Divorce is common and re-marriage is permissible among the women of the backward caste. Polygamy is also prevalent. Both men and women of these castes are engaged in manual labour, mostly on the farms. As the economic conditions are very poor, their cultural level is very low. Most of the women folk keep the upper part of their body uncovered. Men also wear just loin-cloth to cover their bodies. The younger generation have, however, abandoned this primitive practice. Most women in this area smoke locally made cheroot (cigars) even putting the burning end in mouth. Among the backward castes, the 'Kinthali Kalinga' is confined only to the Srikakulam district and, in spite of it, this caste has produced a number of outstanding personalities in various walks of life including politics and bureaucracy.⁹

Fisher Folk

Fishermen form an important section of the population of the district and they live in the coastal area stretching for over 120 Kms. in length. One group of fishermen are engaged in inland-fishing and the other group in sea-fishing. Among the fishermen, there are a number of sub-castes such as Bestha, Meela, Jalari, Kandriga, Vadabaliya, Neyyala, Chopala, etc. Catamarans are used for sea-fishing. Mechanised boats are not very much in use by them since they cannot afford to invest that much money. Normally, the female folk of the community sell fish in the market. Since boys of this community from the age of eight onwards accompany their elders for fishing, schooling among the children of the fishermen is very negligible.

Almost all fishermen in the coastal belt live in thatched houses made of palmyra leaves or paddy straw. Natural calamities such as fire, cyclone, etc. add to economic poverty of these people. There are about 103 villages throughout the coastal belt from Donipet of Ranasthalam Samithi to Donkur in Ichapuram Samithi.

Recently export market for prawns has given a good opportunity to the fishermen to earn more. Due to poverty, the fishermen very often borrow money. The agencies which advance money to the fishermen stipulate that the fishermen should sell their entire catch to them only at the pre-fixed price, which is far less than the market price. Thus the labour of the fishermen

gets exploited by these middlemen and the former get only $\frac{1}{4}$ of the market price. Thus the fisher folk live in perpetual poverty and struggle hard to get their livelihood out of manual labour. This indicates why among the fishermen addition in a family is most welcome. It also indicates why the schooling is less among the children of that community. The government of Andhra Pradesh, through the Department of Fisheries, has taken up several schemes to ameliorate the conditions of the fishermen and to eliminate the middlemen. But its working shows that the corporation relegates its social responsibility to a secondary position and its primary function has become to earn more profit out of the fishing industry.

Harijans (Scheduled Caste)

Untouchability and unapproachability have been the characteristic features of Telugu society in Srikakulam district. The rigid caste rules and the social behaviour of the people not only reflect the politics but also manifest in and adversely affect the economic development of the area under study. Caste oppression and caste conflict is part of the social life of the district. Mobility among the people in general, and among the lower castes, in particular, is very low. Inequality in economic conditions and social divisions have contributed to the emergence of the radical movement in the district. Even after independence, the social and economic conditions of Harijans have not significantly improved. Harijans who number according to the 1971

census, 2,38,489 out of a total population of 25,89,991¹⁰ (i.e. about 9%) in the district are still considered as inferior in status by the upper classes.

Since 1947 both the Central and State governments have been trying schemes for the uplift of the Harijans by extending monetary aid but unfortunately the Scheduled Castes do not receive that help in full measure. It is mostly because of the failure of the implementation machinery and the infiltration and influence of the vested interests. As the literacy level among the Harijans continues to be insignificant, they are not fully conscious of their rights and civil liberties and they are unable to question and demand implementation of the schemes sanctioned by the government. As a consequence, the district has not witnessed any genuine improvement in the socio-economic conditions of Scheduled Castes. It is regrettable that even today untouchability is being practised in many of the villages.¹¹ The untouchability Act remains on the Statute Book, only in name.

The main occupation of the Harijans in the area is agriculture labour and for this they have been getting low wages. Due to the rise in the cost of living they can hardly save anything out of their earnings. The Harijans are afflicted with superstitions. A good number of Harijans have adopted Christianity. However of late, attempts by various social organisations and by the government, is beginning to show some results. Gradually the Harijans are sending their children to schools,

even to urban areas. Their turn out in elections has also increased considerably.

Recently, the State government started the scheme of allotting banjara lands to the landless Harijans and sanctioning houses to the poor and needy among them. There are some practical difficulties in getting possession of land assigned to the Harijans. The governmental authorities allot the plot without verification of occupation by anyone in the area concerned on the basis of their records, found as 'banjara' or 'peramboku' lands.¹² Since the authorities assign the lands mostly in tank beds or those under dispute there is an inbuilt situation of conflict between the Harijans and the landlords who own adjoining lands. Unfortunately disputes of this nature are settled mostly in favour of the landlords. Secondly, the Harijans, due to their economic backwardness are not in a position to maintain the lands assigned to them. The influential ryots cultivate the land under their possession and enjoy the benefits of the crops even though the land may be in the name of a Harijan. The same Harijan who owns the land is treated as a farm servant in his own land.

The extent of the land assigned to them may not exceed an acre or even less and yet for its maintenance they have to undergo a number of legal and practical difficulties. The banks which are supposed to help the poor and needy for their economic development, due to their own regulations, rarely come forward to help them by sanctioning loans without proper guarantee or

security. Quite naturally, the Harijans may not be able to provide such security. The State government has a number of schemes to provide housing to Harijans and the occupant has to repay the cost in instalments. As there is no proper check over the material and the work done, most houses get damaged. Owing to this factor, the Harijans most often refuse to occupy the new houses. Thus, the houses become dilapidated without occupation which causes a great loss to the exchequer. In the end, most of the schemes either get sabotaged or if implemented, do not serve the real purpose.

The steps taken by the government for the Harijan uplift both at the Centre and the States have many pitfalls, and certainly do not reflect a progressive outlook. For instance, the government constructs colonies and dig wells for the welfare of the Harijans separately from the others instead of mixing them with the rest of the society. This is like the apartheid policy in South Africa. Naturally separate Harijan 'ghettos' get formed. The very philosophy of the government on this issue is basically wrong. Surprisingly even the Harijan leaders who ought to have opposed and criticised such a scheme of things on the contrary support the programme to win government favour. Looking at such a development one can say that elites, whatever the community they may belong to, have a propensity to join with the elitist group of advanced communities. Unless the integration of the Harijans with the other Caste Hindus is pushed through in all possible ways, the problem of untouchability will

remain for a long time in the society, particularly in the rural areas as a most negative feature.

Girians (Scheduled Tribes)

According to the census of 1971, the Scheduled Tribes in the district number 2,12,459.¹³ They live in the hilly regions known as agency tracts which consist of Palakonda, Parvathipuram and Salur Taluks. A few of them can be found in the remaining Taluks also. There are some sub-sects in the tribes such as Savara, Jathapu and Kondadora and a few other sects. Besides, there are nomadic tribes in the plain areas. Though they come under the category of Scheduled Tribes, they are settled down in the plain areas mixing with the rest of the society. Table II shows the taluk-wise distribution of the population of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes according to the census of 1971.

TABLE II
SRIKAKULAM DISTRICT (TALUK-WISE)¹⁴

Name of the Taluk	1971 Census population			Percentage of	
	Total	S. Cs.	S. Ts.	S. Cs.	S. Ts.
1. Sompeta	1,60,754	8,979	9,060	5.59	5.64
2. Tekkali	2,12,037	17,311	6,369	8.16	3.00
3. Pathapatnam	2,61,577	33,293	44,812	12.73	17.13
4. Ichapuram(I.S.T.)	99,199	2,831	7,722	2.85	1.74
5. Narasannapeta	1,80,963	11,910	686	6.58	0.38
6. Srikakulam	2,57,281	19,774	669	7.68	0.26
7. Cheepurupalli	3,61,292	37,145	3,102	10.28	0.86
8. Palakonda	3,65,052	41,263	29,768	11.30	8.15
9. Parvathipuram	2,50,549	21,494	72,501	8.58	28.94
10. Bobbili	2,85,707	29,099	5,937	10.33	2.11
11. Salur	1,59,610	15,392	37,833	9.64	23.70
Total:	25,94,021	238,491	212,459	9.21	8.20



According to census data, in Srikakulam taluk, Scheduled Castes constituted 7.68% in 1971 whereas 0.26% was the estimate of Scheduled Tribes. In the taluks of Salur, Parvathipuram and Pathapatnam, Scheduled Tribes are more in number than the Scheduled Castes. The total population of this district during this period was 25,94,021 out of which the Scheduled Tribes alone constituted 4,50,950.

The tribal people who were settled in the hilly areas stand on a separate footing. They live mainly on cultivation and it can be called 'Podu Cultivation',¹⁵ which is very often termed as terrace cultivation or shifting cultivation. They sow the seeds of jowar, redgram, etc. In some places they raise some small plantain trees and grow seasonable vegetables. They sell their forest produce and purchase essential commodities like kerosene, salt, oil, etc., from the market.

As the social customs of the Scheduled Tribes are different from others and a peculiar feature is that their villages are far off from one another. A village has 50 to 70 houses. Polygamy is permissible among the Girijans but not polyandry among the women. Sentimental people as they are, these Girijans are not only God fearing but also believe in superstitions. A primitive sort of nature worship prevails among the tribes such as the worship of stones, trees and pots with different marks and colours.¹⁶

The Girijans do not depend on others for their livelihood. It is rare that one finds a beggar among them and they do all sorts of labour, like cultivation of land,¹⁷ felling of trees for fuel and selling the produce in the plains.

Though there are some schools in the agency areas, these tribal people do not send their children to the schools. Some of the teachers appointed in these schools come from far off places. Neither there has been any inclination on the part of the teachers to induce the children in this community to education, nor the parents are convinced of the necessity of sending their wards to schools. As the Girijans mainly depend on their manual labour, the elders expect their children to help them in work instead of sending them to the schools. Therefore, the literacy rate among the Girijans is quite insignificant.¹⁸

The tribal areas have been neglected for generations and even after independence the government did not make adequate efforts to improve their socio-economic conditions. Exploitation of the tribals takes various forms. Generally, these people are not aware of the existence of the government. The bureaucracy, police, and other governmental agencies, including tribal welfare agencies which are supposed to help and serve them, exploit them in many ways. The Girijans do not have any direct contact either with the state government or with the district authorities and officials at the lower level, like Munsifs. Those who are in touch with them in their day-to-day life tend to cheat them to the maximum extent.¹⁹

Zamindari System

Though the district has the potential and resources to develop into a prosperous area, it is as of now categorised as a backward area. The main reason for this has been the existence of the feudal order for which Zamindars were responsible.²⁰ The British Raj established the Zamindari system for the maintenance and consolidation of their power in India. The Zamindars in turn created Inamdars, Mokhasadars to stabilise their feudal hold. Illiteracy, economic backwardness and ignorance of the people gave them ample opportunities to consolidate their class power.

Zamindars had purposefully chosen the Inamdars from among those who had been held in high esteem in society.²¹ Inamdars were always loyal to the Zamindars and to the British. The income of these Zamindars varied from one to another. Out of their collections, the Zamindars paid a meagre amount to the Government as "Peishkush", i.e., their annual rent to the Government. Similarly, the Inamdars out of their collections paid both in kind and cash, a very meagre amount to the Zamindars as "quit rent", i.e., their annual payment to the Zamindars.

Let us look at the exploitation meted out to the common man in the early phase of the Zamindari system. Some of the estates²² were having, apart from the timber and fuel, different types of forest produce such as tamarind, turmeric,

mohwa flower, asafoetida, soapnut, and broom-sticks, etc., which are available in plenty in the forest area. The Zamindars used to treat these forests as their own and never allowed any of the people working in the estates to make use of these produces. It is a peculiar feature to note that the people, particularly the tribes, had to collect the forest produce and hand it over to the staff of the Zamindars. Most of the tribal people worked for the Zamindars without any remuneration. Their living conditions were sub-human and many of them were having problems of malnutrition and were affected by diseases very frequently. The people were made to believe that a Zamindar was the incarnation of God. This was done to ensure their loyalty and obedience. To pay the taxes and land cess, the poor peasants, had to sell or mortgage their personal belongings. The authorities of the estate used tyrannical methods and harassed the people for collections of revenue. The latter rarely raised their voices against these atrocities. In order to establish their hegemony some of the Zamindars used to treat the tenants much worse than slaves.

The Zamindars had in early times led a life of indulgence. It is evident that they did it at the cost of the poor people. These olden days have gone and many of the Zamindars have themselves become impoverished after the abolition of the Zamindari. A good number of them have opted for different professions. Even now their former prestige and predominance continue to be a force in their estate areas. Even after the

abolition of the Zamindari system, the people in spite of their aversion for the Zamindari system show them high respect and allegiance. For instance, it is not rare that if ex-Ranisaheb (wife of the Zamindar) comes out of her Palace and appears before the public either during the election time or otherwise, thousands of people would flock to her and obey her instructions even in political matters.

The lower classes during the feudal times were forced to cultivate the land of the Zamindars while the produce was enjoyed by the Zamindars. The workers were not paid wages commensurate with their labour. Human dignity as we conceive it today was totally denied to the lower classes and the political system was shaped and maintained for the well-being of the upper classes only. After independence, a sort of a new feudal order came to be established, in which the upper classes in the rural areas continued exploitation in new forms.

Zamindari Abolition Movement

During the national struggle for independence between 1930 and late 40s, the Congress leaders and workers in Srikakulam district, led a movement against the Zamindari system. The people in these areas used to represent their grievances through their local leaders to the district leadership and in course of time, Congress leaders working against the Zamindari system came to be known as "Kisan Workers". At this juncture, N.G. Ranga

supported and inspired these workers as a part of his nation-wide agitation for the abolition of the Zamindari system. The local leaders like Pullala Shyamsundar Rao, Gauthu Latchanna, Dukka Rajan Reddy, Dukka Suryanarayana Reddy, Abdul Rahman Khan and many others were considered as kisan leaders.²³

Prior to 1942, the leftists in the Indian National Congress owing allegiance to Communist ideology and using the "Sickle and Hammer Red Flag" backed the Kisan movement. The movement was led by Ranga and Smt. Bharati Devi Ranga. His colleagues like Swami Sahajananda and Indulal Yagnik, actively participated in anti-Zamindari activities by joining hands with the Communists.

The "All-India Kisan Sabha" held its All-India Conference at Palasa in Srikakulam district in the year 1940. In this conference differences between the Gandhian followers and the Communists became widened resulting in the formation of a separate All-India Kisan Congress under the leadership of Ranga. The Communists captured the All-India Kisan Sabha. In Srikakulam district the All-India Kisan Congress had its roots because of Ranga, and his followers. Hence, the masses of this area came in direct contact with the kisan workers of the Congress Party. As a result of this conference, the ryots of Mandasa Estate entered the forest claiming that it belonged to the people. The Zamindar of Mandasa took the assistance of British officers and the police to prevent their forcible entry.

This led to police firing resulting in the death of five persons, including a woman named Sasumanu Gunnamma. All these developments made the movement against the Zamindari system in the present Srikakulam district an important political event.²⁴

Besides the existence of the Zamindari system, this area witnessed the prevalence of 'Inamdari' system. The same kisan Congress workers were leading an agitation for the abolition of the "Inamdari" system. Movements for the abolition of the Zamindaris and the Inams made the people politically conscious.²⁵ From 1945 onwards the kisan movement took a different shape as the time of the political freedom of the country was nearing. Most of the political workers from this area used to go to Madras as members of deputations, and as representatives to the anti-Zamindari and anti-Inamdari Conference.²⁶ All these developments made Srikakulam district politically awakened. The Congressmen and kisan workers played a dominant role in this process.

Economic Foundation

A careful scrutiny of the economic situation of Srikakulam district will reveal the various aspects of the backwardness of the area. It has got 'podu cultivation' system in the foothills and a form of agriculture based on cash crops in the coastal areas. Paddy is the major food crop of the people and ragi, maize, korri, sugarcane and jute are the main commercial crops. Groundnut, gingelly, green gram, black gram

TABLE III

LAND AND LABOUR DISTRIBUTION IN SRIKAKULAM DISTRICT -1974-75

Area in Hectares

Forests	Barren and uncultivated land	Land put to non-agricultural uses	Culturable waste	Permanent pastures and other grazing lands	Land under Misc. tree crops and groves, not included in area sown	Current fallows	Other fallow lands	Net area sown	Geographical area by village papers
1,50,941	1,23,080	91	23,099	15,878	10,481	85,550	17,784	4,48,366	9,67,176

Agricultural Sector			Non Agricultural Sector							
As Cultivators	As Agricultural Labourers	Total No. of workers in Agricultural Sector	Mining, quarrying, livestock, forestry, fishing, hunting, plantations, orchards & allied activities	Household industry	Manufacturing other than household industry	Construction	Trade & Commerce	Transport Storage and Communications	Other Services	Total Non-Agricultural workers
4,27,391	4,17,827	8,45,758	421,732	55,013	14,847	4,430	55,588	12,716	74,001	2,59,327

and tobacco are also grown. Coconut tops occupy an important place in the area of Ichapuram and Sompeta taluks. Jack fruit and cashew nut gardens come next.

Agricultural operations in the past were primitive and unscientific. At present, modern instruments of agricultural production are being used to cultivate the land. But even now due to lack of proper irrigation facilities agricultural operations depend mainly on water from tanks or on rain water.

Srikakulam is industrially also backward. Though raw materials and mineral ores like manganese, iron, etc., are available in some parts of the district, there are no factories worth the name, except the Ferro Alloys Corporation Ltd., at Garividi. There are only three sugar factories despite the fact that sugarcane production is considerably high in the district. However, there are a number of khandsari sugar units in the district. Srikakulam district is one of the best jute producing areas and the export of the jute is highest in the state. In the entire State of Andhra Pradesh this is the only district where jute is grown in more than a lakh of acres. Jute is being sent from this district to Calcutta for processing, etc., where a number of jute factories exist. In spite of the high rate of production of coconuts, there is no industry to extract the oil from the coconut and make use of the coconut fibre. Similarly, there is no big industry for extracting oil from the cashewnut shells apart from some small units for

preparing the export variety of cashew nuts at Palasa. If industrialization takes place steadily, the economic condition of the district will definitely improve.

There are some cottage industries in the district, which are famous for fine khadi yarn production. Even in olden days Muslin from Srikakulam and Ponduru enjoyed high reputation the world over. During the days of freedom struggle and non-cooperation movement the demand for khadi was very high. Now that the textile industries have advanced so much that the cottage industry cannot compete with it. In spite of this drawback the production of fine khadi has gone up considerably. Some exporting centres for fine khadi also exist in the district.

Salt industry at Naupada gives employment to a considerable number of people. The next important cottage industry is the oil ghani which provides employment to a number of villagers. People from Srikakulam, Bobbili, and Narasannapeta taluks are working in the brass and bell metal industry. Coir industry occupies an important place in Sompeta and Ichapuram aluks and is the main source of income for many families. Fishing industry thrives in all coastal villages of this district, specially in Kalingapatnam and Baruva villages. Veena making in Bobbili taluk and pottery making in many taluks are among the other important cottage industries.

In order to have a clear understanding and perspective of the economic foundation of the district, it is essential to

have a glance at the production relations. The labourers, the propertyless classes in the district, are mostly drawn from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Necessary commodities for the society are produced by these lower classes who live on their manual labour. They are very poor and live in small huts. Besides cultivation, the labourers are expected to serve their masters in various ways. Bonded labour is one of the main features of the society. The poor people who do not possess property of any kind undergo starvation and suffer from want. The labourers have no security of job and they remain at the mercy of the masters.

The exploitation of labour and oppression in its various forms led to the gradual growth of popular movements against the aristocracy like the Kisan movement and the Naxalite movement in the district. The emergence of radical politics in a place where there is very little education clearly symbolises the depth of public feeling about exploitation and oppression. This sort of enslavement coupled with a low literacy rate not only leads to political consciousness but also to revolutionary movements in any given society.

Political stability can be achieved only on a strong and sound economic foundation based on equality, justice, liberty, and fraternity. Once these fundamental aspects of human relationship are curbed by any society, the way is paved for instability and chaos. The one feature which has blocked economic progress of this district is that over 75% of the total

area is ex-estate where feudalism had prevailed till the passing of the Estate Abolition Act, 1948.

Political Background

In order to have an understanding of the party building process and the political development in the crucial periods in the history of the district, one must know the political background of the area. While analysing political background of the district the interaction between various social forces which have paved the way for the emergence of various movements having political overtones will be sketched.

The Srikakulam district was formed with 11 (eleven) taluks in 1950 as a separate revenue district out of the old Visakhapatnam revenue district of Madras Presidency. Originally, a part of the present Srikakulam district, i.e., Ichapuram, Sompeta, Tekkali, Pathapatnam, Narasannapeta and Srikakulam taluks were in Ganjam district of Madras Presidency and the remaining five taluks were in Visakhapatnam district of Madras Presidency. At the time of the formation of the Orissa Province in the year 1936 a portion of Ganjam district, i.e., the above six taluks were taken away and added to Visakhapatnam district.

Till 1936 there was the Ganjam district Congress committee, and V.V. Jogayya Panthulu was its President.²⁸ After the formation of the Orissa State in 1936, a portion of Ganjam district which was merged with Visakhapatnam Revenue district of Madras Presidency, i.e., Ichapuram, Sompeta, Tekkali, Pathapatnam,

Narasannapeta, Srikakulam taluks and the Telugu speaking areas of Ganjam and Koraput districts of Orissa State which had been previously in the erstwhile Madras Presidency, were formed into a separate District Congress Committee known as "North Vizag District Congress Committee" with its headquarters at Chicacole. ²⁹

One of the features of the Congress organisational set-up to be noted is that the portion of Ganjam district which formed part of Orissa State was having a separate DCC under the jurisdiction of "Utkal Provincial Congress Committee". At the same time, the "Andhra Provincial Congress Committee" with its headquarters at Bejawada representing the Telugu speaking districts of Madras Presidency was having its jurisdiction in Orissa also. The Telugu speaking areas of Ganjam and Koraput districts of Orissa State were under the jurisdiction of "North Vizag District Congress Committee" which was a district body of "Andhra Provincial Congress Committee". It is explicit that two 'District Congress Committees' were functioning for quite sometime in Koraput and Ganjam districts of Orissa State on a linguistic basis. At the same time there was a DCC for Visakhapatnam district with its headquarters at Vijayanagaram, though five taluks ³⁰ of Visakhapatnam district were affiliated to a separate DCC, i.e., North Vizag District Congress Committee. An analysis of the way of functioning of District Congress shows that they were organised on a linguistic basis. It is evident that a section of people from the same district were

affiliated to one DCC whereas the other section from the same area were associated to another DCC.

The national movement was very strong in Ganjam and Koraput districts under the leadership of prominent Congressmen.³¹ The British Government always wanted to weaken the national movement, and in this process it encouraged the Maharajah of Parlakimidi to start agitation for a separate State of Orissa. The Maharajah was a staunch supporter of the British. The British Government invited him to the 1933 Round Table Conference as a delegate to oppose the 'transfer of power' to India. After the Round Table Conference the British Government conceded the demand for the formation of Orissa State and in this process they bifurcated the Telugu speaking areas of Ganjam district and retained some parts of Ganjam district in Orissa and left some parts in Madras Presidency which were merged with Visakhapatnam district. This was one more indication of the British policy of "divide and rule".

As a part of the national struggle for independence in the early 1930's and 40's the veteran Congress leaders and workers in Srikakulam district fought against the Zamindari system. Ranga, who belongs to Guntur district, had come to Srikakulam district and roused the feeling of these workers as a part of his nation-wide movement for the abolition of the Zamindari system.³²

As noted earlier, a section of the people who had been fighting against the Zamindars and Inamdars were branded as

"Kisan Mutha". There were several freedom fighters in this area who had joined the national movement as early as 1921.³³ The national struggle in this district was strengthened by the efforts of these veteran leaders in spite of the opposition from the British Government as well as from the local Zamindars and Inamdars.

A notable feature of the Congress politics of Srikakulam district in the early phase of the pre-independence days was the shifting trend between the left and the right within the organisation. The Kisan group within the Congress under the leadership of Ranga had a different policy and programme though it was loyal to the Congress organisation. This section was labelled as the leftists. The other section led by Pattabhi Seetharamayya confined itself to the traditional Congress policies and programmes. This section was known as the 'rightist' section in the Congress. The kisan section always approached the people with mass campaign programme. In between, was a popular and left-of-centre leader named Tangaturi Prakazam. Ranga established some training centres in the district for political education of the people.

The existence of the Justice Party in Madras presidency did not in any way affect the dominance and influence of the Congress in this district. Prior to 1938, the Rajah Saheb of Bobbili was the leader of the Justice Party who later also became Premier of Madras Presidency. He got support from the Zamindars and the landlords. In the 1938 Assembly elections, V.V. Giri

contested as a Congress candidate against the Rajah Sahab in Bobbili constituency and defeated him. A.P. Patro, another Justice Party leader belonging to this area, was Minister for Education in the Justice Party government in Madras. He was defeated by the Congress party candidate Pullala Syamasundara Rao, a popular kisan leader from Tekkali constituency. Challa Narasimha Naidu, a Congress candidate from Srikakulam constituency defeated the Justice Party candidate Pakanati Narayana Rao.³⁴ Though the Justice Party was in power in the Madras Presidency in the year 1938, the Congress party in Srikakulam district had gained mass popularity leading to the defeat of the Justice Party.

