

DR. N. G. RANGA: HIS WORK AMONG THE PEASANTRY

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CERTIFICATE

The research work embodied in this dissertation entitled, **DR. N. G. RANGA: HIS WORK AMONG THE PEASANTRY** has been carried out in the School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, in partial fulfilment for the award of **Master of Philosophy**. This work is original and has not been submitted so far, in part or full, for any other degree or diploma of any University.

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Dedicated to
MY DEAR BROTHER *CHARAN RAJ*, WHO IS IN HEAVEN

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CONTENTS

	Page No.
CHAPTER 1	
Introduction	i
CHAPTER 2	
Historical background of Andhra peasant structure	14
CHAPTER 3	
Emergence of kisan movement (1920-1934)	35
CHAPTER 4	
United fronts strategy and its break-up (1934-1947)	58
CHAPTER 5 :	
Popular movements and Dr. N.G. Ranga's ideology	76
SUMMARY & CONCLUSION	97

ABBREVIATIONS

AICC	-	All India Congress Committee
AITUC	-	All India Trade Union Congress
APCP	-	Andhra Provincial Communist Party
APCSP	-	Andhra Provincial Congress Socialist Party
APZRA	-	Andhra Provincial Zamindari Ryots Association
COWR	-	Court of Wards Report
FR	-	Fortnightly Reports
MELACR	-	Madras Estate Land Act Committee Report
NAI	-	National Archives of India
NMML	-	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
SIFPW	-	South Indian Federation of Peasants and Workers

The following Abbreviations were used to refer to the works of

Dr N G Ranga.

Fight For ...	-	Fight For Freedom
Great People...	-	Great People Whom I Know
Kisan ...	-	Kisan Speaks
The Economic ...	-	The Economic Conditions of the Zamindari Ryots
The Kisan and ...	-	The Kisan and The Congress
Modern Indian ...	-	The Modern Indian Peasants
Revolutionary ...	-	Revolutionary Peasants
Credo ...	-	The Credo of World Peasantry

INTRODUCTION

“Ranga deeply loves peasantry and for them he sacrifices everything and anything.” – Gandhiji.

The above statement says and speaks volumes about Ranga and his vigor for the peasants. Though ours is primarily an agricultural society but works related to them or their movements were less but not nil. There had been sporadic scholarly attempts since 1980's to chart the peasants' movements in India and especially in Andhra after 1950 Telangana revolt. Their contribution to the national movement was very thinly depicted otherwise this was an awfully neglected area in terms of research. This holds true mainly to Andhra districts in the erstwhile Madras presidency. Even whenever undertaken for study the peasants or their leaders were studied from the standpoint of main political leaders making them miniatures on the screen of our national history.

N.G Ranga was one such leader who tirelessly worked for the peasantry under the Congress party banner and for their emancipation – both inside and outside the elected bodies. N.G.Ranga was the only leader who tried to uplift the Peasants on all fronts – economic, social and political spheres. Ranga pleaded with Gandhi and fought with Nehru¹ for the peasants' cause and with other leaders in the AICC and other congress forums. He even touched other neglected sections and worked for their upliftment from all angles. He actively participated in adult education, took lead in adult franchise campaign, organized camps and protests against zamindars and the Britishers for the just cause of

¹ N G Ranga, Agony and Solace, (Compilation of Letters) Letter No. 3.

peasantry. He lead from the front and at times defied central authority of the congress leadership for the sake of peasants². On such personality very little work or no work has been produced so far. I am very happy and at the same time apprehensive to undertake such an arduous task of portraying his life, especially his relationship with peasantry and their problems in a deeply researched and analytical manner proving my points with much of primary sources and mostly employing his own writings. Ranga is a great scholar and produced a vast sea of literature. Ranga was an oxford product and probably the only one who became peasant leader after studying there.³

Mr. N.G.Ranga was born on 17th November 1900 in Nidubrolu of Guntur district. His full name is Nagayya Gogineni Ranga.⁴ Nagayya is being his fathers name and Gogineni their household name or we call it generally surname. He belonged to Kamma caste and not so well to do a peasant family. Ranga's father lost most of the land in Land resettlement Act of 1908.⁵ This is one of the reasons that influenced Ranga to take up the issue of peasants on a wider scale in his teenage only. The other main reason was that he observed the peasant problems from very close quarters and above all he is one among them. His grand parents from the mother's side were very successful peasants and were also very generous. Even though his grandparents from the fathers' side were not so well off and left no legacy for Nagayya, father of Mr. Ranga, most of the property Ranga got was from his mother side grandparents. His mother

² N G Ranga, Fight For Freedom, (Autobiography).. Delhi, 1968, P. 325.

³ I owe this point to Prof. Bhagawan Joshi.

⁴ N G Ranga, Fight For ... , Op. cit., P. 6.

⁵ Ibid. P. 11.

Achamamba was very highly religious person and devoted to the idea of Indian ness and Brahmincal learning. But Ranga's father wanted his son to become an I.C.S after studying at Oxford. In 1920 he left for Oxford not only to join the Indian Civil Service but also to help peasants become independent of the mischief of Revenue Officials and public works departments with whom his father had many unsuccessful fights. His father mainly suffered with the 'Compulsory Land Acquisition Act' and lost much of land. His father fought in the court for this and won the case. Mr. Ranga was associated with his father both emotionally and otherwise in these struggles for what he considered to be his rights. From these struggles Mr. Ranga learned how to survey lands, promissory notes, mortgage and sale deeds, Vakalats for lawyer early at the age of fifteen.⁶ All this stood him in good stead while dealing with peasant problems and their grievances in his later life.

In yet another direction he observed the traditional philosophical faith of our country. He drank deep from the rural beliefs and animistic festive of Kisan's.⁷ Ranga participated in all these festivals enthusiastically. This participation gave him good understanding of the peasant consciousness and their level of awareness. All this he combined with his scholarliness in rousing the peasants from their political slumber and economic torpor. At this young age (in teens) Ranga came to observe the deep philosophical polemics and controversies about various religions and their practices. This also helped him in serving the backwardness and innocence of the rural masses from a sympathetic

⁶ N G Ranga, Fight For ... , Op. cit., P. 16.

⁷ Ibid. P. 17.

angle rather than condemning their ignorance. Ranga always respected the sentiments and beliefs of the peasants while encouraging them to come to the wider screen of national politics.

From 1917 onwards he started acquainting himself with the national happenings by reading nationalist newspapers like the ' Andhra Patrika' and New India' etc. which were reporting faithfully the inspiring activities of our national leaders. When Gandhiji gave a call to all patriotic persons to obtain signatures for the manifesto to be presented to Montague Ranga along with his friends' toured more than ten villages and secured hundreds of signatures and thumbprints.⁸ He encouraged all the members of his village and neighboring villages to join the national struggle for Swaraj. In all this he developed his brothers Venkatappayya, Lakshminarayana, as enthusiastic participants in the movements and educated them in the similar ways. They were his co-partners in his movements of literacy campaign, adult schools, anti-illiteracy programmes, social service activities, fraternization with Kalakars and Harijan etc.⁹

The first twenty years from 1900-1920 Ranga spent his time in the comparative quietness and placidity of the rural India. In this spirit of time lag between town and villages Ranga not only found some interesting features but also learn to adjust to both the spheres and balanced them very well in his long and