With the release of political leaders and workers from jail during the period 1944-45, efforts to mobilise people began in a big way. After lifting of the ban on the Congress in 1945, Congress organisational elections were held in the State as well as in the districts. Just before this, the gap between the "left and the right" groups in the Congress began to widen. For the Assembly elections in 1946, selection of Congress candidates was done on ideological grounds. As the Provincial Congress Committee was in the hands of the rightists like Kala Venkata Rao, the candidates elected were from among those holding rightist views as against the Kisan section in this district.³⁵

Since there was no enrolment of Congress members between 1942-45, the organizational elections were held in 1946 on the basis of jail going.³⁶ For Presidentship of the North Vizag District Congress Committee, Abdul Rahman Khan, a prominent

leader of the kisan group, contested against Suggu Srinivasa Reddy, candidate from the rightist section. The former won. Thus even in 1945-46 the leftist section had a predominant position in the Congress in the area under study. The kisan group had successfully controlled the district Congress affairs. By 1946, the leftists got control of the Congress organization while the rightists got hold of the Legislative wing. The elections for the District Congress Committee were again held in the year 1947 and the same kisan group leaders were elected without contest.³⁷ This election was held after the enrolment of regular Congress members.

Socialist Party in the District

With the dawn of independence, differences among Congressmen widened and it led to the emergence of the Socialist Party of India in the year 1948 under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan, Dr. Rammanohar Lohiya, Achyut Patwardhan and Asoka Mehta. This development had its indirect impact on the people of Srikakulam district, leading to the formation of a district unit.³⁸

With the entry of P.V.G. Raju (the Maharajah of Vijayanagaram) into the political arena as a Socialist, the Socialist party in Srikakulam gained momentum. The Socialists contested a number of seats in the First General Elections. The Socialist Party in Srikakulam was not based on ideology but

on the personal following of the Maharajah of Vijayanagaram. It weakened day by day as the influence and interest of kaju got confined to Visakhapatnam district. The split in the Socialist organisation dealt a big blow to the Socialist party in the district. By 1960, the Socialist organisation got completely wiped out from Srikakulam district.

The period between 1948 and 1951 witnessed many developments within the Congress organisation at the State level which had its impact on the district politics. During war-time (1939-45) the government had imposed rationing and controls on essential commodities. The procurement system for paddy was also introduced. This caused strong difference of opinion between the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee and the Congress party in power at Madras. It is known as the ministerial group vs. the Congress organisational group. Ranga was leading the organisational group as PCC President with the backing of Prakasam. Kala Venkata Rao was leading the ministerial group with the support of Pattabhi. The political differences at the State level percolated to the district level.³⁹ The next Congress party organisational elections were held in 1951. The followers of Ranga were elected in majority as PCC members from North Vizag District Congress Committee. But Ranga was defeated in the hands of Sanjiva Reddy for the PCC Presidentship.

In course of time, disappointment among Congressmen grew more and more. By 1951 several veteran Congress leaders

from various states, like J.B. Kripalani, P.C. Ghosh, S.K. Palkhiwala, Abdul Ghani, Ranga and Prakasam, who disagreed with the policies of the Congress government, resigned from the Congress organisation and formed the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party (KMPP) at a conference held in Patna. The Andhra Praja Party was formed as a branch of All-India Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party by Andhra leaders like Ranga and Prakasam. In the words of Ranga, "the Congress democracy has failed to afford a decent chance to our peasants and workers to transform its party structure and leadership into a party of masses, controlled by the masses for the benefit of the masses, and its inability to reorganise its two mental and organisational structure in such a way that all sections within it can find more or less their due place in its legislature parties and ministries and its loss of statesmanship to set its own house in order."⁴⁰ This was the assessment given by Ranga on the exit of a group of stalwarts from the Congress.

This newly formed party was a non-communist, non-socialist organisation. By this time, a separate Srikakulam Revenue district had been formed and the new party got its own predominance in this area as Ranga and Prakasam were in the central organisation. The Srikakulam district Praja Party was established with M.V. Ramamoorthy and T. Naghavadas as president and general secretary respectively, and it continued only for a few months. Disagreement between Ranga and Prakasam led to the formation of the Krishikar Lok Party (KLP) under the leadership

of Ranga in the year 1951 while the Andhra Praja Party remained as State party under the direction of Prakasam. Ranga's Krishikar Lok Party was founded at the national level just before the first General Election in 1952.

Krishikar Lok Party

The Krishikar Lok Party could get maximum support in Srikakulam district because of the fact that most Congressmen were in the kisan group led by Ranga. The district branch of the Krishikar Lok Party was founded with the kisan section of the Congress.⁴¹ Secession of the followers of Ranga and Prakasam from the Congress, who were the DCC President and Secretary to the KLP led to the election of President of the District Congress Committee. Some of the sympathisers and the associates of the kisan group in the Congress remained in the organisation without joining the KLP. At the election of DCC President, the help of the former district Congress leaders⁴² who were the present KLP members was very much needed. This period in the Congress party witnessed division of the partymen into two separate camps — urban intellectual and rural-based politicians.⁴³ Now both the groups had approached the non-Congress opposition leaders to get the support from their sympathisers and associates who remained in the Congress.

Some of the opposition leaders thought that unless there was some split in the Congress there would not be any

scope for the KLP in the general elections which were to be held in 1952. In order to weaken the Congress organisation the opposition planned to take measures for defeating the urban intellectual group of politicians that was in the hands of rural based politicians. They knew that this would definitely create a wide gap and conflict between the rural-based and urban-based politicians. It was quite natural that once the rural based politicians won the election the urban-oriented politicians would not tolerate their supremacy.

Bendi Kurmanna, Kalinga by caste and a rural-oriented politician, was the Joint Secretary in the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee of which Neelam Sanjiva Reddy was the President. T. Paparao who was contesting against Ch. Narasimha Naidu had been a close associate and a caste man of Bendi Kurmanna. The opposition strategy was that if Paparao succeeded in the election of the President of the DCC, naturally the Provincial Congress' support could be expected because of Bendi Kurmanna being the Joint Secretary. Exactly it happened in selecting the official candidates for the Congress party in 1952 elections. The intellectual urbanised section of the Congress were denied the party tickets. They revolted and contested as independents against the official Congress candidates, which resulted in the defeat of the latter in 1952 election.

After independence, it has mostly been power politics, caste and communal loyalties have greatly affected electoral politics, leadership, recruitment of members and party policies.

In the words of Professor K. Seshadri, "the ghost of caste which was considered dead during the days of independence struggle was resurrected and political opportunism against which Gandhi devoted his entire energy became one of the accepted methods to gain political power."⁴⁵ These phases of national politics are very much visible in the district politics of Srikakulam. But equally it is difficult to analyse the conflicts within the Congress party and between political parties only on the basis of caste affiliations. The role of other forces along with caste, which shaped the party system in Srikakulam are discussed in the next chapter.

NOTES

1. James Walch, Faction and Front (Party Systems in South India), (New Delhi: Young Asia Publications, 1976), p. 29.
2. M. Duverger, "Bases of Parties" in Jeon Blondel, ed., Comparative Government, (London: Macmillan, 1970), p. 96.
3. B. Pattabhi Seetharamayya, The History of the Indian National Congress (1885-1935): Congress Working Committee, (Madras, 1935), p. 17.
4. S. Neumann, "Toward a Comparative Study" in Jeon Blondel, ed., Comparative Government, op.cit., pp. 71-73.
5. Stanley A. Kochanek, The Congress Party of India: The Dynamics of One Party Democracy, (Princeton; Princeton University Press, 1968) p. 1.
6. Districts of Andhra Pradesh, Department of Information and Public Relations, Andhra Pradesh. (Hyderabad, 1965), p. 107.
7. Source: Census of India, 1971, Part II-A of Andhra Pradesh, Statistical Abstract: Andhra Pradesh (Hyderabad, 1975), p. 30.
8. There are three sub-sects of Velama caste prevailing in the area under study, namely, Padma Velama, Koppula Velama, and Polinati Velama. The former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, J. Vengal Rao, belongs to Padma Velama caste. The rumour goes that he wants these three sub-sects to be grouped under one name 'Khanda Velama' for consolidating his political base.
9. To name some of them, Sir A.P. Patro, a former Minister of Madras Presidency under British Rule and his son Sir A.V. Patro, the former Police Commissioner of Madras come into focus. C.H. Krishnamoorthy, who had been the Inspector General of Registration and H. Sembamoorthy former Secretary to Government of Andhra Pradesh belongs to this caste. Another interesting figure who belongs to this caste is B. Rajagopala-Rao, a big business man. He has been a member of Parliament from 1952 except for a brief period of 1967-71.

10. Census of India, 1971, Part II-A of Andhra Pradesh, op. cit., p. 26.
11. The Commissioner for S.s and STs in his 23 Report (1974-75) refers to a study conducted by the Usmania University. What the study has revealed supports the point made here. Report of the Commissioner for SCs and STs, 23rd Report, 1974-75, (Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi) p. 110.
12. Land under the possession of government without cultivation.
13. Census of India, 1971, Part II-A of Andhra Pradesh, op. cit., p. 27.
14. Population as per 1971 Census (collected and compiled in Planning Section, 3.1 - seat), District Collectorate, Srikakulam.
15. In the interior parts of agency tracts there are some places like valleys and even-shaped lands. But, most of their cultivation is terraced, for instance, they clear a particular portion of the shrubs and reclaim the land with small hand made iron implements.
16. They worship goddesses like 'Bhadrakali', 'Amavaru' (Burga) which stand for power. They do not have any temples in the villages. Religion is not universal in character in the district as in other parts of Andhra Pradesh. It is fragmented tactfully by the upper classes to exploit the lower classes and thereby, to maintain and stabilize the feudal economy created by them. There are separate gods and goddesses for them. The gods worshipped by the upper castes may not be the gods of the lower classes. It is interesting to note that the tribals do not have any temples in the villages where Vishnu, Siva or any other lord is the deity.
17. They perform a thanks-giving ceremony to the deities for the crops raised by holding 'puja' in which pigs and goats etc. are sacrificed. About four or five pujas at different times are performed for a single crop. For instance, the mango crop, first they perform puja at the time of the flowering, then for the tender mango, next for the riper ones, for the fruit and finally for the shell or seed.
18. The government of Andhra Pradesh was forced to establish many schools and hostels for the children of the Girisans, particularly, after the radical insurrection into the area under study. But the running of the schools

and the negligence of the teachers is very explicit in the agency areas as well as in the villages of the plain areas. See the 23rd Report of the Commissioner for SCs and STs (1974-75), op. cit., p. 66.

19. For more details on the exploitation of Girijans, see Chapter IV titled 'Rise of Radicalism in the District'.
20. Out of the present 11 taluks only two, i.e., Palakonda and a part of Narasannapeta, were not under the spell of the Zamindari system with an exception of some Inamdars here and there. To name some of the Zamindaris were Vijayanagaram, Bobbili, Tekkali, Kandigan, Urisem, Mandasa, Cheekati, Chemudu, Jalantra, Surangi and so on.
21. The Inams were different types, namely, Whole Inam, Part Inam, Service Inam, Kandriga, Maayam, Agraharams, etc.
22. Estate means the area which was under the control of a Zamindar.
23. Korla Marikrishna Chowdary, P. Pundarikakshachari, K. Narayana, B.M. Seddy, K. Venkatanarayana Dora, K. Krishna Moorthy, B. Appalaswamy, K. Appala Naidu, V. Rangababu, T. Raghavadas, L.L. Das, K. Punnayya were some of the main followers of Ranga in the Zamindari abolition movement as kisan workers.
24. In the year 1940, there was a 'padayatra' from Ichapuram of Srikakulam district to Madras led by Kommareddi Suryanarayana which could be called 'kisan march' for the abolition of the Zamindari system.
25. In an interview with N.G. Ranga many so far hidden facts have come to light. He told that throughout the kisan movement in Andhra he got more response from the Srikakulam district. This clearly indicates the rate of the exploitation of the upper classes and also the political consciousness of the masses of the area under study (Date of interview: 10.9.1977).
26. The inspiration for the abolition of the Zamindari system in the State of Madras came mainly from the Zamindari Enquiry Committee headed by Tanguturi Prakasam, then Revenue Minister, in the year 1938-39 in the pre-independence Congress government. The Zamindari system was abolished in 1948 under the Estates Abolition Act and subsequently the Inamdari system also.

27. Source: Statistical Abstract, Andhra Pradesh, 1976, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, (Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, 1976).
28. Malladi Krishnamoorty, Nyayapati Narayanamoorty and Nabhi Ramakrishna Rao, all Brahmans belonging to Berhampur, held the post of the President of the DCC of Ganjam after Jogayya Panthulu.
29. The present Srikakulam was called as Chicacole.
30. Inchapuram, Sompeta, Tekkali, Pathapatnam, Narasannapeta and Srikakulam taluks.
31. V.V. Jogayya Panthulu, Jayanti Narayan, Mocherla Sitharamayya Nabhi Ramakrishna Rao, Iamedisetty Ramamoorty, Koppisetty Ramamoorty Naidu, Angajala Venkatesam, Gidugu Ramamurty, Gidugu Sithapathi were some of the veteran Congressmen participated in the movement.
32. Since this aspect is discussed in detail in the sections on the Zamindari system and the zamindari abolition movement, it needs no further explanation here.
33. Prominent among them were Thakur Ramakrishna Rao, Garimella Kumaraswamy, Garimella Ramamoorty, Gedela Chandrayya Naidu, Potnuru Swamibabu, Prava Yagneswarasastri, Pullala Seetharamayya, Gandhidas Kallakuri Krishnamoorty, Andhavarapu Lakshmanamoorty, Challa Narasimha Naidu, Tripurana Ranganatha Rao, Kotagiri Settharamaswami, Woonna Ramamurty, Tankala Sasibhushan Gupta, M. Ramamurty, P.N. Apparao and others.
34. The symbol system for the elections was not prevalent during that period. Instead, there were separate colour boxes for each party. The Congress had the yellow colour box. As there was no adult franchise in those days, the number of voters was limited and the constituencies were also few with vast areas.
35. The Congress candidates belonging to the 'rightist' section were Rokkam Ramamoorty Naidu from Tekkali constituency, Garimella Kumaraswamy from Srikakulam, Palavalsa Sangam Naidu from Palakonda and Gona Seetharamaswami from Bobbili constituencies respectively.
36. For the election of the President of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee, Ranga's name was proposed by his followers representing the 'leftist' group. He was then in Denmark. The candidate from rightist section, Pallam Raju, defeated by Ranga in 1946.

37. Latchanna was elected as President and T. Raghava Das as General Secretary.
38. Some of the prominent members constituting the Socialist party wing of Srikakulam district were: S.V. Sambasiva Rao, P. Rama Rao, S. Jagannadham, all advocates of the district, A. Gangayya, T. Lakshmu Naidu, K. Kurmi Naidu, M.V. Parankusam, and a few others.
39. Ranga being a kisan leader opposed control rationing and procurement policies. As he was vehemently opposed to ministerial policies, the ministerial group wanted to throw Ranga out of the office of APCC Presidentship. The ministerial group led by Kala Venkata Rao proposed the name of Sanjeeva Reddy for the APCC Presidentship in 1948. Ranga defeated Reddy with the support of Prakasam and gained more organisational strength than before. After this, the differences between the two groups reached the climax.
40. The Presidential address of N.G. Ranga, The Bharat Krishak Sabha and the Bharat Krishikar Mazdoor Lok Party, (New Delhi, 1951), p. 7.
41. Srikakulam District Unit of Krishikar Lok Party was formed in December 1951. The President of the District Krishikar Lok Party was Latchanna and its General Secretary Raghavadas.
42. Prominent among them were Latchanna, Killi Appala Naidu and few others.
43. There was a contest between Ch. Narasimha Naidu, Velama by caste, an advocate from Srikakulam and T. Papa Rao, Kalinga by caste, a rural oriented politician for the Presidentship of DCC.
44. The results of the First General Elections were discussed in the second chapter.
45. K. Seshadri, Indian Politics: Then and Now (Essays in Historical Perspective), (Delhi: Pragati Publications, 1976), p. 93.

CHAPTER II

PARTY SYSTEM AND ELECTIONS

(1) Preliminary Comments:

Political system is a set of values built on certain structures and framework. Multiple factors determine the politics and system of a party. Vast resources, tremendous changes in scientific and technological spheres, less unemployment and political consciousness of the masses in the United States of America has made the American political system more stable, sustaining and powerful. Acute poverty, mass unemployment, widespread illiteracy and lack of good leadership have brought instability to the developing countries like Pakistan. India, in spite of its ravaged economy, by decades of colonial exploitation, has witnessed good leadership and continuity and stability in the political system. Changes brought about by the spread of education, mass communication, rise of industry, introduction of new institutions of government and development in scientific and technological fields have given a new shape to party politics in India. The identification of the freedom movement with the Indian National Congress made the latter the dominant entity in the country's politics. The Congress managed to remain in power for thirty years by resolving or avoiding conflicts, balancing interests, compromising with the bourgeoisie, adjusting with the middle classes and ruling the lower classes.

Politics at the district level cannot remain unaffected by developments and changes taking place from time to time at the state and national levels. Party politics in a district symbolises in its essence the outward and the inward character of the national politics. To have a clearer view of national politics one should first study district politics. The study of party politics in Srikakulam district depicts the indepth story behind the phenomenon of developing politics of India. And in order to have a clear picture of the district politics it is necessary to examine the interactions between various forces, movements and that of the masses. All these in turn determine the nature and scope of political developments.

Exploitation, mass illiteracy and shifts in party loyalties decide the politics of Srikakulam district. A close scrutiny of Srikakulam district politics reveals it to be a politics of factionalism, opportunism and personal followings with signs of left-orientation and radicalism. Organization is a fundamental aspect of any political party. An effective organisation means an efficient party. Party politics cannot be studied in the real sense of the term without analysing the organisational structure.

Here we are concerned with the Congress party organisation in Srikakulam district. The smallest unit of the party is the mandal committee. The mandal committees are grouped into taluk committees. The Congress constitution makes no clear mention of taluk committees while the mandal committees rarely

function. Both national and State party organisations view the District Congress Committees as the basic units of the party and communicate almost exclusively with them. They may not directly deal with the smaller units. It is the DCC which communicates with the taluk and mandal committees. The DCC takes the main responsibility for the organisation of elections within the district. The DCC makes recommendations about the candidates for the election to the PEC (Pradesh Election Committee) at the State level and on the basis of this list, the PEC sends the names to the CEC (Central Election Committee) for the final selection. The Central Election Committee may not necessarily accept the recommendations of the PEC because of the clique formation at the national level.

The Congress party in the district functioned in the midst of strong opposition from the KLP which was the product of the peasant movement. By the end of 1951, the Congress in Srikakulam was faced with a big crisis. Some leaders with sizable following left the organisation. As the remaining Congressmen were urban based, the limited rural leadership was not able to enrol workers immediately. It took years to build up the organisation for facing the challenge posed by the opposition parties. The district organisation had to operate in the midst of struggles mostly in two directions. Opposition from the KLP, a well based party in the district, and the indifference from the urbanised Congress leadership which was internal were the two important problems the Congress had to face during this period.

Neelam Sanjiva Reddy, the President of the APCC, supported the leaders who have their mass base at the rural areas. As the urban-oriented Congress members could not occupy the office of the DCC, they had always been putting obstacles in the functioning of the district unit. However, the DCC could mobilise support for the Congress party in the elections because the Joint Secretary of the APCC hailed from a rural area in this district. Mobilisation of support was mainly on the basis of caste and communal loyalties.¹ The Congress party neither at the state level nor at the district level had any programme to offer and attract membership.

(ii) 1952 Elections:

For the 1952 General Elections there were twelve constituencies including three plural constituencies to the State Assembly and three constituencies for the Lok Sabha.² There were candidates from Congress, KLP, the Socialist Party, the Praja party and the Communists. In addition to that there were several independents who were mainly dissident Congressmen.³

TABLE I
PARTY POSITION IN THE FIRST GENERAL ELECTIONS -
SRIRAKULAM DISTRICT

LOK SABHA

Seats	Party	Contestants	Seats won	Percentage
3	Congress	3	1	23.97
	KLP	2	-	13.57
	CPI	1	-	7.12
	Socialists	1	-	3.55
	KMPF	1	-	6.56
	Independents	5	2	45.19

TABLE I (Contd.)

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Seats	Party	Contestants	Seats won	Percentage
15	Congress	14	5	30.43
	KLP	15	6	24.80
	CPI	3	-	4.92
	Socialists	7	1	9.73
	KMPP	2	-	1.54
	Independents	23	3	28.56

Table I shows the poor performance of the Congress in the 1952 elections both to the Lok Sabha and to the State Assembly. This position could be attributed to the denial of tickets to several polevaults and their consequential opposition to the official Congress candidates. But most of the independents joined the Congress party after the elections. The policies such as controls, rationing, procurement, etc., followed by the State government headed by the Congress leadership had also alienated some sections of the rural electorate. On the other hand, KLP opposed the governmental policies which enlarged its base mainly among the rural masses. It was also true that the majority of the KLP leadership was drawn from the rural background. The other parties were mainly influential in certain pockets, where they could scrape through due to the charisma of the local leaders and caste factors.⁵ Another reason for the success of the KLP candidates, was that the KLP was identified

as one which had fought for the causes of the peasants, which were in majority in the constituencies, where the KLP fielded its candidates.

In this election, Congress fielded the candidates for all the three Lok Sabha constituencies and got one seat with a percentage of 23.97 whereas the KLP contested in two constituencies and could not win even one seat. The percentage of popular votes is also less comparative to the Congress party as it got only 13.57%. The independents fielded five candidates for three seats and could win two with a popular percentage of 45.19. The CPI, the Socialists, the KNPP were there in the fray but could not attract much.

For the State Assembly, Congress contested only for fourteen seats and could win five with a popular percentage of 30.43. Its main rival party, the KLP, contested for all the fifteen seats and won six with a popular percentage of 24.80. This was an explicit indication that the Congress party had its image among the masses as it had played a leading role in the independence movement. The number of independents were more, a total of twenty three and could win three seats with a percentage of 28.56. The Socialists who were in the next position, contested for seven seats and won only one seat with a percentage of 9.73. The CPI and the KNPP obtained 4.92% and 1.54% respectively. The 1952 General Elections reveal two different patterns in the election of candidates to the Lok Sabha and to the State Assembly as the voting behaviour shows that there has been very little

personal contact between an MP and the masses than that of an MLA and the masses.

The Congress did not have a majority to form the government at Madras. Since the Congress party could not get a sizable majority to form a government, the Communists and the Praja Party formed the United Democratic Front (UDF) with Tanguturi Prakasam as its leaders.⁶ However, the UDF under the leadership of Prakasam could not form the government precisely because it did not have a majority on its own and this majority could have been obtained by the support of the KLP. The KLP leadership had not extended support to Prakasam because Ranga, a vociferous leader of KLP was vehemently opposed to the Communist ideology and its ascendancy to power. On the contrary, Ranga supported Congress party in forming the government, which he opposed tooth and nail during the elections. Ranga stated subsequently that KLP's support to the Congress was on the basis of 'responsive co-operation'.⁷ C. Rajagopalachari, a veteran Congress man, became the chief minister of Madras Province. However, Gauthu Latchanna, a lieutenant of Ranga, was made the leader of the legislative wing of the KLP. Therefore, the KLP dissidents got annoyed because at that time Latchanna was a political light-weight, who came from a backward community and a backward district (Srikakulam), whereas the majority of the members in the dissident group belonged to Kamma and Reddi, the rich peasant castes of Andhra. Ranga's role in backing Latchanna

for the leadership of the legislative wing of the KLP, drove several KLP legislators into the laps of the Congress party.

The Andhra State which emerged on 1st October, 1953 after much agitation for the creation of a separate Andhra State consisted of 11 Telugu speaking districts from the erst-while Madras Presidency.³ Since a separate State of Andhra was formed, legislators elected from the State were to form their own government. Sanjiva Reddy became the leader of the Congress Legislature Party.⁹ The Congress party did not enjoy a majority in forming the government. Therefore, factional pulls and pressures surfaced. Ranga, the KLP leaders, offered co-operation to Praja Party, which was in existence under the leadership of Prakasam. Prakasam became the Chief Minister of Andhra. It is worth noting that Ranga refused to extend support to Prakasam in 1952 when the latter aligned with the Communists and formed the UDF, without a majority to form the government. But Ranga's support at this stage to Prakasam and the latter becoming the Chief Minister,¹⁰ brought two things to light. Prakasam in 1953 did not have any truck with the Communists. Sanjiva Reddy, the leader of the Congress legislative wing, was denied the pleasure of becoming the Chief Minister of Andhra State because of the opposition from the KLP leader, Ranga. Sanjiva Reddy represented another faction when both Ranga and Reddy were in the Congress as Ranga at the apex of the organisational level and Reddy was identified with the ministerial group.

Latchanna became a Minister in Prakasam's Cabinet and this helped him in strengthening KLP's position at Srikakulam district. The position of the Congress party either remained the same or eroded, for there was no one to represent from the district in the Cabinet. Latchanna's ministership was not long. He had to resign from the Cabinet when he had difference of opinion with Prakasam on the question of prohibition.¹¹ Since Latchanna belonged to KLP and his subsequent move of a no-confidence motion in the Assembly brought the downfall of Prakasam's Cabinet in November 1954, which resulted in the dissolution of the Assembly. The President's rule was imposed for some time and subsequently the elections were ordered. All this had increased Latchanna's popularity in the district.

(iii) 1955 Elections:

The general feeling among the State leadership regarding the attainment of power by the Communists had to be stopped at any cost, drove the Congress, KLP and the Praja Party to hold discussions, even forgetting their earlier differences. These negotiations gave birth to the "United Congress Front" (UCF) as a front to fight the 1955 elections.¹² The Elections were held for the Andhra Legislative Assembly for the first time after the emergence of separate Andhra State.

By the time of the elections, Kotagiri Seetharanayya and T.S. Gupta, both followers of Sanjiva Reddy were elected President and Secretary respectively of the DCC of Srikakulam.

During the 1955 elections, at the State organisational level, Gopala Reddy, an associate of Latchanna was the President of the APCC. This had caused a vacuum at the district level politics, to be filled by the free play of Latchanna in the selection of candidates for the district of Srikakulam. Sanjiva Reddy, did not hold any position at the State level at that time in the party hierarchy and left his followers of Srikakulam district to contest the election as independents - opposing the official Congress candidates.¹³ The second phase of the factional feud to be seen during the 1955 Assembly elections is comparable to the first phase in the First General Elections. It is to be noted that all the three constituents of UCF - Congress, KLP, Praja Party - fought the elections with their respective symbols. Due to fresh delimitation, the number of Assembly constituencies went up to twenty in the district.¹⁴

TABLE II

PARTY POSITION IN THE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS - SRIKAKULAM DISTRICT¹⁵
1955

Seats	Party	Contestants	Seats won	Percentage
20	Congress	9	6	18.19
	KLP	11	7	21.34
	CPI	11	-	12.70
	Socialists	6	2	12.89
	Praja party	-	-	-
	Independents	45	5	34.85

The results of the 1955 elections to the Andhra Legislative Assembly presented altogether a different picture. The results not only showed the contesting parties' realistic assessment, but also the influence of some of the local leaders. Of the nine seats the Congress contested out of twenty seats, it won six seats, giving a percentage of 66.66. KLP, the partner of the Congress party, fielded eleven candidates and won seven seats thus achieving a percentage of 63.63. The Communists fielded eleven candidates and did not win even a single seat. The Socialists had put up six candidates and secured two seats. Out of the forty five independents that contested only five seats were wrested.¹⁶ The Praja Party, a third partner of the United Congress Front did not field any candidate in the district.

The formation of the United Congress Front completely reduced the influence of the Communists. Bejawada Gopala Reddy became the Chief Minister after the elections with KLP's nominee Latchanna and N.V. Rama Rao, as ministers in the Cabinet.¹⁷ The merger of KLP with the Congress party, at the instance of the Congress President U.N. Dhebar helped the Congress to establish firm roots in Srikakulam district.

For the office of the Speaker of the Assembly, Sanjiva Reddy proposed the name of Kasu Brahmananda Reddy, while Latchanna proposed the name of R.L.N. Dora, an advocate from Srikakulam. The candidature of the latter was supported by the Chief Minister

and hence Dora could easily walk over with the Speakership. This had brought to surface the factionalism in the Congress party at the State level - one headed by Gopala Reddy and another by Sanjiva Reddy. This factionalism had its effects on the district politics as Dora hailed from the intellectual urban section and was a staunch opponent of Kurumanna, a rural-oriented politician, who was a lieutenant of Sanjiva Reddy. Dora and Latchanna, a combination of urban intellectual and kisan sections respectively, had an upper hand in the district politics.

(iv) Congress Organisational Politics

The organisational politics of the Congress party at the district level presented another picture. Killi Appala Naidu, the President of the Co-operative Central Bank and Kalinga by caste, became the President of Srikakulam District Congress Committee in 1955, in spite of the fact that he was not an elected member of the DCC. By virtue of his Presidentship of the DCC in 1950-51, he became a permanent member of the DCC which enabled him to get elected as President. His opponents filed a petition before the High Command of the Congress challenging the validity of the election. This had caused further divisions in the Congress party at the district. Appala Naidu and the followers of Sanjiva Reddy belonged to Kalinga caste. However, the caste factor did not deter the factional leaders in mobilising support from among their relatives.

Sanjiva Reddy was a state leader and did not have that much of influence at the district. But his rival Latchanna headed the other group, who belonged to the kisans, could strengthen his hold as a Minister in Srikakulam district. The important local body, the Co-operative Central Bank, was also under the influence of the kisan group.¹⁸

The formation of Andhra Pradesh on 1st November 1956¹⁹ virtually took off the lid of Pandora's Box. The battle lines for leadership were drawn between Sanjiva Reddy, who became the leader of the Congress Legislature Party and Gopala Reddy, then Chief Minister of Andhra. The kisan group of Andhra and Chenna Reddy group of Telangana supported Gopala Reddy whereas Kala Venkata Rao and others in Andhra and K.V. Banga Reddi and J.V. Harsinga Rao of Telangana supported Sanjiva Reddy. The ultimate outcome of the factional struggle saw Sanjiva Reddy becoming the Chief Minister who wanted to draw on the strength of the kisan group to establish his hold at the organisational level by inducting Latchanna and K. Obula Reddy into the State Cabinet which, however, did not materialise.

Concurrently, B.R. Rao, a Kalinga businessman, sprouted in the politics of the Srikakulam district. He was elected as an independent to the Lok Sabha in the 1952 elections from Srikakulam constituency. The death of Appala Naidu, a man from his own caste, elevated Rao further and eventually saw his occupancy of Presidentship of the Co-operative Central Bank, a

position which was well exploited by him to enhance his popularity.

The factional fight at the district level politics also expanded further. Some followers of Sanjiva Reddy charged Latchanna, of corruption during his ministerial assignment in Gopala Reddy's Cabinet. The Congress High Command appointed Sardar Hukum Singh, the then Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha to investigate the charges levelled against Latchanna.²⁰

At this juncture, the vacancy of the DCC Presidentship gave a chance to patch up between the rivals. The two ministerial groups competed between them for the office of the DCC Presidentship, one group put up a Kalinga, the brother of a former President of the DCC with the blessings of Sanjiva Reddy, while, the other group consisted of B.R. Rao, another Kalinga MP and a Kapu ML^A with the support of many freedom fighters fielded the candidature of a Vaisya freedom fighter. No group had any individual strength to win the office of the DCC. The kisan group was there as the third force without strength to compete on its own and the two contending ministerial sections approached the former for its support. Therefore, the kisan group started bargaining with the two competing groups. The kisan group would have certainly improved its position taking advantage of this opportunity but for the internal differences it could not do so.

Latchanna had personal difference of opinion with B.R. Rao, MP, who had sponsored one of the candidates for the

DCC Presidentship. This was the reason why Latchanna supported the candidate sponsored by the supporters of Sanjiva Reddy, his bitter rival in the State politics, as against the wish of his followers who were supporting Rao's candidate. The followers of Latchanna wanted the enquiry proceedings sponsored by the supporters of Sanjiva Reddy against Latchanna to be dropped as the price of their support to Reddy's candidate. This stand was not acceptable to Reddy and his followers. However, the numerical strength of the followers of Latchanna helped B.R. Rao's candidate to win the DCC Presidentship. This also paved the way for the kisan section to move closer with one of the groups of Sanjiva Reddy. This brought to surface two things, that even factional fights and caste loyalty had come to a grinding halt at the cost of personality cult. Secondly, both Sanjiva Reddy and Rao, were bitter opponents of Latchanna, at the State and district levels respectively. But at this stage, Latchanna preferred to give support to his rival at the State politics than to the local rival. Hence, personal enmity between the factional leaders would be more at the local level than at the higher levels.

The next DCC elections in 1957 provided a contrast. For the earlier DCC elections the division in the ministerial section was between the urban and rural, but this time the split was both vertical and horizontal, one group consisted of an MP, the Speaker of the State Assembly, former President of the DCC and a few freedom fighters and the other group consisted

of a former Joint Secretary of the APCC, former President of the DCC, a few MLAs and freedom fighters.²² The deciding factor remained with the kisans. The former group consisting of an MP, etc., supported a Brahmin freedom fighter whereas the latter supported a Vaisya freedom fighter for the Presidentship of the DCC. Both groups bargained with the kisans and one group even went to the extent of offering the entire executive body of the DCC to the kisan section as the price for its support and thus clinched the issue. Finally, a Brahmin freedom fighter, who was supported by B.R. Rao, came to occupy the office of the DCC Presidentship.

Although the understanding was to hand over the entire executive to the kisan group, the latter preferred to elect the executive by the general body of the DCC instead of authorising the President to nominate it. The logic behind this move was that if for any reason the President resigns, then the term of the executive body being co-terminus would also end. Since the executive belonged to the kisan group many a resolution passed by the DCC were not to the liking of the ministerial section. The price was too much for the office of the DCC Presidentship and he had even volunteered to resign the office to avoid the displeasure of the state Congress leadership. The polarisation which took place at the time of the Congress organisational elections was out of personal animosity. Since the key contending parties belonged to the same section, i.e., ministerial section and to the Kalinga caste, the mobilisation for support

started on the basis of personal influence. Although a few persons in this gamble would not win anything personally, but still had supported one group against the other for they were either in principle or for personal reasons opposed to their respective counterparts.

(v) 1957 Elections

The 1957 elections to the Lok Sabha provided a completely different political picture. Contending groups joined together and groups which once included many friends, came to oppose each other. There were three parliamentary constituencies in the district including one plural constituency. Srikakulam was a general constituency and Parvathipuram was a plural constituency in which one seat was reserved for the Tribes.

B.R. Rao was the Congress candidate from Srikakulam who had won the seat as independent in the 1952 Lok Sabha elections. The Congress candidates in the Parvathipuram plural constituency were V.V. Giri, for the general seat, and B. Satyanarayana Dora, a rich tribal landlord for the reserved seat. The only opposition to the Congress candidates came from former Socialists who stood as independents. These were V.K. Haidu and D. Suridora respectively for general and the reserved seats.

TABLE III

PARTY POSITION IN THE SECOND GENERAL ELECTIONS - SRIKAKULAM DISTRICT²³

LOK SABHA

Seats	Party	Contestants	Seats Won	Percentage
3	Congress	3	2	51.82
	Independents	3	1	48.17

Table IV shows that the official Congress candidate, B.R. Rao defeated his rival Narayanaappala Naidu, an independent, by a margin of 16356 votes, but in the plural constituency both the Congress candidates were defeated due to the rules of the Election Commission.²⁴ The victory of B.R. Rao gave a fillip to his activity both at the district and at the state levels.

TABLE IV

VALID VOTES POLLED FOR THE CANDIDATES²⁵

Constituency	Party	Candidate	Voted polled	Winning candidate	Majority
Srikakulam	Congress	B.R. Rao	84797	B.R. Rao	16356
	Independent	N. Narayana appala Naidu	68441		
Parvathipuram (general)	Congress	V.V. Giri	124039		
	Independent	V.K. Naidu	118968		
Parvathipuram (reserved)	Congress	B. Satyanarayana Dora	126792	S. Satyanarayana Dora	7864
	Independent	D. Suri Dora	124604		

In 1958, the situation became more fluid by the formation of a regional party, led by Latchanna of Andhra and Chenna Reddy of Telangana. This party was formed to oppose the Congress government headed by Sanjiva Reddy. This regional party came into existence as "Andhra Pradesh Democratic Party" at the end of the year 1958 with Latchanna as President. Ranga, the political mentor of Latchanna, however, remained with the Congress. The kisan section in Srikakulam district parted with the Congress and joined the Democratic Party.

Although Ranga was the leader of the peasants, known as 'Raithubhandhava' (Friend of the Farmer) and also led peasant movements²⁶ in Srikakulam district, he could not prevent his followers in the Congress deserting him and the Congress party by joining with Latchanna in the Democratic Party. Another important factor contributing to the phenomenon of desertion by several kisan Congress workers was the fact that Latchanna belonged to Srikakulam district and also to the kisan group, while Ranga was from Guntur district. Therefore, next to caste factor it was the factor of regional identify which determined the growth of a party and charisma of the leader as manavadu - our man - which is to say our area man.²⁷

When another move was afoot to start a State level party - the inspiration having come from P.V.G. Raju, a Socialist, the Socialist Party and the Democratic party merged together to form the 'Socialist Democratic Party', of which P.V.G. Raju

became the President. But the party had an infant death. The main reason for the short span of the Socialist Democratic Party was that some of its leading lights like P.V.G. Raju, Latchanna and Chenna Reddy were equally strong and had a sizable number of followers who would not unite as a single group. The process of disintegration started with K. Obula Reddy joining the Congress followed by Chenna Reddy and P.V.G. Raju. When the Swatantra Party was born as a brain child of late C. Rajagopalachari in August 1959, Ranga became the national leader of the party. Hence, his lieutenant, Latchanna, joined the party and became the leader of the party at the lower levels. After his brief stay in the Socialist Democratic Party, when Latchanna joined the Swatantra Party, several of his followers also came out after a period of political hibernation.

(vi) Panchayat Raj and Parties

The very year of its inception, i.e., 1959, Swatantra became a strong opposition to the Congress in Srikakulam district. In the three-tier Panchayat Raj system, the Gram panchayat being first step of the ladder, and responsible for the execution of several developmental schemes has lot of funds at its disposal. Therefore, the centre of attraction for capturing power for all the parties was obviously the panchayats, Panchayat Samithis and Zilla arishads. Competition on the basis of caste, kinship and group interests surfaced for the control of the Panchayat Raj system. However, the focus was more on power-politics, rather than on constructive approach to

institution-building at the grass-roots, as necessary part of nation-building activity. Myron Weiner aptly said, "those who argued, as many Gandhians did, that local bodies should be given more power but that there should be no politics in the local bodies whether involving political parties or castes or factions - were taking a contradictory position."²⁸

Both the Congress and the Swatantra tried their best to capture the Panchayat samithis. For the Z.P. Chairmanship, Bendi Kurmanna, a Congress MLC defeated the Swatantra candidate by a very narrow margin of just two votes. Immediately, thereafter, when the election for Vice-Chairmanship took place, by the same meagre margin the Swatantra candidate defeated the Congress candidate. There was no evidence to show that there existed a prior understanding to share the offices in the Zilla Parishad. But that was a clear case of floor-crossing within a very short span on considerations like caste and personal loyalty.²⁹

(vii) The Congress Organisation - the Period of its Decline

The national level politics came to be staged on a proportionate scale at the State and the district levels as well. The Congress party became a handmaid of the Prime Minister at the national level and the Chief Minister at the State level. Whoever was proposed by the Chief Minister for the Presidentship of the PCC had to be elected unanimously. At times, even an unknown figure was brought to head the party at the State level.

In 1959, L.L. Das, an MLA and a close associate of Sanjiva Reddy became the President of the DCC. In 1961, an MP B.R. Rao also became the President of the DCC with the blessings of the Chief Minister.

After 1956 the DCC started losing its importance except to ratify what the national and State level leadership proposed. It lost its representative character and became a nominated body. This led one observer to comment that, "the process of transforming the Congress from a movement for national independence to the position of a ruling party began with the elimination from its ranks of organised groups not amenable to control by the leadership and eroded with the final subordination of the organisation to the leadership in 1951."³⁰

Immediately after independence Congress party did not lose its vigour. Its volunteers used to go to village after village to enrol members, explain the programme and goals of the Congress party and collect membership fees. This gave an opportunity to the common-man to get in touch with the party workers. These volunteers included old Congressmen who stood the test of time and sacrificed a lot for national independence. However, the younger generation, which succeeded thereafter, scrambled for power both at the organisational and at the governmental levels. As has been aptly described: "the old workers sacrificed much but are reaping no benefits; the new workers, on the other hand, have sacrificed nothing but are

exploiting their association with the Congress for their own benefits. This shift in leadership has resulted in great tension and struggle for power within the party. Being no match to superior skill, economic power and political ability of the new entrants, however, the old workers gradually became disinterested in the Congress organisation and either left the Congress or became inactive."³¹ To increase their acceptability among the State leadership coterie, the local leaders went even to the extent of paying membership fees for a large number of persons out of their own pocket. This gesture was made ridiculous to the extent that membership fees for otherwise dead people were also paid in order to artificially increase membership. Several people remained in/^{the}dark without knowing their membership in the party for the subscription was a nominal amount. "The Congress has an open door policy regarding membership. The result is that persons who are interested in controlling the party machine got a large number of members enrolled and secure high elective positions. To achieve this goal increasingly bogus members are enrolled by self-seeking Congress bosses."³²

The PCC leaders in turn entrusted their followers with the task of collecting subscriptions. Thus the money collected was deposited with the PCC office directly. Otherwise had the DCC been allowed to collect the subscription as was the normal practice, then it would have retained its share and deposited with the PCC what would have been the legitimate share

of the PCC treasury. Since the factional leaders at the district level were interested in pushing up their own image, a reverse process was adopted, so that the money reached the PCC treasury directly. This had caused considerable financial hardships on the DCC's, so much so that many DCC offices were not even in a position to appoint a full-time office worker.

(viii) 1962 Elections

The changes in the State leadership affected the Congress party men and their loyalties in the Srikakulam district. This was the time when Sanjiva Reddy relinquished the post of Chief Ministership of Andhra Pradesh and became the President of the All-India Congress Committee. Sanjeevayya, a Harijan, became the Chief Minister. He persuaded one Kottapalli Punnayya, MLA, a district level Swatantra leader who was also a Harijan advocate to join the Congress party. The main reason was to attract the Harijans to the Congress fold. This could be done only when their leader Punnayya joined the Congress. This defection had cost the Swatantra Party a heavy price as became evident by the results of the 1962 elections. The AICC Presidentship helped Sanjiva Reddy to distribute the party tickets for the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly among his followers in the 1962 elections.³³

TABLE V

PARTY POSITION IN THE THIRD GENERAL ELECTIONS - SRIKAKULAM DISTRICT³⁴

LOK SABHA

Seats	Party	Contestants	Seats Won	Percentage
3	Congress	3	3	50.72
	Swatantra	3	-	37.86
	Independents	4	-	11.40

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

20	Congress	20	13	43.62
	Swatantra	17	5	29.14
	CPI	5	-	5.63
	PSP	1	-	1.18
	Jan Sangh	2	-	1.55
	Independents	19	2	18.86

In the Lok Sabha elections, Swatantra secured 37.86% of the popular votes as against the Congress party's 50.72%, but it could not win a single seat. All the three seats went to the Congress party. Concerning the Assembly election held concurrently with the Lok Sabha elections, Congress secured thirteen out of twenty seats contested,³⁵ with 43.62% of the popular votes to its credit. Swatantra party secured five seats with 29.14% of popular votes. Independents fielding nineteen candidates secured

two seats with 18.86% of the popular votes. Although the CPI, PSP and Jan Sangh contested, could not even protect their deposit, except the CPI.

Comparing to the 1952 General Elections, Congress was having a second position in Srikakulam district, but in the 1962 elections Congress improved its position, because some of the leaders of KLP fragmented and either joined the Congress or the newly formed Swatantra Party. A few factors that were responsible for the better performance of the Congress party could be illustrated. The Chief Minister Sanjiva Reddy won the hearts of the Harijan voters as he was a Harijan. The Zilla Parishad Chairmanship was also in the hands of a close associate of Sanjiva Reddy, the AICC President. With both organisational zeal at the district level and the Congress party in power at the State, it was not a difficult task for the Congress to secure a comfortable majority in Srikakulam district.

The election results gave an indication as to how the caste loyalty was being used. The DCC Presidentship was in the hands of a Kalinga, who was also an MP. The Zilla Parishad Chairmanship was also with a Kalinga. Of the thirteen seats to the Assembly, which the Congress had secured, two seats each went to the three dominant peasant castes, i.e., Kalinga, Kapu and Velama; two seats went to the Scheduled Caste and one to the Scheduled Tribe; two ex-Zamindars were also there and a Vaisya was elected from Srikakulam town constituency, which was due to the major population of the Vaisya community in the town. There exists material

evidence to say that money had played a role in the election politics. Of the five Swatantra candidates three belonged to the Kapu caste, one Velama and the fifth, the leader of the party, Latchanna, from the Srisayana caste. The kisan section lost its respect because of its frequent change-overs from one party to another.³⁶

Congress party would have fared better, had there not been many independents in the field, who became dissidents or rebels from Congress when they were denied party tickets by the party High Command. The party leadership could not take disciplinary action. On earlier occasions some Congress dissidents who contested as independents, and got elected, were re-admitted to the Congress fold. As the Congress tickets for the Assembly elections were mainly distributed among the followers of Sanjiva Reddy, it was absolutely possible for him to come back to the State politics. This position helped him becoming Chief Minister of the State again and then the roles got reversed. Sanjeevayya became the President of the All India Congress Committee.

The death of the Zilla Parishad Chairman, Bendi Kurmanna, in 1963, resulted in the bye-election of the post. Chief Minister Sanjiva Reddy supported T. Papa Rao, a Kalinga in preference to V.K. Naidu, a Velama Congress MLA and Vice-Chairman of the Z.P. who was also an aspirant for that post. Swatantra Party which secured considerable number of Panchayat Samithis was waiting for an opportunity to toss its weight and this coincided with Naidu's ambition to become the Chairman of

the Zilla Parishad. On its own Swatantra party would not have won the election. Since the house was divided, the caste line became dominant. Kapus would always prefer Velamas to Kalingas. As the official Congress candidate was a Kalinga, many Kapus from among the Congressmen were openly supported Naidu. However, Naidu won the election as ^{an} independent against the official Congress candidate with the support of the Swatantra Party. Naidu would not also be expelled from Congress for violating the Congress party directives, as otherwise his expulsion from Congress would amount losing the Presidentship of the Z.P. and also the Swatantra Party was very eager to enter the split-house of the Congress and admit Naidu to its fold. Meanwhile, Naidu started hobnobbing with Brahmananda Reddy, when the latter was the Finance Minister of Andhra Pradesh and a close follower of Sanjiva Reddy. All these, had raised the stature of Naidu and he became a factional leader in the Srikakulam district politics, vis-a-vis the Congress party had to lie low to cleanse its house.

(ix) 1967 Elections

Tinged with its success in the Zilla Parishad Chairmanship's election, the appetite of the Swatantra Party leaders grew more and one after another they queued up to join the Congress. Latchanna was left all alone in the Swatantra Party and he tried to build up the party again. Though Latchanna lost the old guard, his new found support of the younger generation made the Swatantra Party a strong opposition to the Congress party by the time the 1967 elections were held. ³⁷

TABLE VI
PARTY POSITION IN THE FOURTH GENERAL ELECTIONS - SRIKAKULAM
DISTRICT³⁸

LOK SABHA

Seats	Party	Contestants	Seats Won	Percentage
3	Congress	3	1	42.0
	Swatantra	2	2	36.8
	Independents	4	-	21.0

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

19	Congress	19	4	35.42
	Swatantra	15	10	32.30
	CPI	2	-	1.21
	CPI(M)	3	-	3.21
	Jan Sangh	4	-	1.00
	Independents	25	5	26.83

From the results of the 1967 elections, one could guess how the polarisation had taken place. Of the three Congress candidates fielded for the Lok Sabha, only one could win. However, the percentage of popular votes (42%) polled by the Congress party remained the highest. Swatantra which had

put up two candidates got both of them elected securing 36.08% of the popular votes polled. The third in the contest were the independents. None of the four independents could win a seat, although they secured 21% of the popular votes.

In comparison with the 1962 Lok Sabha elections, Congress lost not only the number of seats from three to one, but also its popular votes from 50.72 per cent to 42 per cent. Swatantra also lost its popular percentage of votes by one per cent (37.86% in 1962 and 36.08% in 1967). However, in the 1962 elections Swatantra Party did not have any representation from Srikakulam district to the Lok Sabha, while the 1967 elections returned both the candidates it fielded. Although the independents did not win any seat in both the elections, i.e., 1962 and 1967, its popular votes rose from 11.04 per cent to 21 per cent. This increase of popular votes to the independents could only indicate the way in which the two all India parties, viz., the Congress and the Swatantra, lost their credibility among the masses.

The Assembly elections held concurrently with the Lok Sabha elections was also another print of the same negative. The position of the Congress party in Srikakulam district came down from its thirteen seats in 1962 to four seats in 1967 in the Legislative Assembly. Its percentage of popular votes also slid down from 43.62 per cent to 35.42 per cent. Swatantra party, improved its performance from five seats in 1962 to ten seats in 1967 and its popular votes also increased from 29.14

per cent to 32.30 per cent. CPI, CPI(M) and Jan Sangh also fielded their candidates in vain. However, CPI's popular votes decreased from 5.63 per cent to 1.21 per cent. Independents improved their position by securing three additional seats, i.e., from two seats to five seats. Their popular votes also rose up from 18.86 per cent to 26.83 per cent. Here a factor to be noted is that the radical movement led by the Marxists at the district level was slowly gathering a momentum against the Congress government.³⁹ This group extended their support to the Swatantra Party in the elections, particularly in the tribal belt of the district.

The 1967 elections had put an end to the one party dominance. Both internal and external factors were responsible for the Congress going into oblivion in Srikakulam district. Factional fights and lack of unity and rivalry between the local Congress leaders were witnessed. This time the Swatantra party adopted better tactics to face the ruling party. It waited until the announcement of the candidates by the Congress to win over the dissidents. It also kept in its mind its strength in the district. The loss of the Congress party was the gain of the Swatantra Party. Latchanna's personal strength was the mainstay of the Swatantra Party's victory. The State government's imposition of additional land revenue, levy on certain food-grains, etc., were responsible for alienating some of the rural voters. This was tactfully utilised by Latchanna. The two Parliamentary constituencies which the Swatantra captured from

the Congress also indicated the mood of the people. B.R. Rao, the sitting Congress MP who was winning from the Srikakulam Parliamentary constituency since 1952 lost to Latchanna. Since Latchanna won the Sompeta Assembly seat and Srikakulam Parliamentary seat, he resigned his Parliamentary seat to accommodate Ranga who was defeated as Swatantra candidate from Chittoor Parliamentary constituency. The bye-election saw Ranga as Swatantra candidate and B.R. Rao again as the Congress candidate. Although Swatantra won the bye-election, the margin was reduced from 60,385 votes in 1967 General Elections to 52,664 popular votes. This decrease in the margin could be attributed as the candidate of the Swatantra Party, Ranga, was an outsider to the district, as against Latchanna, a local candidate in 1967 General Elections.

The three factional leaders of the Congress - B.R. Rao, V.K. Naidu and L.L. Das - were defeated at the hands of the opposition. The poor performance of the Congress party in Srikakulam district led to rethinking of its strategy and to revitalising the cadres. The State leadership took direct interest in the Srikakulam district politics. V.K. Naidu who lost in the 1967 Assembly elections became a Secretary of the APCC and also a member of the State Housing Board. In 1968, V.K. Naidu became a member of the Legislative Council and Brahmananda Reddy, the Chief Minister, appointed him as Minister for Electricity.⁴⁰ V.K. Naidu's induction into the Cabinet helped the Congress party to come to grips. Within a short period a

section of the Swatantra party legislators from the Srikakulam district came close to V.K. Naidu and by 1970-71, six out of the ten Swatantra legislators joined the Congress party. The strength of the Congress party rose from four to ten seats in the Legislative Assembly as the position of the Swatantra Party came down to four seats from Srikakulam district. Of the six Swatantra candidates who had joined the Congress, four legislators belonged to the Velama caste, from which V.K. Naidu hailed and the other two legislators belonged to the native place of Naidu, where he exercised considerable influence. Naidu's influence rose considerably both at the district and State level politics.

The split in the Congress party in 1969 did not affect the party position in Srikakulam district. Sanjiva Reddy, who remained with the Congress (O), and once had a large number of followers in this district, could not count on any supporters after the split. They had aligned themselves with the Chief Minister Brahmananda Reddy. It all showed the extent to which the politicians of Srikakulam district could do to somehow remain in power.

(x) 1971 Elections

The 1967 elections to the Lok Sabha and to some of the State legislatures proved that the popularity of the Congress party was on the decline. Majority of the old guard of the Congress remained with the Congress (O) at the national level led by Kamaraj. The split away group under Mrs. Gandhi was

however holding power at the Centre and in a few States. Even by then, some of the States were under the spell of the regional parties or of the coalition governments. Opposition grew to an extent that became a challenge to the leadership of Mrs. Gandhi in the Parliament. This had driven her, among other things, to dissolve the Lok Sabha in December 1970 and announce elections in March 1971.⁴¹ In the 1971 mid-term election to the Lok Sabha, Congress party was a weak party at the national level. However, in the State of Andhra Pradesh and particularly at Srikakulam district, the Congress led by Mrs. Gandhi enjoyed good support.

TABLE VII
PARTY POSITION IN THE MID-TERM POLL
IN 1971 - SRIKAKULAM DISTRICT⁴²

LOK SABHA

Seats	Party	Contestants	Seats Won	Percentage
3	Congress	3	3	67.44
	Swatantra	3	-	27.06
	CPI	1	-	4.46
	Independents	1	-	1.03

In 1971 election, the Congress led by Mrs. Gandhi fielded candidates who were its former Members of the Lok Sabha from Srikakulam district. However, the Congress (O) did not put

up any candidate. The Swatantra Party's candidates in the two constituencies were its sitting MPs and in the third constituency, a kapu, a former Samithi President was the candidate. There was only one independent in Srikakulam constituency and CPI contested for the Scheduled Tribe reserved seat. This left Congress to face directly the Swatantra in Bobbili Constituency and there was a triangular fight in the other constituencies.

The Indira wave was so strong in Srikakulam district that all the three Congress candidates won the election with a massive majority. The results not only indicated the charisma of Mrs. Gandhi but also the support to her slogan 'garibi hatao'. Ranga, who was a national leader, contesting on a Swatantra ticket from Srikakulam constituency lost by over a margin of 1,12,172 of popular votes. Congress secured 67.44 per cent of the popular votes as against 42.00 per cent in the 1967 elections. Swatantra Party's position went down from 36.18 per cent in 1967 to 27.06 per cent in 1971. The lone independent got a negligible 1.03 per cent as against 21%, the share of independents in 1967. After the radical movement, CPI fared better in this election getting 4.47 per cent of popular votes. However, the 1971 election proved that caste was not the only determining factor in the elections but also the personality of the leader decides the outcome of the poll.

Before the elections to the State Assembly Brahmananda Reddy was asked to resign from the office of the Chief Ministership and P.V. Narasimha Rao, another close associate of Mrs. Gandhi

was installed in the office of the Chief Ministership of Andhra Pradesh. Many prominent Reddys in the Brahmaananda Reddy's cabinet could not find berth in Narasimha Rao's cabinet. However, V.K. Naidu from Srikakulam district retained his place in the cabinet.

(xi) 1972 Elections

Another change before the 1972 Assembly elections in the Congress was at the organisational level. The APCC reconstituted the party organisation throughout the State and nominated ad hoc Committees for all the districts for the purpose of the ensuing elections in 1972. K.V.N. Dora, a veteran freedom fighter, became the President of the ad hoc DCC of Srikakulam. The DCC executive had members from among the supporters of the four factional leaders on the basis of caste, area, etc. The 1971 Lok Sabha elections and its massive victory for the Congress attracted several people from Srikakulam district for the Congress tickets in the 1972 Assembly elections. Factional leaders of the DCC exerted maximum pressure on the Central Election Committee to get tickets for their nominees.⁴³

TABLE VIII

PARTY POSITION IN THE FIFTH GENERAL
ELECTIONS - SRIKAKULAM DISTRICT 44

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Seats	Party	Contestants	Seats Won	Percentage
19	Congress	19	12	49.94
	Swatantra	6	-	10.65
	CPI	1	-	0.76
	Jan Sangh	3	-	1.51
	Independents	24	7	37.13

In 1972 Assembly elections Congress party fielded candidates in all the nineteen constituencies. Swatantra Party fielded six, CPI one, Jan Sangh three and independents twenty-four. Congress won twelve seats out of nineteen it contested, and secured 49.9 per cent in 1967. Swatantra did not win any seat and its popularity also came down in terms of percentage of popular votes, i.e., 32.3 per cent in 1967 to 10.65 per cent in 1972. Independents secured seven seats of the twenty they had contested, which yielded 37.13 per cent of the popular votes in comparison to 26.83 in 1967. From the results of these two elections, it could be seen that the Congress party not only secured more seats in the 1972 elections but also increased its popular votes in this district. Swatantra lost not only its representation in the State legislature but its electoral base was that the number of seats it captured were less than that captured by the independents. CPI and Jan Sangh only remained as parties on the ballot papers without an appreciable following.

The elections again brought to light the single party system as per the Srikakulam district concerned. Of the twelve successful Congress candidates two belonged to Kalinga and two seats went to Velama caste, three to Kapu, one each to Scheduled Tribe, Brahmin and Ganjam Reddy and two to Scheduled Caste. Of the seven independents who were successful, three were Velamas, one Kalinga, two Tribes and one Ganjam Reddy.⁴⁵

The victory of the Congress party was mainly due to the charisma of Mrs. Gandhi. The Congress would have fared better

had there not been six rebel Congressmen as independents. However, immediately after the elections the six rebel Congressmen who were elected joined the Congress party. Thus, the strength of the Congress party increased to eighteen out of nineteen legislators from the Srikakulam district. The strength of the Swatantra Party since the 1971 Parliamentary elections was decreasing and reached its lowest point in the 1972 Assembly elections. The post-1972 Assembly elections scenario further saw fragmentation of the depleted strength of the Swatantra Party. With whatever strength it had, it merged with the BKO and subsequently BLD. If the Swatantra Party had survived at the district level, it was due to the leadership of Latchanna.

(xii) An Over-view of the Electoral Performance and Electoral Politics of the Congress

An overall picture that could be drawn on the Congress party's performance in the elections commencing from the 1952 Lok Sabha elections and ending with the 1972 Assembly elections, i.e., the period under study could be seen from the comparative analysis of all the elections. Srikakulam district continued to have three Parliamentary constituencies since 1952 elections. Only in the 1957 elections it had a plural constituency. The 1952 parliamentary election was an election contested by many parties. In this multi-corned contest the Congress party won only one seat. In 1957 while Congress was opposed by independents alone, it secured two seats. In 1962, two parties, viz., the Congress, and the Swatantra and the independents were in the

field. However, Congress got all the three seats. In 1967, the Congress party fielded the sitting MPs and yet got only one seat. The other two seats went to the Swatantra. In 1971, the Congress party had secured all the three seats.

In terms of popular votes polled by the Congress in Srikakulam district, it showed the rise and fall of the party. In 1952, Congress secured 23.97%; in 1957 - 51.82%; in 1962 - 50.72%; in 1967 - 42%; and 1971 - 67.44%. This rise and ecline can be attributed to several factors that played and also exposed the organisational strength and support to the policies of the government. In the 1952 elections Srikakulam district was part of the Madras Presidency. KLP and Praja party were the main opposition parties to the Congress party. The two parties got roughly 20% while the Congress got 23.97% of the popular votes. Independents secured two seats and 45.19% of the popular votes. This big share only indicates that there were five independents and some of the votes obtained by them were either due to personality factor or caste factor.

With the understanding of the KLP, the Praja Party and the Congress to form the United Congress Front to fight the elections in 1955 to the Andhra State Assembly, the percentage of popular votes of the Congress party rose to 51.82% in the 1957 Lok Sabha elections from Srikakulam district. Although Congress won only two seats of the three it contested in 1957, the third seat was won by an independent. It was due to certain procedures of the Election Commission, as this was a plural

constituency. Independents share of 48.17% of the popular votes in 1957 elections, was due to two factors - there were two ex-Socialists as candidates and the third independent was a rebel Congressman. Therefore, the independents' share was not a negative vote but was due to the personality and the caste factor of the independents.

Congress retained almost the same percentage of popular votes (50.72%) in the 1962 elections and secured all the three seats. Swatantra and the independents were the other contestants in the field. Swatantra secured 37.86% of the popular votes and did not secure any seat. This Swatantra's share of 37.86% indicates that the votes it got were mainly that of the kisans. The independents share came down from 48.17% of the previous election to 11.4%. This loss was the gain of the Swatantra party since Congress maintained its popular votes.

The 1967 elections was the lean period for the Congress party. It could only win one seat of the three it contested and its popular votes also went down, i.e., from 50.72% in the previous election to 42%. This decline was due to certain policies of the State government towards the working class, which the latter considered as directed against them. Swatantra won the two seats it contested and almost maintained its popular votes, i.e., 36.8%. However, Independents' share of popular votes rose up to 21% as against previous election's 11.4%. This raise in independents' share was the loss to the Congress, for reasons mentioned above. While the reason for the victory of

the one candidate of the Congress in this election was due to the support given by the Maharajah of Vijayanagaram because the four Assembly constituencies fall under the influence of the Maharajah. In the 1967 bye-election in which Kanga was the Swatantra candidate helped Swatantra to retain the seat with a considerable margin of votes.

The split in the Congress party in 1969 resulted in the dissolution of the Lok Sabha in December 1970 and mid-term elections were held in March 1971. It was a gamble Mr. Gandhi undertook, and no one expected that the Congress under Mrs. Gandhi would sweep the polls. The results indicated the magic of her charisma. The Congress party got all the three seats it contested from this district and secured 67.44% as against the 42% in the previous election. Swatantra's three candidates were not only defeated but also its percentage of popular votes came down to 27.06%. There was only one independent and the popular votes secured by him was 1.03% against 21% in the previous election. The performance of the Congress party in the 1971 elections was the best performance with the highest percentage of popular votes. In 1962 although the Congress secured all the three seats it contested, its popular vote was not as high as in 1971. The undivided CPI after fielding one candidate in the 1952 elections securing 7.12% of the popular votes, came into the arena again in 1971 to get only 4.47% as a divided (CPI) party.

The voting pattern in the Legislative Assembly elections was not the same in comparison to the Lok Sabha elections. An

analysis of the Assembly election results during the period 1952-72 from this district corroborated the earlier statement. In 1952, of the fifteen seats from the district, Congress contested fourteen seats winning five with a popular percentage of 30.43%. KLP contested fifteen seats and secured six seats with 24.8% of popular votes. In terms of number of seats, the third in the race were the independents with three seats and 28.56% of the popular votes. Socialists contested seven seats and secured only one seat with a popular percentage of 9.73%.

With the formation of the State of Andhra in 1953, Prakasam became the Chief Minister and, however, his ministry's fall in November 1954 resulted in elections for the first time to the Andhra State Assembly in 1955. Notwithstanding the fact that the Congress, the KLP and the Praja Party agreed to form a front called the 'United Congress Front', the constituent parties contested the elections with their respective party symbols. Congress secured six seats of the nine it contested with 18.19% of the popular votes. This showed a decline in the popular votes from 30.43% in 1952 to 18.19% in 1955. KLP with eleven contestants in the field secured seven seats with 21.34% of the popular votes. Several Congressmen became rebels and swelled the ranks of independents to secure five seats and 34.85% of the popular vote. The Socialists improved their position by winning two seats and getting a popular vote of 12.89%. This slide down in the popular vote of the Congress party was due to several Congressmen contesting as independents when denied the party tickets, which took the share of their votes of personal

influence away from the Congress. Although KLP improved its position in terms of the number of seats it won, its popular vote fell down from 24.8% to 21.34%. The 1955 election results showed that no party had retained its popular image.

Taking this picture further to compare with the 1962 elections there emerged a situation in which Congress winning thirteen of the twenty candidates it fielded with a popular percentage of 43.62% to its credit. Swatantra Party, which consists mainly of the former KLP and other kisan elements in the Congress, contested seventeen seats to secure five and secured 29.14% of the popular vote. The number of independent contestants also went down and their representation in the Assembly was only two with 18.86% of the popular votes. The increase in the Congress strength and percentage of popular vote were due to two factors. There were less number of independents and the CPI candidates. Then there was the absence of the Socialists, because the Socialist leader, P.V.G. Raju with his followers had joined the Congress, and indeed helped the Congress party to concentrate its fight against the Swatantra Party in order to capture more seats and increase its popular votes. Another factor was that the Swatantra Party was a new party and it could not establish its credentials among the masses so soon. However, the 29.14% of the popular vote that it received were in fact votes obtained by the kisan leaders of the Swatantra Party on their personal score. As we had noted in the 1955 elections, many of the rebel Congressmen who

contested as independents and had their share of votes due to personal influence, surrendered to the Congress their personal vote-banks when they joined the Congress party.

Failure of the State government to implement progressive policies and fulfil the demands of the farmers in the problem of land revenue etc. and due to infighting among the rank and file of the Congressmen reversed the poll prospects of the Congress party in 1967 elections. In terms of number of seats, the Congress fared very badly and lost many seats and could only get a popular vote of 35.42% as against 43.62%. The loss suffered by the Congress party proved to be a gain for the Swatantra party to a very great extent and for the independents who again swelled its ranks as rebel Congressmen. Swatantra's popular vote went up to 32.3% as against 29.14% in 1962. Independents also performed better by securing 26.83% of the popular vote in 1967 as against 18.86% in 1962. However, the CPI, CPI(M) and Jan Sangh were parties without any representation and formed negligible percentage of popular vote.

The 1972 elections, with Mrs. Gandhi in the forefront led her party to a landslide victory, getting twelve of the nineteen seats the Congress party contested and achieved a percentage of 49.94% of popular votes as against 35.42% secured in the previous elections. Swatantra's popularity was eroding since its infighting blew out of all proportions and came onto the surface in the 1971 Lok Sabha elections and it touched its

lowest ebb in the 1972 Assembly elections as it recorded just 10.65% of the popular vote as against 32.3% in the previous elections. Swatantra had also lost all the six candidates it had fielded. Independents kept up their morale to record 37.13% of the popular vote as against 26.83% in the previous election and secured seven seats.

Thus starting from the 1952 elections and ending with 1972 (that is the period of this study) the Congress party recorded a fluctuating wave length in terms of electoral appeal. The upper limit was touched in 1962 and 1972. The bottom line of the wave length was touched in 1952, 1955 and 1967. During the period of the poor performance of the Congress party, the major factor was undoubtedly factional quarrels. When the Congress reached its peak form, the opposition was in disarray. And another important thing to be noted is that there were a few independents and the challenge posed by the independents was negligible. The kisan section which changed its party identity often, either by joining Congress or swelling the ranks of the regional parties, could not prove to be a viable opposition to the Congress, when the latter ruled the state uninterruptedly since independence.

One major conclusion that can be drawn from the analysis of both the Lok Sabha and the Assembly elections is that there are two decisive group of factors determine the results, namely, internal and external. Internal factors include caste, region to which a candidate belongs and the

region from where he contests, popularity, affluence and status in society. External factors include the support for the candidate at the party organisational level and the impact of the policies of the government, etc. However, if one examines the relative roles of these group of factors, internal factors play a more important role than the external in the Assembly elections, while in the Lok Sabha elections, we see that both the factors operate with equal importance. Since the Parliamentary constituency consists of several Assembly constituencies, a contestant naturally has unequal rapport with voters in various segments of the constituency. Hence, the candidate's performance is influenced by his over-all popularity and relations with candidates contesting for Assembly constituencies within his Parliamentary constituency.

The performance of a party in different elections illustrated the nature of party politics that prevailed at the district level. In 1952, the KLP which won more number of seats followed by Congress and independents give a picture of a two party system. In 1955, the position remained almost the same. However, Congress and the KLP had an understanding. Thus, more or less the same party system remained with a sprinkling of a few Socialists. The 1955 election results, which showed a two party existence did not remain the same throughout because the merger of the KLP with the Congress after the elections reverted back again to the single party system with the dominance of the Congress party.

With the emergence of Andhra Democratic Party under the leadership of Latchanna and subsequently, the Socialist Democratic Party led by P.V.G. Raju and Latchanna which had considerable following from this district, posed a threat to the existing district party politics. The birth of Swatantra Party in 1959 which had its strong roots from the kisans of Srikakulam district tilted the balance of one party dominance. The results of the 1962 elections completed the process of polarisation, in which Congress became dominant with Swatantra as a weak opposition. Swatantra stood as a weak opposition, because it was newly formed party by 1962. It gathered strength slowly and even replaced Congress party from its position in the 1967 elections. The period between the 1962 and 1967 elections, give a picture of two parties contesting for supremacy in the Srikakulam district.

The 1967 election results again indicated a process in which only one party could remain stronger and the other weaker. This time the stronger party was the Swatantra Party and the weaker was the Congress party. The Congress party fared so badly that even the independents had one seat more than the Congress. This position did not persist beyond the next general elections in 1971. Six of the Swatantra legislators and a few independents, after the elections marched into the Congress camp and increased the strength of the Congress party. This only highlights how hungry certain legislators were for power and that the Congress party was also prepared to take into its fold some of those so

called independents who were 'rebel' Congressmen, and had opposed its official candidates.

Mrs. Gandhi's highly risky decisions like bringing the party to the 1969 split, announcing the dissolution of the Lok Sabha in December 1970 and facing the electorate in March 1971 Lok Sabha elections, proved right by subsequent events. This tempo was maintained by the Congress in the 1972 State Assembly elections also. Congress was the only party after the 1972 elections winning twelve seats in Srikakulam district. Except one independent MLA, the rest of the five elected independents were just like small pieces of iron attracted by a magnet, joined the Congress party. Thus again it became a one-party dominance at the district level.

Another important conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that some sections of the kisans, were alienated by the Congress to the extent of either remaining as a vocal opposition within the Congress or challenging the Congress party from outside as a party like the KLP, the Swatantra or the independents. From 1952, it was known that the opposition party was being formed out of the sections of peasants in the name of the KLP or the Swatantra in this district. The kisans were to an extent responsible for the existence of a one party or two party dominance in the politics of Srikakulam district. A glance at the party system and position of the various districts in the State, highlight the fact that in Srikakulam district the opposition had always found a fertile ground. This situation

was well understood by the radicals. Srikakulam district subsequently became a bastion of radical politics, which is discussed in Chapter IV.

In the pre-independent days the Indian National Congress was more a national movement comprising heterogeneous group, than a party. Its main objective was to achieve independence for the country from foreign rule. But in the post-independence period, Indian National Congress got itself converted into a party with certain objectives, yet it retained the same heterogeneous configuration, which had put in doubt its credentials as a cohesive party with a clear ideology. This configuration consisted of competing interests, ^{people} with opposing ideological inclinations, different classes and regions, interests representing unequal economic holdings, etc. A political scientist has rightly put it that, "since independence the Congress became a macro-political system, a sort of federal arrangement holding together micro sub-systems - the factions, forums, lobbies, groups, that is, classes and masses. These sub-systems constantly interact on the political process of the Congress. This vast infrastructure based on considerations of caste, interest, region, personality and reflecting in politics the divisions in society and variegation of political 'animals' seeking power has been maintained by the common eagerness of the regional party groups within the Congress who seek to maintain themselves as a federal conglomeration." ⁴⁶

The Congress party's politics and goals were determined by a few individuals who had close contacts with the leaders of the national independence movement. These few people influenced the leadership in moulding the party's political programme according to their choice and preference. The national leaders had little choice other than endorsing the recommendations of these middlemen who anyhow controlled local politics. Since, as a party, the aim of the Congress was to capture and retain power at any cost. This process was legitimised through elections. The middlemen had no role in the struggle for independence nor in the nation-building activity, except however to acquire wealth for themselves.

The antecedents of all the independents in the various elections indicate their one time association or membership of a political party. These independents are not really independent in the real sense of the word, i.e., non-committed to any party or ideology. Majority of the independents in a particular election were seen to be the followers of a particular factional leader of the Congress. Congress as the ruling party cannot be said to command such a respect in implementing its poll manifesto. The anger and dislike of the people towards the Congress party were expressed through the ballot paper, which showed that there did not remain a strong opposition party, which could show a record in order to win the confidence of the people. Many a time, the independents performed better than the candidates put up by

established parties, which only give credence to the fact that people had not much faith in the parties as such.

The factional pulls of the district Congress party through their established leaders many a time posed the threat to the existing dominant party system. The factional leaders install their henchmen as independents or as 'rebel' Congressmen against the official Congress candidates, who often are the followers of another factional leader. When the 'voice' of the factional leader is dominant, he gets his followers as official Congress candidates. If his 'voice' does not count, the factional leader himself instigate his followers to oppose the official Congress candidates and contest as independents. If by chance these rebel or dissident Congressmen win the elections, they, in turn, determine the fate of the leader. Such factional fights and its aftermath determine the composition and role of the party system.

NOTES

1. The Joint Secretary of the APCC and the President of the DCC belong to the Kalinga caste, which is a large community in the district.
2. In 1952, there were twelve constituencies including three plural seats, for the Assembly and three constituencies for the Lok Sabha. The twelve Assembly constituencies were: Salur, Cheepurupalli (plural constituency, one seat reserved for Scheduled Caste), Bobbili, Parvathipuram, Srikakulam (plural constituency, one seat reserved for Scheduled Caste), Honjaram, Palakonda, Marasannapeta, Pathapatnam (plural constituency, one seat reserved for Scheduled Tribe), Tekkali, Sompeta and Ichchapuram. The Lok Sabha constituencies were Pathapatnam, Srikakulam and Parvathipuram.
3. About dissident Congressmen, see the section on Political Background in Chapter I.
4. Source: Election Commission-India, Report on the First General Elections in India, 1951-52, 2 Vols., (New Delhi, 1955).
5. The Socialists could secure only one seat because of the influence of their leader, the then Maharajah of Vijayanagaram. B.P. Rao could win the Srikakulam seat since his caste, Kalinga, counts considerable majority in the constituency.
6. Narayana Rao, K.V., The Emergence of Andhra Pradesh (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1973), p. 244.
7. Responsive co-operation means the extension of the KLP's support to the Congress party as long as Congress party remained co-operative with the KLP.
8. Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Nellore, Kurnool, Anantapur, Cuddapah and Chittoor districts.
9. Narayana Rao, K.V., op. cit., p. 254.
10. Narayana Rao, K.V., op. cit., p. 259.
11. Latchanna also belongs to the tappers' community of Srikakulam.
12. Kundula Obula Reddy was the President of the state branch of the KLP, Tenneti Viswanatham was the President of the Andhra Praja Party and Bejawada Gopala Reddy was the

APCC President. The leaders of these three parties with their top associates started dialogues in 'Ramsadan' in a place called Patamata of Vijayawada district. Later on, these talks came to be popularly known as "Ramasadan Talks."

13. Bendi Kurmanna, the former Joint Secretary of the APCC, and P. Narasimhappa Rao, a Working Committee member of the DCC of Srikakulam were some of the Congress men very close to Sanjiva Reddy who contested as independents.
14. This time the number of Assembly constituencies was increased to twenty, including three plural constituencies, namely Ichchapuram, Sompeta, Brahmanatharla, Tekkali, Narasannapeta, Pathapatnam (plural seat, one seat reserved for Scheduled Castes), Naguru, Parvathipuram, Salur (plural seat, one seat reserved for Scheduled Tribe), Hobbili, Balijapeta, Vunukuru, Palakonda, Nagarikatakam, Srikakulam, Sheramhammadpuram and Cheepurupalli (plural seat, one reserved for Scheduled Caste).
15. Election Commission, India, Report on the General Election to the Andhra Legislative Assembly, 1955, (Delhi, 1956).
16. These independents were mainly the dissident Congressmen. For more details, see, Antics of the Congress High Command: Group Politics in Andhra Pradesh, The Andhra Pradesh Democratic Party, (Hyderabad, 1958), p. 43.
17. K.V. Narayana Rao, op. cit., p. 261.
18. Meanwhile, Killi Appala Naidu, leader of the kisan section of the Congress party, died of heart attack in 1956 which was a great loss to the kisan group. This occurrence created the opportunity for C. Narasimha Naidu, Velama by caste and a prominent advocate from Srikakulam, to attain the position of the President of the DCC.
19. The present Andhra Pradesh formed out of the merger of eleven districts of the then Andhra and nine Telangana districts of erstwhile State of Hyderabad.
20. Antics of the Congress High Command, op. cit., p. 41.
21. B. Kurmanna ^{and} T. Papa Rao put up T. Chiranjiva Rao, brother of Papa Rao, all from the Kalinga caste. The other ministerial group consisted of B.R. Rao, L.L. Das, put up T.S. Gupta for the post of the President of the DCC.
22. R.L.H. Dora, the Speaker of the Andhra Legislative Assembly, B.R. Rao, MP, Ch. Narasimha Naidu, former DCC President put up K. Seetharama Swami, a Brahmin freedom

fighter for the office of the Presidentship of the DCC. The other ministerial group consisted of Kurmanna, L.L. Das, Papa Rao put up T.S. Gupta as their candidate. Finally, Seetharama Swami won the election. If we compare the groups and persons formed for the two elections, it is very clear that the factional groups are not permanent and also its members.

23. Election Commission - India, Report on the Second General Elections in India, 1957, 2 Vols., (New Delhi, 1959).
24. As per the rules of the Election Commission, in the plural constituencies, the counting would be taken first to the reserved seat and the person who secured majority of the votes will be declared as elected for the reserved seat. The next counting would take place for the general seat and the person who secured more number of votes among the remaining candidates will be declared elected for the reserved seat. Hence, both the tribal candidate who got more votes than the general candidates were declared elected for Pervathipuram reserved and general seats.
25. Election Commission - India, Report on the Second General Elections in India.
26. Ranga was the father of the Kisan movement in Srikkulam district.
27. Harrison has rightly put it that, "the candidate to support is 'manavada' - own man - which is to say our caste man" in Selig S. Harrison, India: The Most Dangerous Decade, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960) p. 229
28. Myron Weiner, Party Building in a New Nation: The Indian National Congress, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 167.
29. S. Kurmanna, the Congress candidate defeated the Swatantra candidate R. Chandrasekhara Rao with a margin of two votes for the office of the Zilla Parishad Chairmanship. For the Vice-Chairmanship, the Swatantra party candidate, K. Punnayya won the election against the Congress candidate, K. Seetharama Swami with a margin of ~~the~~ two votes.
30. Gopal Krishna, "One Party Dominance - Development and Trends" in Rajni Kothari, ed., Party System and Election Studies, (Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1967), p. 27.
31. Ramashray Ray, Congress Defeat in Farrukhabad: A Failure of Party Organisation, in Rajni Kothari, ed., op. cit., p. 201.
32. C.P. Shambhri, "Political Parties and State Politics", in Iqbal Harain, ed., State Politics in India, (Meenakshi Prakashan, Meerut, 1967), p. 380.

33. In the 1962 elections, there were no plural constituencies. The number of Assembly constituencies was twenty as follows: Ichapuram, Sompeta, Brahmanatherla, Tekkali, Narasannapeta, Pathapatnam, Koththuru (SC), Naguru (ST), Parvathipuram, Pachipenta (ST), Salur, Bobbili, Balijipeta, Vunukuru, Palakonda, Nagirikatakam, Srikekulam, Sermahammedpuram, Ponduru (SC), Cheepurupalli. The Lok Sabha constituencies were three: Srikekulam, Parvatipuram (ST), Cheepurupalli.
34. Election Commission - India, Report on the Third General Elections in India, 1962, 2 Vols., (New Delhi, 1963 & 1966).
35. K. Punnayya, a Harijan advocate, returned unopposed as a Congress candidate.
36. The kisan section of the Congress from the Srikekulam district had changed its parties since 1951 from Praja party, to KLP, to UCF, to the Congress party, to Andhra Democratic party, to the Socialist Democratic party and finally to the Swatantra Party.
37. There was a slight change in the number of constituencies in the 1967 elections in this district. The constituencies were: Ichapuram, Sompeta, Tekkali, Narischandrapuram, Narasannapeta, Pathapatnam (SC), Koththuru (ST), Naguru (ST), Parvathipuram, Salur (ST), Bobbili, Pedasannapuram, Unukuru, Palakonda (SC), Nagirikatakam, Srikekulam, Ktcherla, Ponduru, Cheepurupalli.
38. Election Commission - India, Report on the Third General Elections in India, 1967, 2 Vols., (New Delhi).
39. For Radicalism see the Chapter IV: Rise of Radicalism.
40. It was only in 1955-56, Latchanna, the KLP legislator from this district was a Minister. There was no representation in the State Cabinet from this district between 1956-69.
41. The three Lok Sabha constituencies were Srikekulam, Bobbili and Parvathipuram (ST).
42. Report on the Fifth General Election in India, 1971-72, (New Delhi, 1973).
43. B.V. Rao was successful in getting six tickets for his men, V.R. Naidu got seven tickets, G. Sreeramulu Naidu got two tickets and L.L. Das got three tickets, including one for himself. The remaining one candidate, T. Papa Rao, rewarded the ticket by the Chief Minister.

44. Report on the Fifth General Elections in India, 1971-72(New Delhi, 1973).
45. B.R. Rao's group got four out of the six seats contested, V.K. Naidu's group secured three seats out of seven contested, G. Sreeramulu Naidu's nominees contested two seats and won both, and L.L. Das was able to win three seats, including his own.
46. Rasheeduddin Khan, "The Third Decade of Independence", Secular Democracy Republic Day Special Number, New Delhi, January, 1976).

CHAPTER III

FACTIONAL POLITICS AND THE LEADERSHIP PATTERN OF THE CONGRESS PARTY

The existence of factional groups in a party like the Congress is almost unavoidable. But these factions differ from level to level, and as our investigation shows they are more intensive at the district level. The basic power-hold of any leader is his home district. Factional politics in the district is essentially in the nature of a competition between groups of a party to assert their interests and show their importance in relation to each other. "The term 'faction' is commonly used", says Lasswell, "to designate any constituent group of a larger unit which looks for the advancement of particular persons or policies."¹ The leader of a faction tries to maintain a close relationship with his followers to keep it going. The factions are like temporary aggregation to achieve a particular end. The members of a faction do not stay in it permanently. They often change their allegiance. While working for the fulfillment of their interests, clashes also occur between the leaders and their respective groups and this may affect the structure of the factional politics of a district, at a given time.

James Walch refers to two levels of factionalism : micro factionalism and macro-factionalism . He says: "Micro-factionalism refers to tightly-knit groups of followers and leaders and is prevalent mainly at the local level. Macro-factionalism refers to intra-party divisiveness related to

specific socio-economic interests.² Though Walch gave this typology to two major levels of factionalism, one cannot ignore that factional politics often has linkages at all levels with different contents. In the factional politics of the district, i.e., the micro factionalism, the prevalence of close-knit groups of followers and leaders would also be linked with their political, social and economic interests at the macro level. The structure, the organisation of the party and the party system as a whole will be affected by factional struggles between the groups within that party. No doubt, while pursuing particular interests, they sometime even undermine the goals of the party as such.

In this chapter, we proposed to investigate the factional fights in the District Congress Party in Srikakulam.

The issues which developed in the pre-independence period, particularly after 1937, took a different shape in the post-independence period, ultimately leading to changes in the content of factional conflicts and in the character of the political leadership of the district. The cause of the conflicts and the struggle for getting independence from the colonial rule and freedom from the Zamindari system turned into more personalized clashes to capture the party organisation and to obtain power. And in the same way, the political leadership of the district changed from the hands of the freedom fighters, who exercised certain influence among the masses to persons who became political leaders with the influence of money

and sectarian support. They distributed political patronage among their followers. "If the freedom movements were instrumental in bringing into the Congress diverse social and economic interests and integrating them together in the pursuit of a common cause, the prospect of capturing power apparatus of the society divided these elements, each trying to push the other out from position of power. The result of the latter tendency was factionalism, indiscipline, and emergence of parochial interests in the party."³

Factions in Pre-independence Days

As discussed in the previous chapters, the area under study, i.e., Srikakulam district was mainly under the economic and political influence of the Zamindars and Inamdars. During the British rule, the feudal system prevailed and though there was an urge among the Kisans for the abolition of the Zamindari system, they could do precious little. The British government was in favour of the feudal system in India. But the same urge led the kisans of this district to support the national movement under the leadership of Gandhiji and the Congress with the hope that they could be relieved of the feudal exploitation if a national government came into power.

The kisan leaders from various parts of the district started mobilising the ryots on the issue of resettlement of lands in 1930s. At this juncture, Ranga from Guntur district, arrived on the scene with a slogan, 'Abolition of the Zamindari

System' and propagating a philosophy that there should not be any intermediary between the government and the peasant. By that time, Pullala Syamasundara Rao, an intellectual Brahmin, and Dukka Rajan Reddy, a prominent peasant, were the young kisan leaders and Gauthu Latchanna was one of the more important follower. Ranga took the assistance of these young workers and established his links with the kisans in the district. With this, a kisan section within the Congress was established. Since the area was predominantly under the feudal system, the kisan movement received considerable support and sympathy. For all these kisan workers, the Congress and the national struggle was the base to enter public life, kisan work being their special field of activity.

The Indian National Congress in the pre-independence period was a platform for all schools of thought and represented various sections of the society. However, top leaders of the Congress in Andhra were almost all Brahmins. Brahmin leadership dominated in this district as well. The Congress organisation of the area was in the hands of orthodox Gandhian followers like Varahagiri Venkata Jogayya Pantulu. They were not in favour of kisan activities led by Pullala Syamasundara Rao within the Congress as a separate group under a different "Sickle and Hammer" flag. As the flag represented the labour and the kisans or kalakars at that time, the kisan leaders did not want to discard it. But both the groups used to work for the Congress party and mobilised the people for the national struggle. One

section was headed by elderly orthodox Gandhians, considered to be the 'rightists' and the other section was led by more radical kisan leaders, the 'leftists'. Hence, the internal struggle was always there in the district Congress in the pre-independence days. With the emergence of Ranga, a Kamma by caste, as the non-Brahmin leader of the kisans, the differences accentuated between the 'rightists' and the 'leftist' sections both at the district and at the State level since the Congress leadership was at that time entirely in the hands of the Brahmin intellectuals. When the kisan organisation became prominent, both the Brahmin and non-Brahmin leadership existed side by side in the district Congress.

For almost all the elections in the area, these two sections were the main contestants for power and influence. At that time, the Justice Party was in prominence and its power and its prominent leaders like the Rajah of Bobbili (then Premier of Madras) and Sir A.P. Patro, Minister from the Justice Party, belonged to this area. But, if there was any contest or competition between the Congress and the Justice Party, the two sections of the Congress, both the 'right' and 'left', joined together to fight against the Justice Party. This shows that if there was any external threat, the two factions ceased fighting between themselves temporarily. V.O. Key refers to this sort of clash in his hypothesis that "increased inter-party competition leads to decreased intra-party factionalism."⁴ It was only on internal issues that the two sections vigorously fought against each other.

The two factions of the Congress observed the age-old principle of 'unity in diversity and diversity in unity'. This they had proved in the 1938 elections when the Congress defeated the Justice Party candidates, including the then Premier of Madras. The most important point to note here is that there was no sabotage among the Congressmen openly or secretly in spite of their internal differences. After the lifting of the ban imposed on the Indian National Congress by the British Government in the wake of the Quit India Movement of 1942, elections were held in 1946 in which the rightists gained a majority and formed a Congress government at Madras. In these elections, the selection of candidates was based on group strength and on the personal following of the leaders. In this district, followers of Ranga branded as 'Kisan Mutha' were denied Congress tickets due to differences between Ranga and Pattabhi at the State level. For instance, Latchanna, a prominent kisan leader with popularity in Ichapuram, Sempeta and Tekkali taluks and who was even otherwise popular as a 'mass leader' throughout the area, was denied Congress ticket for the Tekkali Assembly constituency. It was given instead to a follower of Prakasam, Rokkam Ramamurthy. But Latchanna, being a loyal Congressman proposed Ramamurthy's candidature and worked for the success of the Congress party in all the constituencies. Had Latchanna filed his nomination against Ramamurthy as an independent or as a rebel Congressman, Ramamurthy would have most probably been defeated.

After 1946 elections, Prakasam became the Chief Minister and Ranga became the President of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee defeating the candidate sponsored by Kala Venkata Rao and Pattabhi. Thereby the factional clashes at the State level got intensified and had their impact on this district as well. In the same year, the DCC had been captured by the followers of Ranga in Srikakulam district. Hence, the organisation was in the hands of one faction and the legislative wing in the hands of the other. With this, it was clear that at the district level also, factional strifes would ensue and increase. Both groups started mobilising their forces to gain more strength. The LCC had been captured by the kisan group consecutively for three years. Until they resigned from the Congress to join the KLP, the kisan group retained the control of the Congress organisation in their hands.

The State factional politics were mainly responsible for the continuance of factions at the district level. In 1948, Pattabhi, the architect of the rightist section from which the ministerial section emerged, had become the President of the AICC. The ministerial group of this district had organised the "Inamdar's Conference" to demand protection and concessions to the Inamdars by the government. Pattabhi had come down to Srikakulam to inaugurate the conference. The significant feature to note was that the kisan group was agitating for the abolition of the Inamdars, whereas the AICC President blessed the ministerial group of this district who were the supporters

of the Inamdars. During their conference and afterwards, several representations had been made to the AICC President by the ministerial faction demanding that the existing DCC should be superseded and handed over to the ministerial group. But it was not possible for them since the kisan group was cautious and careful and did not commit any irregularities in the affairs of the District Congress organisation, to warrant any action against them.

Factions and Local Institutions

In 1949, the kisan faction captured the Co-operative Central Bank which was a major source for influencing the masses. In 1950, elections for a separate Srikakulam District Board were held and both the factions of the Congress, i.e., the 'rightists' and the 'leftists' contested in each constituency. The Congress party left the choice of their representatives to the electorate because it wanted the elected members to stay in its fold. There were thus no 'official' Congress candidates, as such.

In this election, the parochial interests like caste, kith-and-kin relationship worked in most of the constituencies. A leader might belong to one particular faction, but if there was a choice between kith-and-kin and the faction concerned, the preference was for blood relation as against the group allegiance. For instance, in Hagarikatakam constituency, the contest was very keen and significant because Latchanna, the kisan leader, put up a candidate against the cousin of another prominent kisan leader.

The contestant opposing the candidate of Latchanna was also the former DCC Secretary of the kisan section in 1946. The situation was such that unless the kisan leader worked for his cousin against the candidate of his own group sponsored by Latchanna, the latter candidate would win. This had brought to the fore the question of family prestige. The kisan leader worked for his cousin and defeated the kisan group candidate by a big margin, and proved that blood is thicker than water. This clearly reveals the upper-hand of blood relationship over the interests of the faction. So it is clear, that as in parties, so in the factions the parochial factors count a lot. In 1950, for the Presidentship of the Zilla Board, the contest was between R.L.N. Dora, ministerial group candidate, and L.L. Das, the candidate of the kisan group. Dora was elected by a small margin. Hence the Zilla Board was in the hands of the ministerial faction and the Co-operative Central Bank in the hands of the kisan faction by the year 1950.

Personal Egoisms

It is interesting to observe the role of personal egoism in crucial times. In 1950, the elections for the PCC members were held in a vigorous way. Keen contest was ^{made} between the two factions of the State Congress party, Kala Venkata Rao's group and Ranga's group. T. Raghavadas, one of the kisan leaders, was elected as a PCC member from Pariakimidi defeating the ministerial candidate, R. Ramamurty Naidu, brother of the Zilla Board President. Incidentally, both belonged to the

Telaga caste. The PCC seat at Amadalavalasa became a prestigious one because the contestants were Killi Appala Naidu, prominent kisan leader, and T. Papa Rao, close follower of Sanjiva Reddy. These two belonged to the Kaliga Caste and hailed from the same area.

At this stage, among the kisan associates of Latchanna, differences arose between Killi Appala Naidu and Kaghavadas. They were not even on talking terms due to their personal differences. Das worked sincerely for the success of the kisan group, particularly in his area Amadalavalasa for Appala Naidu's victory over Papa Rao. As Das belonged to this area, he expected that Naidu would request him to vote for him. But Naidu did not ask Das for his vote. Therefore, Das, in spite of the pressure from the leader of the faction, Latchanna, voted against Naidu and Papa Rao was elected as member of the PCC with a slender but crucial margin of one vote. That was the beginning of Papa Rao's rise to the level of State politics as it helped him to get closer to Sanjiva Reddy. So, this incident showed that personal feelings sometimes weaken group interests.

In 1951, Ranga and Prakasam went out of the Congress party and in this district the kisan faction also left the Congress party to join the KLP. After the departure of the kisan faction, the remaining Congressmen in the ministerial faction started building up their own groups in view of the ensuing First General Elections in 1952. They were mainly divided into two factions, the urbanised intellectuals and the rural based politicians with communal backing.

Caste and Factionalism

A separate Andhra State out of the erstwhile Madras Presidency came into existence in October 1953, with its capital at Kurnool. Sanjiva Reddy was the deputy Chief Minister. The state leaders used to think of Srikakulam in terms of two main castes: the Kalinga and the Kapu. Bondi Kurmanna, T. Papa Rao and P.N. Apparao were the main spokesmen of the Kalinga caste and L.L. Das was the lone representative of the Kapu caste. In 1952, Kurmanna was defeated by R.L.N. Dora whereas L.L. Das was elected to the Assembly. In 1953, there was a proposal to take L.L. Das into Prakasam's cabinet at Kurnool. But Kurmanna prevailed upon Sanjiva Reddy not to take Das.

In 1956, after the death of Killi Appala Naidu, a prominent Kalinga from his area, B.h. Rao, another Kalinga from the same area, Amadalavalasa, captured the presidency of Co-operative Central Bank. Appala Naidu, till his death, stood against Kurmanna and Papa Rao, his own castemen. Then B.h. Rao MP, started mobilising his followers in the district politics from among the Kalinga caste against Kurmanna and Papa Rao's combination. B.h. Rao was also elected to the Lok Sabha in 1957 with the support of the kisan section.

In comparison with the Kalingas, the Kapus were backward in political consciousness. In this district next to Brahmins, the Kalingas had greater political awakening than the other castes. Even the leaders of the Kapus were not as dynamic

and dashing as the leaders of the Kalingas. L.L. Das, an MLA, being a Kapu, was not able to mobilise all his castemen to his fold. Sanjiva Reddy became the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. At the time of the contest for leadership between Copala Reddy and Sanjiva Reddy in 1956, L.L. Das did not take a firm stand in support of Sanjiva Reddy though of course he finally voted for him. Taking advantage of the vacillation of Das, Kurmanna again influenced Sanjiva Reddy not to take Das into his Cabinet. Since Das was not so caste-minded and associated himself with other castes as well, some of the non-Kapus used to extend their support to him.

P.N. Appa Rao, another prominent Kalinga, who was an MLA between 1955-62 and follower of Sanjiva Reddy and subsequently of Sanjeevayya had become President of the Tirumala Tirupathi Devasthanam Board, which was a very important position to hold. Tirupathi is a well-known pilgrim centre where Lord Venkateswara is the ruling deity. Hence, he became important and developed close ties with many Central and State leaders. He used to play an important role in the politics of the district Congress party. But he was always in favour of the Chief Minister's group, whoever the Chief Minister might be. B.R. Rao was also of the same type, since he was mainly a businessman. When Sanjiva Reddy was the Chief Minister, these two supported him, then later on when Sanjeevayya became the Chief Minister, they used to follow him. Again when Sanjiva Reddy came back to the State politics as Chief Minister, both Appa Rao and B.R. Rao

once again switched their allegiance to him. So, power-chasing and support of the powerful is yet another notable feature of the district politics. The group leaders and their followers could change allegiance to any person at any time, provided he was powerful and willing enough to extend his patronage to them.

Panchayats and Factions

The Panchayat Samithis and Zilla Parishads Act came into force in 1959 and elections for the Panchayat Samithis were held in December of the same year. Since this Act gave an opportunity to the rural masses to come into close touch with the local administration and gave them the opportunity to enjoy power through the three-tier system, i.e., Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samithis and Zilla Parishads, the local dominant persons with their money and caste-backing and support of the feudal lords entered the field to capture the Samithis. In this battle for power all the factions, i.e., within the Congress party and the Congress vs. others, fought with each other.

Keeping in view the election and the post of the Panchayat Samithi president, the area leaders used to encourage their followers in the villages to become the Sarpanch either with money or with caste backing. As the Sarpanch was the member of the Panchayat Samithi to elect the President of the Samithi and also had a direct hand in the local administration, every wealthy and influential person coveted this post.

It was common knowledge that a leader who wanted to become the Panchayat Samithi President would finance his men and use his influence to get them elected as village Sarpanchs. In this way he tried to put up as many candidates as possible and in turn got their support to become the Panchayat Samithi President. In some villages for various reasons the election of Sarpanch was unanimous. It mostly happened when a district level leader wanted to become the Sarpanch of his own village. But in many cases, there was keen contest for the post. Soon after the election, the Sarpanch would side with one of the contesting candidates for the Presidentship of the Panchayat Samithi.

The cost of the Panchayat Samithi President's election sometimes equated with that of a member of Parliament. The presidential contestant would run the camps providing all his men with comfortable facilities. There were incidents of abduction of Sarpanches from the villages and keeping them in election camps for a week or more or taking them on pilgrimages to far off places and getting them back only on election day to the venue of the polling station. This was done to prevent the opposing candidate from winning over the Sarpanches to his side. In these panchayat elections there was no room for ideology. The caste and coin dominated the scene. Normally in a village, persons from the single dominant caste would be elected. Quite often two persons of the dominant caste would contest for the post even if they were related to each other.

The Panchayat Raj system created tremendous activity in the Panchayat Samithis and Zilla Parishads. The developmental activities spread and as a result there was great awakening in the rural areas. But this system also had its undesirable aspects. The most dangerous was the development of communal and caste consciousness. The Samithis became dens of caste high-handedness. The major caste in a particular Samithi area capture the Samithi presidentship. In the political life of the Srikakulam district, caste considerations gained supremacy over the economic ideology of the political party. The persons who captured the Samithis and Zilla Parishads dominated the political life of the district.

After this general analysis of the panchayat system, it is necessary to investigate certain incidents that occurred in this system. Bendi Kurmanna became the Chairman of the Zilla Parishad in December 1959. Kottapalli Punnayya from the Swatantra party was the Vice-President till February 1962. At the expiry of his term as MLA, Punnayya ceased to be the Vice-Chairman of the Z.P. In the 1962 general elections, Vasireddi Krishna Moorthy Naidu was elected to the Assembly and succeeded Punnayya as Vice-Chairman of the Z.P. Thereby Naidu, a Velama, entered into the administration of the Zilla Parishad since the Chairman delegated certain powers to the Vice-Chairman. While enjoying these powers he started mobilising his strength and gaining popularity in the district.

One Kotla Sanyasappala Naidu, a Swatantra MLA, filed a write petition for some reasons against the Zilla Parishad Chairman with the indirect encouragement and support of the Vice-Chairman. Following the High Court order, the Chairman vacated the post and the Vice-Chairman acted as the Chairman for some time. During this period, V.K. Naidu wanted to assert his position as Chairman hoping that Kurmana would not come back to office. But contrary to his expectations and wishes, on the vacation of the injunction order, Kurmana came back to power again as Z.P. Chairman. With these developments the factions in the Zilla Parishad administration widened and the Panchayat Samithi presidents were pulled and pushed into opposite directions by these factions. But because of the death of Kurmana in January, 1963, V.K. Naidu became the Chairman of the Z.P. in February, 1963, and with this position, Naidu became a significant personality in the district politics.⁵

In 1964, elections were held to the Panchayats for the next term. By this time, B.A. Rao had grabbed almost all the important posts. He was the President of the Co-operative Central Bank, Chairman of the Co-operative Sugar Factory at his place Amalalavalasa and the DCC President. He got one of his brothers elected a member of the Legislative Council, another brother was made President of the Amalalavalasa Panchayat Samithi and yet another brother became President of the Amalalavalasa Gram Panchayat.⁶ For all practical purposes he used his influence to the maximum extent possible. Through all

these sources he was not only able to raise his own status and enhance his prestige but also those of his family members. At the same time he was not merely a politician but also a leading businessmen. His political career was useful in pursuing his business interests. Not content with the power in his hands, he wished that the Zilla Parishad also to be under his control. For this purpose, he wanted to set up his brother B.V. Narasinga Rao as a candidate for the Zilla Parishad Chairmanship.

It became a problem for the district leaders in the Congress whether to allow the chairmanship of the Zilla Parishad to pass into the hands of B.R. Rao or not. Everyone knew that the election of the Zilla Parishad Chairman will cost much more than the election of an MLA or an MP. As Rajagopala Rao was known for his wealth, he could meet the election expenses. The persons who wanted to oppose him had to be prepared to spend an equal amount of money. For this purpose, all the leaders including the then Z.P. Chairmen, V.R. Naidu, and L.L. Das, leader from the Kapu caste, sponsored the name of G. Sriramulu Naidu, Kapu by caste, who was the then President of the Rana-sthalam Panchayat Samithi. He was a rich landlord who could raise enough money to oppose Rajagopala Rao.

At that time Brahmananda Reddy was the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. The relations between the Chief Minister and Rajagopala Rao were not good. Besides, all factions and their their leaders were giving support to Sriramulu Naidu against

B.R. Rao. The Chief Minister announced the name of Sriramulu Naidu as the Congress candidate for the Zilla Parishad chairmanship. B.R. Rao put up his brother, B.V. Narasinga Rao, as an independent candidate. But Sriramulu Naidu won the election with a small margin. Brahmananda Reddy was not happy with B.R. Rao and his supporters. On becoming the Chairman of the Zilla Parishad, Sriramulu Naidu became an important personality in the district and was also close to the Chief Minister. For the next term also Sriramulu Naidu was elected as Chairman of the Zilla Parishad in 1970 and continued to hold the post until he became the member of the Legislative Council in August 1974.

The elections for the Zilla Parishad Chairmanship were held four times in 1950, 1959, 1963 and 1964 including that of the District Board election and the contest was between R.L.N. Dora (Telaga) vs. L.L. Das (Kapu); Bendi Kurmanna (Kalinga) vs. K. Chandrasekhara Rao (Kapu); T. Papa Rao (Kalinga) vs. V.K. Naidu (Velama); and G. Sriramulu Naidu (Kapu) vs. B. Narasinga Rao (Kalinga) respectively. Thus it is evident that the contest for the district decentralised democratic post of Zilla Parishad Chairman lay between the two major dominant castes of the district - Kalinga and Kapu. In between these two castes, V.K. Naidu, who came from another dominant caste - Velama and had an influence in the Bobbili area, projected himself as a third contender for power in the district politics.

By 1965, there were four factions in the district. They were led respectively by B.R. Rao, V.K. Naidu, G. Sriramulu

Haidu and L.L. Das. Both Sriramulu Haidu and L.L. Das belonged to the same caste - Kapu. Hence, their castemen were also divided in their support of the factional leaders. However, B.R. Rao of the Kalinga caste and V.R. Haidu of the Velama caste, enjoyed the full support of their own castes. "Personal enmities between faction leaders occur more frequently and are more intense when the opposing leaders come from different castes."⁷ These four factional leaders started mobilising their forces within the Congress party against each other.

Before going further, it is necessary to give some description of the major factional leaders, their political qualities and style of work.

Boddepalli Rajagopala Rao : Politics of Business

B.R. Rao hails from Akkulapeta village near Amadalavalasa and comes from an upper middle class peasant family. His father was a businessman at Amadalavalasa owning a rice mill. When he was first elected to the Lok Sabha as an independent, he was only a businessman and his business tactics as an inherent quality was much in evidence in his public life. His attractive personality was an asset to him which impressed the masses. After capturing the Co-operative Central Bank, he improved his business and became rich and gathered some henchmen around him in public life. Being an MP he used to influence the State officials, some of whom were literally at his beck and call.

As a shrewd politician with a plan to stabilise his position both politically and economically, he succeeded in getting a sugar factory in Amadalavalasa. Being the chief promoter, he became President of its Managing Committee. This was a major source of influence for him in many ways since most of the farmers around Amadalavalasa came under his obligation. With the sugar factory in his control, he was able to manage the Panchayat Samithi at Amadalavalasa, and made his brothers heads of that institution.

He was neither a mass leader nor a class leader. But he was able to manipulate political affairs to his benefit. At the grass-roots level of politics he would avoid coming into direct touch with the common man except on rare occasions. He would entertain some of the influential persons in the area and they would spread a good word about him, so as to influence other people. While he did not build a communal group, but he did encourage persons from his caste who were very close to him. But his advantage was that the Kalingas were the most dominant caste numerically in his constituency.

He also procured the support of independent contestants to the Assembly in addition to the support that he got from his party, the Congress. He had developed a technique to play an important role at the time of the elections. He had a tendency to extend financial and caste support secretly to those Assembly candidates who in turn would give him their

support for his Parliamentary candidature. At the same time, he often attempted to defeat his opponents, whether within the Congress or outside, by any means, including use of physical force if necessary. Except for the period between 1967 to 1971, when he was defeated in the Lok Sabha elections, he was in the limelight and played a prominent role in district politics. He used to say that he was 'not interested in politics but only in business' but with business in his hands he was the more intelligent factional leader than the other three leaders.

Vasireddi Krishnamoorthy Naidu : Politics of Caste

V.K. Naidu belongs to Pinapenki village of Bobbili Taluk and comes from an ordinary middle class farmer's family. He was an L.C.E. from Gindi Engineering College and served as supervisor in the Public Works Department of Andhra Pradesh. His father-in-law was an MLA from Balijapeta Constituency of Srikakulam district. While V.K. Naidu was in service, some of his relations became contractors and in 1956 he resigned the job and himself became a contractor. At the same time, as a follower of the Socialist leader P.V.G. Raju, he joined hands with the Socialist workers at Bobbili against the Rajah. In the 1957 Parliamentary elections, V.K. Naidu was set up by the Socialist group as an independent candidate against V.V. Giri since his Velama community was dominant in the constituency. But both he and Giri lost the election.*

* For details of this election, see the results of 1957 Lok Sabha Election, Chapter II.

In the 1962 General election, he became an MLA from the Bailjapeta constituency eliminating his father-in-law from the field. He also became the Vice-Chairman of the Zilla Parishad in April, 1962 and its Chairman in February, 1963. V.K. Naidu was not in a position to face the challenge from B.R. Rao in 1964 for the Zilla Parishad Chairmanship since he was not financially sound at that time. V.K. Naidu was mainly responsible for bringing G. Sriramulu Naidu from local politics to the district politics as Chairman of the Zilla Parishad and as his successor. Since the Zilla Parishad Chairman was giving some weight to his predecessor, Naidu could maintain his personality as it was before in the district politics.

But, in the 1967 General elections, Naidu was defeated by an independent supported by the Rajah of Bobbili. At this stage, Chief Minister Brahmananda Reddi wanted to promote a third person in the district on caste basis against the powerful representatives of the other two castes, namely, the Kalingas and Kapus. Naidu was chosen for this purpose. As a first step, Naidu was given the post of APCC General Secretary and was also made a member of the State Housing Board. This had elevated him as a politician at the state level. Thereafter in 1968, he was elected to the Legislative Council from the Sriekulam local authorities constituency.

In 1969, Naidu was taken into Brahmananda Reddy's Cabinet as Minister for Power. He was the second person from the district to become a Minister for Electricity, Latchanna

being the first in 1955-56. By 1970, he projected himself to be one of the strong personalities in the State Cabinet and prevailed upon the Swatantra legislators to come to his side, particularly the Velamas both in Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam districts. By 1971, six of the ten Swatantra legislators of this district had joined the Congress party under his influence. With these developments, Brahmananda Reddy got an impression that Naidu could manage the affairs in any situation and included him among his close associates. As a shrewd opportunist, he also started improving his personal wealth. He set up the Khandasari Sugar Factory. Thereafter, he could manipulate things not only with political patronage but also with the power of money.

When Brahmananda Reddy resigned as Chief Minister in 1971, P.V. Narasimha Rao formed the interim government in which Naidu became the Cabinet Minister for Excise. After the 1972 elections also, Narasimha Rao took Naidu into his Cabinet and gave him the important portfolio of Home. In this way, Naidu proved to be a person of tactics and was able to manage affairs to his advantage. Being a Velama, he started mobilising his caste people in the Parvathipuram division and extended the operation to the Srikakulam division and the Visakhapatnam district. Thereby he became the sole representative of the Velama caste and was acknowledged by many as their leader.

Gorle Sriramulu Naidu : Politics of Power

He was a Kapu from a pure agriculturist family and hailed from Patherlapalli Village of Cheepurupalli Taluk situated at the coastal belt far from the civilised towns. He was considered to be one of the richest landlords but had the reputation of being an unpolished, arrogant and a crooked politician. He became the Samithi President of Banasthalam in 1959 and remained so till 1964. In 1964, he became the Zilla Parishad Chairman defeating the candidate of B.K. Rao with the power of his money, and with the support from all the other groups in the district.

By virtue of his position as the Zilla Parishad Chairman he was close to Chief Minister Brahmananda Reddy as a leading figure of the district. He was elected unopposed as Chairman for the second time in 1970. Though he reached the district level as Z.P. Chairman with the help of V.K. Naidu and L.L. Das, he eventually turned against them. Against the senior leader from his caste, L.L. Das, Sriramulu Naidu started mobilising castemen towards his side as Zilla Parishad Chairman. His tendency was to allow no other personality in the district to come up to a higher level.

Lakulapu Lakshman Das : Politics of a Freedom Fighter

L.L. Das belongs to the Kapu caste and comes from an upper middle agriculturist family of Nommunsariyapalli Village in Pathapatnam Taluk. He was a commerce graduate from Andhra

University and was a participant in the 1942 Quit India Movement. He was associated with the kisan group under the leadership of Ranga. For a short period he was in service as Assistant Panchayat Officer and resigned the job in 1947 to join politics again. Though he was a disciple of Ranga, he did not join the KLP. There was a group of old guard in his place Pathapatnam Taluk who never wanted L.L. Des to come up in public life. However, he entered the taluk politics as Secretary, Taluk Congress.

He was elected to the Assembly in 1952 and also in 1955 and played an active role among the legislators at Madras, Kurnool and Hyderabad. He was the Vice-President of the Co-operative Central Bank from 1949 to 1956 and was a candidate for the District Board in 1950. He was the DCC President for some time and also the APCC Secretary. He was elected to the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly in 1962 also but he was defeated in the 1967 Assembly elections by a Swatantra candidate. After this defeat he was the Panchayat Samithi President of Saravakota from July 1970 to March 1972. In the 1972 Assembly elections, he was again elected and was taken into P.V. Narasimha Rao's Cabinet as Minister for Housing. For this elevation to the State level politics, he had the blessings from V.V. Giri, then President of India, as he had been close to Giri since 1952.

Temperamentally, he was mild, calm and soft-spoken. He might or might not help many but was harmful to none. But he was known for his quality of doing a right thing at the

wrong time, thereby suffering in reputation as an indiscrete politician. He could not mobilise the groups around him as he was unable to do things according to the wishes of his followers or associates. But he was capable of retaining his position somehow or the other and maintained his relationship with various persons because of his vast contacts in public life for more than thirty years.

As a freedom fighter, he was sympathetic towards political sufferers and social workers. He was not a person to favour his own castemen or to depend upon them for his strength, though the vast community was there to support him. He was not in a position to spend money for political purposes as he was not rich. Thus he was a relatively less powerful factional leader in the district as against the other three in the Congress party.

The factional fights between these leaders and their groups were of a fluctuating nature. Though basically there were four significant factions, any two or three factions might combine to oppose the rest. Sometimes such combinations might be for panchayats, district party organisations, local co-operative institutions or for election purposes. No one could predict which group would align with which other group. Only the convenience and advantage of the leaders according to their predilection in a given situation was the decisive factor in this regard.

Politics After 1972

After the 1972 elections, the Congress Ministry was formed in the State of Andhra Pradesh under the Chief Ministership of P.V. Narasimha Rao. V.K. Naidu was the Minister for Home. L.L. Das also joined the Cabinet as Minister for Housing. The Andhra agitation cropped up in September 1972 for separate Andhra. It is necessary to look into the participation of the leaders of Srikakulam in that agitation. The agitation gradually gathered momentum and spread to the entire eleven districts of Andhra and later took a violent turn. The government deployed Special Armed Police everywhere and asked for military assistance to control the situation. As Home Minister, V.K. Naidu was responsible for deployment of the Special Armed Police and Military. As the situation reached its peak, B.V. Subba Reddy, the Deputy Chief Minister, and some other Ministers including V.K. Naidu resigned from the Ministry.

V.K. Naidu in order to become popular with the masses took over the Secretaryship of the "Andhra Rashtra Karyacharana Sangham" which was directing the agitation. L.L. Das, another minister from this district, however, remained in the Cabinet as an 'integrationist'. B.R. Rao, MP, and G. Sriramulu Naidu, the Z.P. Chairman, and their groups were also with the 'separatists' whereas the followers of P.V. Narasimha Rao and L.L. Das were in the group of 'integrationists'.

As the law and order situation became serious, the government headed by P.V. Narasimha Rao was dissolved and

President's rule was imposed. After the failure of the agitation, the government was formed under the leadership of Jalagam Vengal Rao. Vengal Rao took into his Cabinet the separatist, V.K. Naidu, as Minister for Medium Irrigation and the integrationist, L.L. Das, as Minister for Labour and Employment.

Vengal Rao and Srikakulam

Vengal Rao was not a leader of the State level stature until his entry into Brahmananda Reddy's Cabinet as Home Minister. He was for sometime Zilla Parishad Chairman of Khammam and the Chairman of the State Chamber of Panchayats. During his tenure as Home Minister, he became known as a 'strongman' for 'crushing' the Haxalite Movement in Srikakulam district and in other parts of the State. He had also come closer to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Vengal Rao was born in Soperu Village of Palakonda Taluk of Srikakulam district and his father used to work in the Bobbili estate of the Rajah. Thus by birth he came from the Andhra region, and by domicile, he belonged to the Telengana region. He grew up in West Godavari and finally settled in Khammam district of Telangana prior to the Police Action in 1948.

After the lifting of the President's rule in the state in December 1973, Vengal Rao, a Padma Velama by caste, was 'imposed' by the Prime Minister as the leader of the State Congress Party and thus became the Chief Minister. V.K. Naidu and L.L. Das from this district were his cabinet colleagues.

Naidu, being a Velama, developed close relations with the Chief Minister. With the blessings of Vengal Rao, Naidu started mobilising and encouraging the three sects of Velamas in this district under the banner of "Akhandu Velama". The three sects were Padma Velama, Koppula Velama and Polinati Velama and in spite of their different social customs and traditions seemed to be united under the leadership of V.K. Naidu in this district and Jalagam Vengal Rao at the state level. Taking advantage of his closeness with the Chief Minister, Naidu used to obtain almost all the nominated posts for Velama caste people in this district. For instance, his followers from Velama caste became the heads of major local institutions like Land Mortgage Bank, Srikakulam District Co-operative Consumer Stores, etc. A Velama lady MLA became the President of the Super Bazar at her place and also member of many other State organisations like Circars Planning and Development Board. Hence, under the regime of Vengal Rao, the Velama caste of Srikakulam district got many benefits and gained in importance vis-a-vis other major castes. The other minister, L.L. Das, was not getting any support or sympathy from the Chief Minister, except that he continued to be Minister. On the other hand, V.K. Naidu was the minister who could make or unmake things in the district with the full support of the Chief Minister.

Factions vs. Power Politics

Prior to 1952, the Congressmen were not accustomed to work against their own party either directly or indirectly.

Subsequently, the leaders of the Congress party started forming their own pressure groups and competing with each other to get the sympathies of the Chief Minister and other senior and important leaders at the centre. G. Sriramulu Naidu, being a Kapu, never wanted the senior leader from his caste, that is, L.L. Das, to remain important in active politics. He was mainly responsible for the latter's defeat in the 1967 elections and had used all his influence as Zilla Parishad Chairman to this effect. He also had a hand in the defeat of V.R. Naidu in Pedamanapuram Constituency in the 1967 elections, since the Kapu caste commands considerable votes. To take vengeance against B.R. Rao for putting up his brother for the Zilla Parishad Chairmanship against him, Sriramulu Naidu openly tried for the defeat of Rao in the 1967 Parliamentary elections. Chief Minister Brahmaananda Reddy was also not favourably disposed towards Rajagopala Rao because the latter had voted against Brahmaananda Reddy's candidate in the State Parliamentary Board elections before the 1967 elections.⁸ Sriramulu Naidu wanted to monopolise power in the district and to wipe out B.R. Rao and L.L. Das from the political scene in Srikakulam. This helped the Swatantra Party in many ways to get its candidates elected in 1967. It should be remembered that Sriramulu Naidu was formerly with the Swatantra Party.

V.R. Naidu was not keen to contest from the Srikakulam local authorities constituency for the second term in 1974, since Sriramulu Naidu was up-in-arms against him at that time. He

thought Sriramulu Naidu would use the Zilla Parishad influence to defeat him. However, V.K. Naidu got elected from the Assembly constituency with the blessings of the Chief Minister, Vengal Rao. Sriramulu Naidu in competition with V.K. Naidu did manage to get his castemen, P.V. Appala Naidu, elected as an MLC from Srikakulam in 1968. In the 1972 elections, Sriramulu Naidu opposed the proposal that the Congress ticket be given to L.L. Das, but when he failed in this, he had put up his own caste person, T. Akkala Naidu, a Panchayat Samithi President, against Das.

Sriramulu Naidu also wanted to become a minister in Vengal Rao's Cabinet since his opponents V.K. Naidu and L.L. Das were already in the Cabinet. For this purpose he preferred to become an MLC and relinquish the Chairmanship of Zilla Parishad. Unfortunately for him he did not succeed in getting the minister-ship because V.K. Naidu who was very close to the Chief Minister manoeuvred against his candidature. In September 1974, Palavalasa Rajasekharam, a Kapu, was elected unanimously as Chairman of the Zilla Parishad. His candidature was supported mainly by L.L. Das, Rajah of Bobbili and V.K. Naidu. Rajasekharam was a young educated person and son of the former MLA who was a prominent Congress leader of the district.

One can see similar pattern of political behaviour in other factional leaders. If one leader called for a meeting, the other would oppose the move and try to prevent as many persons as possible from attending the meeting. These factional

leaders, though giving the public impression that they respected each other, never ceased privately to defame and denigrate their rivals. There were allegations against B.R. Rao regarding misuse of power and misappropriation of funds of the Co-operative Central Bank. Similar allegations were made against V.K. Haidu by his opponents. In the same way the rival factional leaders encouraged some people to send petitions against L.L. Das about his personal life and properties to slender him in the eyes of the Central High Command and the State leadership. Such acts of mud-slinging led to demoralization in the party organisation in general and created tension and rivalry among the individual leaders in particular.

The factional fights contributed considerably to indiscipline in the Congress. Indeed it is said to state that indiscipline had been encouraged by party leaders even at higher levels. For instance, while the Congress would proclaim that it would not tolerate persons contesting against the official candidates, but as soon as the elections were over the successful rebels were re-admitted to the party, and soon occupied positions of importance.

In Srikakulam district six Congress rebels had defeated the official Congress candidates in the 1972 Assembly elections and yet they were taken back into the Congress Legislature Party. These rebels, it should be added, were encouraged and supported by the Congress factional leaders in their fight against one another. The State leaders would entertain the

rebels at their official functions while openly ignoring the defeated Congress candidates. And what was extraordinary was the spectacle that the Ministers and even the Chief Minister would 'grace' the functions organised by the rebel Congressmen, without any guails of conscience.

There were several such instances of this behaviour in Srikakulam district. For example, in the Andalavalasa Assembly constituency Rajagopala Rao tried for the Congress ticket for his henchman and when he failed to secure it, he openly set up that man as an independent against the official Congress candidate who was defeated. From the date of his victory, the independent more or less behaved as a Congress and got things done with the help of Congress Ministers. This was known to all. Similarly, Sriramulu Naidu encouraged and sponsored his close follower for the party ticket in the Etcherla Assembly constituency and when he failed to get it he set him up as an independent and defeated the Congress candidate. It was a known fact that V.K. Naidu himself being a Congress MLA contested against the official Congress candidate for the Chairmanship of Zilla Parishad in 1963.

The Central and State leaders were well aware of these actions of blatant indiscipline of the district faction leaders. But on the adage "where ignorance is bliss, it is folly to be wise", they preferred to keep quiet. The conclusion that one might draw is that the Congress party wanted persons with power, money and caste backing in its fold irrespective of

their opportunism, indiscipline, lack of decorum, political morality or attachment to party programme and electoral strategy.

The factional fight was more stiff between the two ministers of Sprikakulam district. They could not agree on a common candidate to fill any post in the district. For instance, DCC ad hoc committees were to be appointed in 1974 and there was no agreement reached between the two ministers for the post of DCC Presidentship. Ultimately, P. Raghavadas was made the DCC President. Raghavadas, an Ex-MLC and former Panchayat Samithi President, had a considerable following throughout the district since he was in the political field for more than three decades as a kisan leader and a disciple of Ranga.

The faction leaders continued their tussle for getting support from the government and from the higher levels of the party. Power was the sole criterion for them in their political career. If they were out of power for sometime, they became restive. In the 1967 general elections, B.R. Rao, V.K. Naidu and L.L. Das were defeated in the Parliament and Assembly elections. These three factional leaders left active politics after their defeat in the elections and returned to pursue their agricultural occupations. At that time, G. Sriramulu Naidu used to be very active as the Chairman of the Zilla Parishad. But when he was elected to the Legislative Council he relinquished the Chairmanship of the Zilla Parishad in the hope that he would become a minister, and when he failed in this mission, he went back to his agricultural pursuits and was not to be seen in

active public life for sometime. It was only when the Chief Minister rewarded him by making him President of the Co-operative Central Bank, did he come to active political life again. Thanks to power politics, the people also got accustomed to respect, honour and follow persons in power and not others however great and sincere they might have been.

NOTES

1. Harold D. Lasswell, "Faction", in Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. VI (New York, 1951).
2. Walch, James, Faction and Front - Party Systems in South India. (New Delhi: Young Asia Publications, 1976), p. 73.
3. Ray, Ramashray, "Intra-Party Conflict in the Bihar Congress", in Kothari, Rajni (ed.), Party System and Election Studies, (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1967) p. 100.
4. V.O. Key, Jr., Politics, Parties and Pressure Groups, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1952) p. 351.
5. Naidu contested for the Chairmanship as an independent against the official Congress candidate. Details of this election have been discussed in Chapter II.
6. B. Narayana Murthy, the first brother of Rajagopala Rao, was the Sarpanch of the Amadalavalasa Gram Panchayat and became the Amadalavalasa Samithi President in 1959. When Narayana Murthy became an MLC in 1962, his second brother B.V. Narasinga Rao, became the Sarpanch of the Amadalavalasa and so the Samithi President of the Amadalavalasa in 1964. When his second brother vacated the post of Sarpanch at Amadalavalasa, his elder brother, B. Joginaidu, an engineer and contractor, became the Sarpanch.
7. Brass, Paul, Factional Politics in an Indian State, Berkeley: California University Press, (1966) p. 56.
8. Before 1967 elections, there was a vacancy for one member in the State Parliamentary Board. By that time the differences between Sanjiva Reddy and Brahmananda Reddy had widened and the groups were having equal strength. The question was whoever got the member, that group would gain the majority in the election committee to select the Congress candidates for the ensuing election of 1967. At that time, Sanjiva Reddy, Sanjeswarya and K. Raghuramayya joined together against Brahmananda Reddy. It was a keen fight between the two rival groups. Brahmananda Reddy sponsored Kakani Venkataratnam and the other group sponsored Ch. V.P.R. Murtyraju. Kakani won the election, being the Chief Minister's candidate. In this election Rajagopala Rao went against the Chief Minister with his men in the PCC from this district and supported the candidate of Sanjiva Reddy.

CHAPTER IV

RISE OF RADICALISM IN THE DISTRICT

The existence of radicalism among the weaker sections for better living conditions is very much evident in this district of Srikakulam, as was briefly discussed in the first Chapter. In the pre-independence era and in the early part of the post-independence period, the peasants were roused by the kisan workers against the exploitation of the Zamindars. This agitation had come to be known as 'Kisan Movement' and the workers as 'Kisan Mutha'. The movement was not confined to the Girijans or the Harijans in the agency areas unlike the Naxalite movement, but spread to the plain areas of the district as well because, except for two taluks, the entire district was under the control of the Zamindars.

The extremist movement that existed only in the agency areas under the leadership of the Communists was entirely different from the Kisan Movement, though both were 'radical movements' aimed at achieving more or less the same purpose, that is, to liberate the poor and the hungry masses from the clutches of the exploiters. One important point to be noted here is that the Kisan Movement was organised by leaders who belonged to the Congress party, who nevertheless fought against the Congress government in defence of the cause of the peasants. But radicalism among the Girijans was injected and inspired by the Communist

leaders. Since the Zamindaris were abolished, the target of attack of radicals were landlords, money-lenders, contractors and businessmen who were suspected to be in league with the Congress leaders.

Naxalism, which had one of its source of inspiration in Maoism, has been discussed by several writers who had paid special attention to the 'radical revolt' in Srikakulam district as well. Shanta Sinha particularly studies the problem in depth and gives a comprehensive picture of the life of the Girijans of Srikakulam and their revolution under the leadership of the Communists.¹ Since, the present study is concerned with the 'Congress party politics at the district level', it is not intended here to present any detailed analysis of the 'Naxalite Movement' in the district, but merely to highlight some points related to the area's radical politics, which were necessarily linked to the party politics of the Congress.

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to take note of the role of the Communist Party in this district, since the roles of other parties have been discussed in the previous Chapter. In this district, Marpu Padmanabham, Bendalam Gavarayya, Ganugula Tarinachari, all freedom fighters from Sompeta taluk were colleagues of Gauthu Latchanna in the kisan organisation under the leadership of N.G. Ranga till the Palasa conference and the split of the Kisan Sabha² which went into the hands of the Communists. At the time of the split, the above named persons

remained in the Kisan Sabha and continued their allegiance to the Communist Party. But they were not in a position to organise the party in the entire district as they were getting on in age. Later, M. Abbayya Heidu of Cheepurupalli, Darapu Govinda Rajulu of Dimili, Ganti Rajeswara Rao of Baruva, Tripuraneni Venkateswara Rao of Krishna district and Koduganti Govinda Rao of Anakapalli organised the Communist Party unit in this district.

All these leaders who pioneered the Communist Organisation in this district came from different backgrounds. Both Darapu Govindarajulu and Ganti Rajeswara Rao, who graduated from Parlakimidi College, were active even during their college days and led a procession on August 15, 1947 in response to the call of the CPI. When the party went underground during 1948-50, there was a warrant against Koduganti Govinda Rao of Anakapalli. He used to come and take shelter somewhere in Pathapatnam taluk, particularly in Dimili and other villages bordering Parlakimidi of Orissa State. The police suspected Darapu Govindarajulu, a student and native of Dimili village, of harbouring Govinda Rao. It arrested Govindarajulu. He remained in jail as a detenu for about three years. Having come in close association with other Communists in the jail, he imbibed the qualities of a Communist leader. After his release and active participation, the Communist organisation in this area was able to strengthen its base.

Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah also took shelter in this district when the Communist Party went underground and exerted

whatever influence he could in extending its appeal. Bollimuntha Sivaramakrishnaiah, now a famous film script-writer, was also one such outlaw who took shelter in Palakonda taluk and influenced cultural activities. Tripuraneni Venkateswara Rao, although he hails from Krishna district, was not a stranger to this district as he studied in the M.R. College of Vijayanagaram for his B.Sc., during the period of his underground activities. He is not only an intellectual but also an able organiser at the same time who gave the party a district-wide base in the mid-fifties, as the district party Secretary. In the mid-term elections of 1955, the Communist Party contested more than half the seats in the district but secured none. However, in the process of the election campaign it spread to new areas and acquired new cadres. At the State level the party was in a crisis both politically and financially. One of the worst victims of this crisis was Tripuraneni Venkateswara Rao himself. The party could not provide him with the usual allowance. Financial difficulties forced him to leave the district and ultimately the Party also. As stated earlier, during the mid-term election new cadres poured into the party. Balaga Prasada Rao of Srikakulam and T. Hayagriva Rao of Palakonda emerged as student leaders. Vandana Satyanarayana and Modalaivalasa Seetharam, both lawyers, were party candidates in the election and gave a good showing. No mass-scale movements were witnessed during this period except for the 'Amani Ryot Satyagraha' and 'Geetha Satyagraha'.

The real impetus for the development of the Party came with the 1957 elections when the first Communist government took

office in Kerala. The extension of the party to new areas in the 1955 mid-term election and the elation of the masses over the electoral victories of the Party at the national level were consolidated in the late fifties. P.L. Naidu of Parvathipuram, Varahagiri Prasada Rao and Sala Kondala Rao, both of Eobbili, and Majji Tulesidas of Sompeta, all lawyers, were drawn into the party and gave it a respectable image. By 1957-58, Tarimela Nagireddy also visited the area as a leader of the Communist Party. He toured the entire district of Srikakulam and addressed the public meetings at Parvathipuram, Mondemkhul, Srikakulam, Palakonda and at various other places.

Rise of Radicalism in the Agency

Around 1957 the Communist Party penetrated into the agency. How it happened and why the Girijans welcomed the Communist Party to lead them is very important to know the origin of radicalism in the agency and of the subsequent armed rising by the Naxalites. Before dealing with that part, it is necessary to know the conditions and difficulties in the day-to-day life of the Girijans in the area. There is a brief mention about the life style of the Girijans in the first Chapter. Here it is proposed to examine the exploitation of the tribals by various elements through different means.

Exploitation of the Girijans

The tribal areas had been neglected for generations and even after independence the government failed to improve

their conditions, both economic and social. The exploitation of the tribal people comes from many sources: landlords or muthadars, merchants or businessmen and moneylenders, contractors, forest department, village officers like munsif and karnam, police department and revenue department officials.

Landlords or Muthadars

To protect the interests of the Girijans the British government had enacted a law with certain provisions. As defined in this law, the matters connected with the tribal people would be dealt by an officer of the revenue department with some magisterial powers and the law and order problems by the police department. According to the law, no person from outside the scheduled area, i.e., agency, should purchase land from the tribals without the prior sanction of the government. The Act came into force in 1917, but it remained a dead letter. Many landlords had either purchased lands in the agency areas from the tribals or obtained pattas from the Zamindars or Mokhasadars. With pattas or sale deeds in hand, the landlords claimed the ownership of the land ignoring the Act. The administration at the district and the State level had also never objected to this. The practice was continued till the radical movement took roots in the agency areas of Srikakulam district.

The landlords and muthadars claim that the plain land in the agency area which was under the possession and cultivation of the tribals belonged to them and they used to take the major produce as their share, leaving a small portion to the tiller.

Some of the landlords were residing outside the scheduled area, whereas, some others were staying within the scheduled area, if not in the interior agency. Usually the landlords reside in the villages where the non-tribal population is larger and particularly away from the tribals. These landlords and muthadars say that the lands were their inherited properties and had been in their possession for generations together. Their great great grandfathers had acquired these lands either by purchasing or by getting a patta through a 'Sanad' (order of the King) from the rulers of the area. All these years, before and after independence, the government never bothered to find out about the exploitation by the landlords and the muthadars. They used to stay away from the lands claimed by them and took the produce at the time of harvesting from the cultivating tribals. The voiceless tribals were made to feel that the claims of the landlord were genuine and met their demands for a share of the produce.

Merchants and Money-lenders

The merchants from inside and outside the agency area too had exploited the tribal people to a great extent. They gave them loans on the understanding that these would be repaid with interest in the shape of forest produce. It is an unending process. The tribals are plain-hearted and honest in their dealings. They seldom tell lies. The merchant would also offer provisions to the tribals which are not available in the agency, like kerosene, salt, chilli-power and beads, in exchange for

forest products. Such transactions weighted in favour of the merchant. These money-lenders are mostly of the 'Sondi' sub-caste. So are the Baniyas. The Sondi sahukars used to come to the agency from the plain areas to sell liquor to the tribals and later on they settled there and became money-lenders. All the essential commodities were supplied by these Sahukars or money-lenders and they would maintain accounts to collect their charges in kind from the tribals. In several instances the total collection of interest came to 200 to 300 per cent of the principal amount. It is a notable feature that the tribals would pay the amount ungrudgingly except when there was a failure of the crops in which a penal rate of interest was charged.

Forest Contractors

The forest contractors were a different type of exploiters. They used to take the forest areas for fuel, timber or bamboos. They engaged the tribals as labourers and extract maximum work from them. The tribals would come to work early in the morning and go home late in the evening. They would cut and carry the material to particular places from where it would be transported to the export areas. For all this work the contractors would pay the labourer not more than eight annas (fifty paise) per day. The wages earned by the tribals would not buy them food for even half a day. In this way the tribals were being squeezed by the forest contractors.

Forest Department

As government servants, the forest officials used to collect tribals from different villages and put them on work for afforestation, formation of forest paths and digging of trenches for plantation without any payment. They used to treat them as their bonded labour. At the same time, they would show some expenditure as wage payment to the labourers and use it for their own benefit. Moreover, they were accustomed to collect the forest produce from the poor tribals as 'mamool' (i.e. a 'legitimate due') by force if necessary.

Village Heads

The exploitation caused by the immediate administration, i.e., village Munsif and Karnam to the tribals in many ways was more or less inhuman. Most of the tribal villages in the agency were unsurveyed and the revenue authorities wrote whatever they liked about the possession of lands and collected levy, etc. Their collections of land revenue and other rents varied from season to season. The tribals would pay as per the demand of the village officers and would never obtain a receipt. Mostly the village officers collected their 'mamools' as a right from each and every produce the tribal raised. The village officers also extracted free labour from the tribals for their personal work. Often they worked as domestic servants if the place of residence of the officers was nearby. Taking advantage of the illiteracy and innocence of the tribals, these officers had it a practice to demand money or produce on false pretexts.

Revenue and Police

The exploitation by the police and revenue officials caused much terror in the villages. Occasionally they used to visit the villages and terrorised the tribal people by carrying away their goats, sheep, chickens, etc., as 'mamool'.

Girijan Development Corporation

The traders from the plain areas used to go to the agency and purchase forest commodities at very low prices and sell them at abnormally high prices in towns outside the agency area. The traders normally advanced money to the tribals against the anticipated crop yield or collection of the forest produce at arbitrarily fixed rates. When the harvest or the produce had been gathered, the tribals would be required to hand it over to the traders without questioning. The traders made huge profits out of the purchases in the agency area and the sale of the same outside the agency.

With a view to ending this evil practice, the then Andhra government with its capital at Kurnool set up the Girijan Development Corporation. The object was to eliminate the middlemen in the trade of the agency produce and to give direct benefit to the tribal people. The corporation notified certain agency produces and traders from outside the agency area were prohibited to purchase the produce from the tribals directly. For this purpose, the corporation divided the agency area into zones and established some sale depots. In the beginning it was adhering

to certain principles. The management of the corporation was placed in the hands of the revenue officials. After some time, establishment cost of the corporation went up and to become a self-sufficient organisation, it also started making profit. The tribal people were acquired to offer their produce only to the corporation at whatever rates it fixed. Thus, the tribals lost their freedom to sell their forest produce to whosoever gave them a higher price. The corporation would not offer them the rates prevailing in outside markets or in the handies.

The corporation also used to employ the local traders as its agents on a commission basis to collect the produce from the tribals. The traders who were accustomed to exploit them, were again in the field as the agents in league with the corporation officials. It became a 'legalised exploitation'. Besides, there was wrong weighing, less and delayed payment, etc. With all this happening it can be said that the corporation which was started for the betterment of the tribals itself became an instrument of exploitation. This is one of the reasons for the tribals to lose their faith in the government and its machinery.

In the Farvathipuram agency area, the Congress party leadership and the Congress legislators, particularly the ex-Zamindar of Kurupam, Chandra Chudamani Dev, and his followers could not attract the Girijans to their side. By the year 1958, corruption and exploitation by the forest department, the excise department and the revenue department had become too horrible and unbearable. The Girijans, particularly in the agency tracts,

were so disgusted that they looked for an alternative leadership to solve their problems. The whole atmosphere in the agency tracts of Srikakulam district and in the coastal belt of Uddanam area was vitiated and the ruling circles, particularly of the Congress party and the Swatantra Party, alienated themselves from the masses.

The major problems before the Girijans were three, viz., to get reasonable wages, obtain lowering of interest rates on loans and procure resumption of the land from the landlords. These problems were not solved by the Congress party or the Swatantra Party leadership as it was dominated by the exploiting landlords, money-lenders, traders and contractors. The Girijans were anxiously waiting for an alternative leadership to solve their burning problems of land, wages and interest rates. At that stage the Communist Party under the leadership of Ramalingachari entered the agency.

By 1959, there was a 'Girijan Sangam' in the agency organised by the Girijans with the encouragement of the Communists of which Vempatapu Satyam, Gajapati Endudora, Kondagorre Lassui, Rangaji, Kondagorre Sriramulu, Arika Somulu, Kiladi Somulu, etc., were the executive members. They appealed to all the Girijans in all the villages of the agency to become members with a subscription fees of ten paise. The Girijan Sangam was organised only to solve their economic problems.

Venpatapu Satyanarayana - The Champion of the Girijans

After entering the agency area, the Communist Party recruited Satyam, the mass leader of the Girijans, as a party member in 1960. Satyam, a higher grade elementary school teacher at Kondabaredu village near Mondemkhul of Parvathipuram taluk, was not originally a sympathiser of the Communist Party. He had abandoned his first wife with a son and married a Jatapu tribal woman and got a daughter through her by name Venpatapu Bharathi, who also took an active part in the radical movement.

Satyam possessed some poetic talent and could also sing. He had written some poems and a 'Burrakatha' about the life of the Girijans, the sorrows and woes of the tribals depicting their pathetic life and how they were suffering at the hands of the landlords, and became very popular among the Girijans as he used to sing this Burrakatha continuously for hours together. He used to settle disputes within the Girijan fraternity relating to the matters of land, marriage, divorce and money transactions.

Satyam wanted to organise a 'Co-operative Credit Society' to help the Girijans. He collected share capital to the tune of one thousand rupees by touring all the Girijan villages. But, the Congress landlords' group leaders in the area, mainly Meditha Satyanarayana, a contractor, and Gudla Satyanarayana, a businessman, were opposed to the organisation of either credit societies or labour co-operative societies for the Girijans in spite of the co-operative department's efforts.

They feared this might help the Girijans to free themselves from the clutches of the landlords and contractors. Both Meditha Satyanarayana and Gudla Satyanarayana with the backing of the Congress legislators of the area, sent telegrams to the government alleging that Satyam was cheating the Girijan masses and he should be removed from his teaching job.

At that stage the local DEO served a copy of the charges on Satyam. One Palle Ramulu, a sympathiser of the Communist Party, was a teacher in Manda village of Kurupam agency. He organised the tribals to fight against the landlords and contractors. The tribals resisted exploitation by a forest contractor in that area under the leadership of Ramulu. The contractor, however, succeeded in getting Ramulu transferred to Parvathipuram agency. Since Satyam was also a teacher in the Parvathipuram agency and leading the Girijans, Ramulu and Satyam became good friends. Friendship with a person who had relations with the Communist Party leaders drove Satyam to approach them and the local advocates who were the Communist sympathisers³ regarding the chargesheet. The advocates and Communist leaders approached the local Deputy Registrar of Co-operative Societies and got permission under the Co-operatives Act to register a society by name 'Mondemkhul Harijan Girijan Co-operative Labour Contract Society Ltd.' with an area of operations throughout the agency tract of Parvathipuram taluk. The money collected by Satyam was deposited in the Co-operative Bank as share capital. The Communist leadership persuaded the Director of Public Instructions to accord permission to Satyam to act as president of the

society. Further proceedings by the BDO were dropped in view of the permission granted by the higher authorities.

As president of the Labour Co-operative Society, Satyam used to contact the Block Development Officer at Bhadravari Samithi for work and he obtained two or three contracts. The society under his presidentship could pay two rupees and eight annas to three rupees per day as wages to the Girijans whereas the local contractors for the same piece of work were grudging to pay even eight annas (fifty paise). Therefore, the Girijans of the entire agency were attracted towards the leadership of Satyam and regarded him as their champion. He was known as 'Kondabaredu Master' among the Girijans of the agency.

Even in the functioning of the society and the works allotted by the Samithi, the Congress legislators headed by the ex-Zamindar of Kuruppa threatened the BDO that he should not entrust any work to the society because it was dominated by the Communists. Even after the society had begun work Satyam was not a Communist. After one or two meetings of the society, the taluk Communist Party deputed Kamalingachari and Adibhatla Kailasam to organise the Communist Party in the agency area and slowly bring Satyam into the Communist hold. And Satyam also found it convenient to join the Communists against the Congress legislators.

His own struggles against the local landlords, who belonged to the Congress and were constantly conspiring to kill him, drove him to the conclusion that the parliamentary process

could not liberate the Girijan masses from poverty, hunger and exploitation and that armed struggle was the only method to achieve socialism. Satyam did not know much about Marxism or Marxism-Leninism and was not a theoretician. Moreover, he was a humanist and a philanthropist.

In the early sixties, Chowdary Tejeswara Rao and Panchadi Krishnamoorti, fresh from College, plunged into the youth movement and built up a district-wide organisation. The district conferences of the youth organization were grand affairs attracting all strata of the population. The leadership of Tejeswara Rao and Panchadi helped the youth movement to draw all the youth cadres into the radical movement. Satyam and Adibhatla Kailasam took over the agency party organisation and created a mass base for it. Panchadi was sent to Sompeta taluk to checkmate Majji Tulasidas who in his pursuit of power was proving himself to be beyond the control and discipline of the party. A tussle grew in Sompeta taluk when Panchadi went there. Ultimately Tulasidas was forced out of the party. Panchadi became supreme there but it must be said to his credit that he built up a strong organisation drawing the agricultural labour, poor peasantry and the fishermen into the party which later proved to be the backbone of the Naxalite Movement there.

Panchayats and the Party

During this period the party achieved significant electoral victories in the local body elections proving its mass base. Party candidate Mostaka Swaminaidu twice became

the chief of the Seethampeta Samithi in the 1960 and 1964 elections. Majji Iulasidas was elected President of the Mandasa Samithi with party support. R. Pentannaaidu, a party member, became the Vice-President of the Palakonda Panchayat Samithi. P. Appa Rao became the Vice-President of Sher-Mohammadpuram Samithi as a result of an electoral understanding with a faction of Congressmen. With about twenty party sarpanches, they were the balancing force in the Kotturu Samithi. These electoral successes, especially in Setthampeta and Mandasa Samithis, helped the party to grow phenomenally in those areas and found the base for the radical movement. The early sixties also witnessed the growing organisation of the motor transport workers as well as the Girijans under the leadership of Bora Chinna in Salur Taluk. Chinna was an erstwhile socialist disgusted with the political antics of the socialist maharaja, P.V.G. Raju.

The 1962 Indo-China border war proved to be a watershed in the Communist movement in the country. Those who were believing that the party was becoming more and more reformist became disillusioned with the policy of all-out support to the war effort of the government. These members not only identified themselves with the left faction of the Indian party but also with the general line of CPC (Chinese party). As one wit at that time put it, "the war between Marxism and revisionism was fought on the slopes of Himalayas."⁴ The point of no return was reached. The split became "irrevocable, final and complete." Though their leadership was put behind the bars, the leftists within the party

captured party organisations and institutions wherever they could. Sundarayya called Visalandhra daily, a party organ, a revisionist rag⁵ and asked leftists to resign from their posts when they failed to capture the paper.

One of the sub-editors to resign was T.H. Rao who hailed from this district. He was deputed by the left leadership to go to the district to organise a party within the party. Therefore, the party membership in this district went over to the Marxists as also the mass leaders and intellectuals. V. Ramalingachari, the then district party secretary, Tejeswara Rao and Panchadi, district secretarial members became staunch leftists. The district organisation was wholly under the control of the leftists. Under their leadership the movement in the Agency assumed a militant character. A hunger march by the Girijans was conducted to the district headquarters. Huge demonstrations with thousands participating were held in Parvathipuram and Palakonda.

At that time the revisionist leadership of the party gave a call for presenting a charter of demands to Parliament. Thousands of signatures were secured for this 'Magna Carta' in the district though the leadership did not believe in the efficacy of such methods. The culminating point of these mass activities was reached when the state leadership gave a call for mass Satyagraha against the Additional Land Assessment Act which imposed a heavy burden on the peasantry. The leftist leadership of the district whole-heartedly plunged into the

movement which covered the entire district. The poor peasantry and the tribals solidly stood behind the party in this movement. A feature of the movement was the participation of women in large numbers in picketing before taluk offices. About thirty persons belonging to Parvathipuram and Palakonda taluks were arrested and charge-sheeted. The movement was withdrawn after gaining some concessions from the government. However, the government did not release the jailed comrades of this district who included T.H. Rao, Balaga Appala Naidu, Adibhatla Kailasam, Arika Somulu, a tribal workers, and others who, except for the first-mentioned, played a prominent role later in the Naxalite movement. They served the full course of their terms. In 1964, the split became open when the CPI(M) was officially formed. The entire agency was under its organisation.

By 1967, the differences between the Central Committee of CPI(M) and the Andhra leaders like T. Nagi Reddy, Kolla Venkafah, Devulspalli Venkateswara Rao and Chandra P. Ila Reddy resulted in the expulsion of the Andhra dissident revolutionaries from the party. The Andhra leaders formed a nine-member State Co-ordination Committee in June 1968 at a meeting held at Vijayawada with T. Nagi Reddy as Convener. They rejected the Parliamentary path as futile and adopted the Maoist line of revolutionary struggle to capture political power. Later on, in October 1968, the State committee decided to merge itself with the All-India Co-ordination Committee formed with like-minded revolutionaries under the leadership of Charu Mazumdar. But the Srikakulam

District Co-ordination Committee under the leadership of Tejeswara Rao ignored the State leadership of T. Nagireddy and maintained direct contacts with the All-India Co-ordination Committee and with Charu Majumdar and started receiving direct instructions from Calcutta for an immediate armed struggle with the Srikakulam agency area as the base on the lines of Naxalbari movement in West Bengal.⁶

How the agency area became the base for the armed struggle and why the Girijans who were ignorant of Maoism or Marxism-Leninism fought as soldiers for that revolution are the key questions.

First of all, it should be noted that the Congress party at the district level led by the landlords had alienated the masses instead of solving their problems. The Congress drove the Girijans into the fold of the radicals. Even this exploitation of the Girijans was recognised by the Congress government itself and the following statement prepared by the government against the Naxalites in the famous Parvathipuram conspiracy case proved the same:

*Srikakulam district which had already become a hot-bed of subversive activities had been selected as a base for launching armed struggle as the hilly terrain covered with dense forests comprising about 600 square miles inhabited by primitive Savara and Jathapu tribes provided an ideal locale for an armed

insurrection. There was widespread discontentment among the tribals of Srikakulam Agency due to prohibition of traditional Podu cultivation and steady erosion of tribal lands into the hands of Sahukars and alleged exploitation by the merchants, money-lenders, etc. Completely alienated as they are from the mainstream of life, the ignorant tribals fell an easy prey to the subtle and persuasive propoganda carried on by the Communist revolutionaries who systematically indoctrinated Communist ideology of violence and sowed the seeds of subversion. They demanded the restoration of Girijan lands, distribution of banjar lands, abolition of debts, fair market price for forest produce, lifting of prohibition on the use of forest timber by Girijans and lastly for declaring the agency as an autonomous region to be administered by the representatives of the Girijans. There have been sporadic and isolated incidents symptomatic of the wide-spread tribal unrest which found expression in tribal organisation. Soon after the 1967 elections, agitations were launched, meetings were held by Communist leaders and violence was also used intermittently. One such meeting was held on 31.10.1967 at Mondemkhul which was attended by a large number of tribals. A party of tribals was intercepted at Levidi by the landlords headed by Meditha Satyanarayana who opened fire resulting in the death of two tribals. This incident was exploited by the above accused and others to stir up a revolt in the agency and tribals resorted to looting Sandies in Polla, Seethampeta and Kurupam, etc., and indulging in violence in the Agency culminating in the police firing at Pedakaraja village

on 4.3.1968 resulting in the death of two tribals. Taking advantage of the prevailing hostility of the tribals, the Communist revolutionaries started recruiting 'Savaras and Jathapus' as members of various guerillas imparting training to them in the use of weapons, bows and arms and indoctrinating them to spread lawlessness in the region. Slowly the CPI(ML) emerged as a distinct political group advocating guerilla-type warfare modelled on the teaching of Mao-tse-tung and experimented in the Maxalbari uprising. This group started a series of violent actions with the object of terrorising the people and establishing so-called liberated areas. Late Vempatapu Satyanarayana became the unchallenged leader of the tribals and master-minded the insurrection.*⁷

It is most important to note that not the tribals but a landlord, namely, Meditha Satyanarayana who had the backing of the Congress party, was the first to open fire resulting in the death of two tribals - Koranna and Manganna - at Levidi junction. This incident roused the feelings of the toiling Girijan masses against their oppression by ^{the} landlords. The tribals under the leadership of the Communists went to court for justice. But after the acquittal of all the landlords accused in the 'Levidi double murder case', the Girijans lost confidence in the judiciary and police and in law and order itself. The prosecution of hundreds of Girijans and their conviction on false grounds in local courts also created distrust in their minds.

All these happenings and exploitation made the Girijans nurse hatred and resentment towards government machinery instead of looking at it as their saviour. The Sub-Inspector of Police, the Taluk Tehsildar, the Taluk Forest Ranger, the Block Development Officer and the Excise Sub-Inspector, etc., and all the remaining local official machinery identified themselves with the ruling Congress leadership headed by the local MLAs and big landlords. When there was a conflict between a landlord and a Girijan in any village in respect of wage-rates, lands or money-lending rates, the official machinery invariably supported the landlord.

The climax was reached in 1969. The landlords ganged up on one side and the Girijans on the other. Both were determined to fight it out. From 1958 to 1968, ceaseless struggles in legal forms for better wages, liberation from the cruel moneylenders' clutches and for getting back their ancestral lands from non-tribal landlords were launched by the tribals under the banner of Girijan Sangham. They found the experience frustrating. The Girijans, inspired by the Communists, thought that they must take revenge against the landlords and kill some particularly notorious ones. At about the same time, the All-India Co-ordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries decided to form a party based on the thoughts of Lenin and Mao on 22nd April, 1969, the one hundredth birthday of Lenin. The new party was named the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist). The Srikakulam District Committee under the leadership of Tejeswara

Rao automatically came under the banner of CPI(M-L). The Committee had convened many secret conferences in all the areas with a view to strengthening the party and implementing the programme of annihilation of the 'class enemy'. It was a coincidence that while the Girijans were in a mood to take revenge against the landlords, the Communist Party (M-L) decided to launch an armed struggle.

The 'Girijan Sangham', which was the backbone for the armed struggle, was organised in 1959 only to solve the economic problems of the Girijans. It had never thought of capturing political power. Even in 1968, the Girijans and the Girijan Sangham thought that they were only fighting against the local landlords for their economic demands though the radical leadership was preparing for an armed struggle to capture political power. In a sense, the Girijans were misled by the extremists who synchronised the struggle of the Girijans against the local landlords with their own fight against the Central Government as a phased programme of guerilla warfare taking Srikakulam agency as a base area. However, there is little doubt that the Girijan masses who had been fighting under the leadership of the Girijan Sangham which had nothing to do with Marxism-Leninism or the Communist leadership were driven into the fold of radicals due to the repression of the Congress landlords. Hence, one can come to the conclusion that the local Congress leadership itself sowed the seeds of radicalism in the agency through exploitation by its men.

The Congress Leadership and the Comrades

Though the Communists tried to topple the Congress government and despite the Congress leadership's aversion towards the radical movement and its activists, there were certain relationships and links between the district Congress leaders and the radicals. B.K. Rao, Congress MP, and most powerful factional leader, and Tejeswara Rao, the Srikakulam District Committee (ML) Secretary and a leader of the radicals, were closely related to each other. Sampurnaamma, wife of Tejeswara Rao, who also took an active part in the radical movement was B.R. Rao's niece. Tejeswara Rao's father-in-law was an APCC member. Chowdary Satyanarayana, father of Tejeswara Rao, was a follower of Ranga, Swatantra MLA and a freedom fighter. There were rumours that B.R. Rao used to give shelter to radicals, particularly of his own caste, 'Kinthali Kalingas', the so-called Tejeswara Rao's group. There were whisperings to the effect that B.R. Rao's men had direct contacts with Tejeswara Rao's group and they used to convert or sell gold looted by the Naxalites into cash and were also active in hiding the gold and cash. There were also rumours that Tejeswara Rao could be shot at sight and there was a cash prize to the tune of Rs.10,000/- for the police officer and the people who aided in catching him. And a week prior to Tejeswara Rao's surrender and during a fortnight before and after, there were cases of killing of Naxalites in 'encounters' or their torturing for three or four days. Another rumour goes that Tejeswara Rao surrendered with

the connivance of the Home Department and the backing of the Kalinga MLAs and Rajagopala Rao, MP. The Swatantra party might also have helped as his father was a Swatantra party MLA at that time. In fact, Rajagopala Rao, MP, himself was courier and underground Communist party worker in the year 1942.

Another factional leader of the Congress party, the then Z.P. Chairman, Gorle Sriramulu Naidu, had understandings with his caste radicals, the Kapus. And also Karri Narayana Rao, Member of Parliament, Peerukatla Venkatappala Naidu, Samithi President, and Parankusam Naidu, MLA, who also belonged to Kapu caste had taken interest in protecting the Kapu radicals from being killed in the name of 'encounters' with the police. Balaga Appala Naidu, a Kapu Naxalite leader and a prominent accused in Seethampeta Naxalite dacoity case and whose name also figured as accused in the famous Parvathipuram conspiracy case, had finally surrendered to the Congress leadership. The Congress leader, Gorle Sriramulu Naidu, assured him and his followers that all cases pending against them would be dropped. Sriramulu Naidu could manage things at Seethampeta Samithi of which his casteman, Appala Naidu, was the chief. Though Appala Naidu joined the Congress, he could not escape facing trials and convictions.

Agathamudi Simhadri Naidu and Agathamudu Byaragi Naidu, who were noted Naxalite leaders in Kotturu Samithi area, also belonged to Kapu caste and were connected with Sriramulu Naidu. That area was dominated by the Kapu caste and Sriramulu Naidu could dictate terms to all his castemen, though they were

Communists. In the 1970 Panchayat elections, all Communist sympathisers and CPI(ML) supporters were elected as sarpanches. They were nearly twenty. Under instigation of Sriramulu Naidu, they elected K. Mohan Rao, as Samithi President. Though Mohan Rao belonged to the Congress party, the Communists claimed him as an ML man. During the Naxalite movement, the President of the Kotturu Samithi, though a Congressman, had harboured many a fugitive because he was elected with ^{the} support of the Communists. Kemidi Appalasuri, another top Naxalite leader of Srikakulam, also came from Kapu caste. He had the backing of his caste Congress leaders.

The Role of Caste and Factional Infights among the Radicals

The caste virus also penetrated into the radical movement. All Kinthali Kalinga caste comrades who played an active role in the Naxalite movement like Chowdary Tejeswara Rao, Panchadi Krishnameorti, Pyla Vasudeva Rao, Dippala Govinda Rao, Dippala Krishnamurthy, Kota Chinababu, Barla Sundara Rao, Venugopala Das, Bendalam Appa Rao and Marpu Balakrishnamma, the then MLC, formed one group.⁸ They worked under the leadership of Tejeswara Rao, irrespective of ideological subtleties. Since this caste dominated the Srikakulam District Committee, they wanted to capture the leadership of the district and the province. It was rumoured that they wanted to introduce 'Kalinga Raj' since this caste dominated other political parties also in the district. It is very unfortunate to note that even the radicals could not escape from the evil of caste. The relationships and

the backing of Congressmen on the basis of caste with the radicals was quite evident.

Factionalism too was rampant in the radical movement. It seems that Vempatapu Satyam and Adibhatta Kailasam formed one group. They were against Nagabhushanam Patnaik's group. It appears that Kalingas under the leadership of Tejeswara Rao were also against Patnaik and there were differences between Satyam and Tejeswara Rao. Satyam had also differences about the leadership and the line of action with Zanidi Appalasuri. The reason for this factionalism is nothing but petty-mindedness to capture the leadership by sacrificing the cause itself.

Failure to Win the Ballot

Though the Communist organisation was quite strong in the Agency areas, it could not win any Assembly or Parliament seat ever since 1952. The Communists used to set up candidates in the reserved Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste constituencies hoping to win the votes of the Girijan and Harijan masses. The fundamental defect in the voting pattern was that the reserved constituencies consisted of the agency area and the plain area half and half. In the agency area where the Girijans lived, the Communist organisation was much stronger than the Congress or any other party. But in the plains, the people opposed infiltration of the Communists. As one observer aptly puts it that, "the principal weakness of the movement was its belief that the people of India could rise in revolt as soon as a call for armed struggle was given. While the Naxalites received support from

the tribals in Srikakulam, their activities did not spread to the surrounding plains.⁹ The residents of the plains hardly cast their votes in favour of the Communist candidates. The Girijana votes, which the Communists believed would be solidly cast in their favour, were divided due to the manipulations of the Congress and other parties.

The class structure in the plains was such as would impede the easy spread of Communist influence. Without a sustained struggle and propagation of the Marxist-leninist ideology it was very difficult for the Communists to win over the majority of the masses in the plains. The difference between the class structure of a Girijan village and that of a village in the plains reveals the reason for this. In the villages of the plains, though there were fewer land owners, the existence of poor peasantry belonging to the same caste as that of the big landlord worked as a stumbling block against the spread of Communist influence. In a Girijan village, there are already two hostile camps, one the tribal and the other a non-tribal consisting of the Sondi Sahakar, the exploiter, etc. But in the plains there are no hostile camps or declared enemies on the basis of economic struggles. Though the Communists had participated in the parliamentary process, they proclaimed it as useless and took to armed struggle to capture political power in the Srikakulam district. But even in this they failed.

The Failure of the Movement

Why the Naxalite movement rose to such heights in this district is a difficult question to answer. A tentative answer is: there was no other effective leftist party or movement to take its place. Politically and economically our country faced its worst crisis in 1967. People at least in this district believed that the Naxalites were showing the way out of the crisis. The Naxalites on their part believed that 'the spark lighted by them in the Agency could spread like a prairie fire.' The tribals rose in revolt as one man. But it should be remembered that the revolt in the Agency was essentially a tribal revolt and not a Naxalite political revolt. "The movement of the Girijans in Srikakulam predates Naxalbari. It began in 1959 as a Girijan struggle - a struggle of the hill tribes - under the leadership of the undivided Communist party in the Parvathipuram Agency."¹⁰ Naxalism was only a catalytic agent.

There have been tribal revolts of this nature even earlier. During the British rule, the most important agency revolt was under Alluri Seetharamaraju. The British took great care so as not to anger the tribals by not policing their areas and imposing their statutes. The tribals were allowed to pursue their own ways of life and thinking. They were free to have their own glass of home-brewed liquor.

Once a national government was formed in 1947, it was thought that integration was the first item on its agenda. Its flag and rule should extend to all the four corners of the land.

The first to oppose this policy were the Nagas - a major tribal segment in North Eastern India. The government fought against the Nagas for seven long years and ultimately entered into a truce with the 'Federal government of Nagaland'. The Mizos created a similar problem. These tribals living on the outer periphery of the country have an advantage in fighting with the central authority which the inland tribals do not enjoy in that the former can secure support from hostile foreign countries.

The point to be noted is that the tribals resent very much the administrative, political and economic interference from 'outsiders'. When the interference became unbearable, there was an outburst. The Srikakulam tribal revolt was one such outburst. The Communists following the Chinese line capitalised on tribal resentment.

Not only the tribals, some people from plains also played an active role in the movement. They were impatient for a change. The Naxalites told them that revolution was round the corner. The people obeyed their command to take up arms to achieve the desired goal of socialism. Here the failure of the other parties enters into the picture.

Persons with understanding of the Indian situation and its complexity knew that the Naxalite line was suicidal and self-destructive and doomed to failure. Its implications and repercussions were also better known to the Communists than to others. They alone could effectively counter the propaganda

of the Naxalites. The CPA in this district was practically non-existent as its members had gone over en bloc to the CPI(ML). The residue of the united Communist party, that is the CPI, in the district was too small to count as a factor. Its leaders were regarded as seekers of comfort and parliamentary berths. There never had been a wing of radical or socialist Congressmen in this district. All Congressmen poured venom against the Naxalites by branding them as murderers and robbers. The Swatantra party was more loyal than the king in opposing the Naxalites. In fact, the mechanics of the Naxalite movement destroyed itself since it was an off-shoot of adventurism. With the death of Vempatapu Satyanarayana, the unrivalled king of the tribals, and Adibhatta Kailasam, the intellectual leader of the Naxalites, there was a de facto collapse of the movement in India. With the death of Charu Mazumdar, the father of the movement, Naxalism could be said to have closed its final chapter.

Results of the Radical Movement

The Congress government in 1962, under the leadership of Pandit Nehru, had directed the State governments to issue orders to the co-operative departments and other allied departments to organise "Co-operative Farming Societies" and to encourage the peasants by giving them liberal subsidies, loans, grants, cash and fertilizers. By 1972, as a result of the Naxalite movement, more than a hundred landlords and an equal number of Naxalites had been killed in the district. The non-

tribal landlords had left the agency areas. The Congress regime got an excellent opportunity to introduce Co-operative farming Societies in each tribal village as part of its professed socialistic programme. The Girijan masses were also mentally prepared for it.

Now the question is did the Congress Government try to introduce co-operative farming in Srikakulam agency area? No, it did not. On the contrary, it introduced Savara landlordism, that is the landlordism of a segment of the tribes. The Jatapu landlord took the place of the Sondi landlord. He was given five to ten acres of land to own. This demonstrates that the Congress at the State and particularly at the district and local levels has not at all been radical in thought and much less in action, but on the contrary it revealed rank reactionarism. The district Congress leadership had sabotaged all Co-operative societies like the 'Forest Coupe Co-operative Contract Society' and the 'Labour Contract Societies' in the agency areas. It continued to do so even after the start of the armed struggle. Therefore, it was the rank reactionary local Congressmen that had actually driven the Harijan and Girijan masses, in general, into the hands of the radicals.

NOTES

1. Sinha, Shantha, Marxism in Andhra Pradesh, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University, 1977.
2. The reasons for this split were discussed in detail in the First Chapter.
3. Satyam with Ramulu, approached P.L. Naidu, local advocate at Parvathipuram and sympathiser of Communist Party, to answer the chargesheet.
4. Interview with a non-aligned Communist by conviction.
5. Interview with the then sub-editor of Visalandhra daily.
6. Parvathipuram Conspiracy Case, Chargesheet prepared by the Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, 1970.
7. Parvathipuram Conspiracy Case, op. cit.
8. The 'Kinchali Kalinga' caste was under the Criminal Tribes' Act in the pre-independence days.
9. Biplab Das Gupta, The Naxalite Movement. (New Delhi: ^{W.E.} Allied, 1974), p. 63.
10. Biplab Das Gupta, op. cit., p. 47.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

In the foregoing chapters attempt was made to investigate and analyse certain dimensions of the party politics in Srikakulam district, particularly in terms of factionalism and politicisation in the two decades under study. With this data-base as the back-drop of analysis, certain generalisations can be made about the nature of the party system at the grass-root level in our newly constituted democracy and its implications for national politics, with focus on the Congress party, as a major forum of political aggregation.

Party politics in the Srikakulam district has been continuously changing depending on the local circumstances, interacting with the situation obtaining in the State and national politics, at any given time. In pre-independence days, freedom movement coincided with the struggle for the abolition of the Zamindari system. Indeed this struggle continued even after independence. At that time the Congress organisation and leadership was in the hands of the Brahmins until the emergence of a non Brahmin leadership under Banga, who led the kisan movement. His lieutenants, Syamsundar Rao, an intellectual Brahmin, and Latchanna, a dynamic organiser belonging to the tappers' community, organised the movement. Thereafter, both Brahmins and non Brahmins shared political leadership in the district.

The existence of the feudal system was one of the main reasons for the poverty of the people. There were both Brahmin and non-Brahmin landlords. In the struggle to expose the inequalities in society under the Zamindari and Inamdari system, the kisan section of the Congress party exercised greater influence among the peasants. The rivalry between the kisan section known as the 'leftists' and the ministerial section, known as the 'rightists', had been developing even before the dawn of independence.

With the emergence of the KLP in 1951, the Congress had to experience effective opposition and depletion in its ranks as many of its leaders and the rank and file left the party to join the newly formed KLP. The Congress party and the KLP were the main contenders for power in the district politics, though the Socialists had also come on the scene with a small following. The presence of the Communist party in the Andhra region in no way affected the district politics at that time. The First General Elections in 1952 strengthened the hands of the kisan section as the KLP which secured more number of seats in the Assembly from Srikakulam district than the Congress party could win. The United Congress Front of the Congress, the Praja party and the KLP formed in 1955 to confront the Communists in the state increased the influence of the KLP more than that of the Congress party in the district.

The Congress party became strong only after 1955 when the KLP finally merged with it. But within years when Latchanna

and some other leaders formed the Democratic Party at the state level, the whole lot of leaders from the district who were with him since pre-independence days joined the new party which ultimately identified itself with the Swatantra party, formed in 1959, under the leadership of Ranga at the national level. Latchanna became the head of its district unit.

By 1960, political developments that had taken place in the district had significantly altered the working of the party system itself. The induction of persons of non-Brahmin peasant castes from the rural belt into the leadership pattern gave a new look to the party system. These changes together with the disintegration of the kisan section, made the Congress party powerful again and helped it win a majority of seats from Srikakulam district to the Andhra Pradesh Assembly in the third General Elections in 1962.

Though the Swatantra party was not quite strong at the time of the 1962 elections, since it was still a very new party, but in the district it acquired a sound foothold due to the existence of a strong leadership. The Congress party despite winning a majority of seats was not free from confusion on account of the bitter factional fights between individual leaders and groups. The policies of the state Congress government relating to agricultural levy and cess on food-grains and other produce antagonised a section of the peasantry. Various agitations launched by the Swatantra party under the leadership

of Latchanna attracted the voters towards this new party. All these factors helped the Swatantra party to capture a majority of the Assembly seats from Srikakulam district in the Fourth General Elections in 1967. Consequently the Congress suffered a severe setback. The main factional leaders of the Congress party in the district - B.R. Rao, V.K. Naidu and L.L. Das - were defeated. However, the Congress party remained as the ruling party at the State. Within a short period of time six out of the ten Swatantra legislators who were elected to the Assembly crossed over to the Congress party, presumably to become members of the ruling party. With these defections, the Swatantra party lost its hold on the district while the Congress doubled its strength by 1970.

In the Fifth General Elections in 1972, under the leadership of Mrs. Gandhi, the Congress gained further support from the masses. Its policies relating to the uplift of the poor down-trodden sections influenced a large number of people of this backward district. On the other hand the Swatantra party was almost routed in the district, where once it dominated local politics.

It should be noted that the Srikakulam district has not been a stronghold of any single party for a reasonably long period of time. The voters here have been in the habit of electing a party which could find solutions to their immediate problems at that particular point of time. This is quite evident from the results of the First to the Fifth General Elections,

over a span of two decades. It shows that the electorate at least in this district was mainly concerned with those policies of the government which immediately affected them rather than with larger national-level or even state-level policies, which were anyhow beyond the comprehension of the layman and affected him only indirectly. This is probably as it should be in a large democracy, such as ours, where basic problems of the people require urgent attention. This is commonly referred to as interest-orientation in electoral politics.

As is evident from the account given in the previous chapters, the phenomenon of group loyalties, caste factors, money power and factional struggles seemed to have dominated the political scene in Srikakulam district, ever since 1951. This was very much evident in the process of the selection of candidates for the elections. The Congressmen, who had been denied party ticket rebelled and contested either as independents or with the support of their caste or factional groups. The shift from politics of the freedom movement to power-politics brought into play factors like personal gain and caste and kinship ties.

The introduction of the Panchayat raj system made the situation worse. The Panchayats paved the way for many ambitious persons to become active in the district politics. The person who could control his castemen, with offer of monetary and material benefits emerged as a local leader and then rose to

the level of a district leader. The area of a Panchayat Samithi, for instance, comes under the leadership of a person who belonged to a specific dominant caste of that area.

The Srikakulam district is dominated by three major non-Brahmin peasant castes, namely, Kintali Kalinga, Kapu and Velama. The Kalinga caste is confined only to this district. More or less, persons belonging to the same caste are inter-linked in multiple relationships. This kith and kin relationship throughout the district works as a cementing force for politicians to reach higher levels. The majority of the legislators of this district come from these land-based dominant peasant castes. It is interesting to note that these otherwise dominant castes fall in the category of backward classes, according to the existing schedule of categorisation in terms of socio-cultural development, though the major portion of the agricultural land in Srikakulam district was under the control of these castes. They are however scattered throughout the district, each controlling certain pockets in the area. No one caste dominates the entire political scene. This becomes quite clear if we examine the caste of the Presidents of the BCC's. But at the same time it has been proved during the election time that money and caste-support without a mass base and political experience would not work. No single factor alone can ensure electoral victory.

The district Congress politics was clouded by factional struggles from the pre-independence days which became more

explicit with the emergence of the four factional leaders - B.R. Rao, V.K. Naidu, G. Sriramulu Naidu and L.L. Das - and their groups in the sixties. No faction showed much interest in the organisation and building-up of the party as such. Without any political ideology or principles, these opportunistic groups operated the party system only to their advantage. Shifting loyalties and changing parties have been the basic features of the district politics. Defection from one party to another had become a common occurrence.

The history of the Srikakulam district politics is replete with examples of the persistent impulse of the common man to fight against exploitation to which he had been subjected at any point of time. The movement against the Zamindars, the Inamdars, and the Muthadars before and soon after independence, and the Maxalite movement in recent times, occurred in the district among other things also due to the failure of the Congress leadership to solve the basic problems of the people at the lower levels. Moreover, the local leaders indirectly contributed to a rousing^a feeling of revulsion in the toiling masses against the manifest greed for power and personal benefits of the established leaders. Indeed neither radical movements nor the measures taken by the government to counter them, have been of much help to the poor and the needy in the amelioration of their chronic problems of poverty, ignorance, disease, etc.

The assertion which is often made that it is not politics that gets caste-ridden but that the caste gets politicised is not borne out by the findings of the present study of

party politics in Srikakulam district. The role of caste is prominent in many political matters, like organising an inner group or a faction within the party, winning an election to the Parliament, the Assembly, or the Panchayat, etc. A person with a solid caste-base has a better prospect of becoming a leader in that area. He could, if he so desires, exploit the sentiments of his caste people to the maximum for his political ends. But with this it does not follow that his castemen will also be in a position to take advantage in matters political. There is considerable evidence to show that politics is caste-ridden. But this is something different from the politicisation of the caste, which is relatively quite negligible. Our own study has shown that while politicisation of the caste has not made much headway, yet party politics at all levels appeared to be influenced by the role of the caste leaders.

At the same time, it is true that belonging to the numerically dominant caste in an area is not the only criteria for a person to become a leader. He should also have the backing of money power to promote and sustain his leadership. A person can become a leader with the caste-base only if he is in a position to keep his caste-folks in good humour with generous monetary rewards. These two factors, i.e., caste support and monetary favours shown to caste supporters help him to dispense patronage acquired through political power. The congruence of 'caste and coin' can produce a factional leader and help him thrive in politics.

Our findings show that a factional group can also be exclusively caste-based. The existing studies on the factional politics reveal³ that a faction is multi-interest and multi-caste in its base. Though a faction may be multi-caste, yet it is the dominant caste that leads a faction. It is evident from this study that persons belonging to the dominant peasant castes are able to build their own factional groups within the Congress party with their castes as the focal point, even when the faction is multi-caste in its composition.

The factional struggles of the Congress party did not seem to subside when there was a threat from the opposing parties. Theorists like Lasswell say that factional conflicts tend to subside when there is an external threat from the opposition. The degree of factional struggles in the Congress party has been changing from days of independence to the present time. In pre-independence days, the factional groups used to give united fight to the opposing party if the situation warranted it. But at present, the factional groups of the Congress party fight among themselves as if they are opposing parties. One hardly sees these factions getting united whatever the threat, external or internal.

The identification of the machinery of the government with the party in power helps considerably in influencing ^{the} people and gives the ruling party greater facility in coming back to power. The mass base of the Congress party got widened through this process of identification. The masses had become accustomed

to identifying the Congress with the raj or the government. If they got help from the government for their economic upliftment or if the government implemented any welfare programme, it was all supposed to have taken place in the name of the Congress party and its leaders. The interesting point to note here is that the poor rural folk, who got a piece of land or a buffalo under Mrs. Gandhi's Twenty-Point Programme, thought that 'Amma' (Mathajee) was sending these gifts directly to them. This psychology of the illiterate poor-folks did help Mrs. Gandhi in broadening the base of her party, and riding on the crest of popular support.

The Congress party organisation at the district level is very feeble. The DCC itself is a nominal body becoming active only at the time of the elections. It rarely functions for any other purpose. The people would rather give importance to the legislators than to the DCC. Of course, the craze to become a DCC President or executive committee member is there since they too have some role to play at the time of the elections.

As for the behaviour of the party members, there is little discipline in their functioning at the grass-root level. One finds persons who unsuccessfully tried for the Congress ticket at the time of the elections contesting the poll as independents against the official Congress nominees, sometimes even as candidates of an opposition party. They will choose any party to capture power and adopt any means to keep their

followers satisfied. The disciplinary action supposed to be taken by the party leaders (who are assigned this task) against the rebels, is more often than not, a mere eyewash. The party expects to get the successful rebels back into its fold when the election results have been announced in order to increase their number in the Legislature or the Parliament. Hence, power politics of the party leaders and their opportunistic attitude to obtain positions in the government through any means, even at the cost of the party at the time of the polls, did great harm to the image of the Congress among the people.

Lack of ideology and lack of discipline in the party leadership as well as in the rank and file at the grass-root level are great impediments to the effective survival of the Congress party in the future.

Srikakulam district, which is now also recognised as the land of radical politics with a uniquely complex system of Hindu caste, despite low level of formal education, is one of the most politically conscious districts of Andhra Pradesh. Allegiance of the village folk to the Congress party, its programmes and the earlier support extended by them to the freedom struggle are important political factors that have determined the context of their current politics. The district needs attention from the Government and voluntary agencies for its socio-economic development. It is a place where rampant injustice, bonded labour, inhuman treatment of the lower classes and

widespread suppression of the weaker sections of the society prevails. It has got an economic potential full of mineral and agricultural resources, provided they are utilised properly by the society.

The Congress party in Srikakulam district, adapted itself to the changes in the political environment and the local power structure. It manipulated factional, caste and ideological disputes and used its influence to win and maintain electoral support. It utilised traditional methods of dispute settlement to maintain cohesion within the party. It has been relatively sensitive to local discontent manifested particularly in the left-orientation of the peasant movement. Leadership in the Congress party was drawn from both rural and urban centres of the district has had a great effect on the factional politics of the party. In spite of the pulls and pressures from both within and outside, the Congress party in Srikakulam district was to very large extent successful in resolving internal conflicts, winning elections and remaining in power.

Party building in a developing country like India is not only a process of change but also an aspect of political development. A party can be built up on a sound basis only by dedicated and forward-looking leadership. It needs to be investigated further as to how the party building process by the Congress party took place in Srikakulam district within the triangle of high level political consciousness, a leftist peasant movement and low level of literacy.

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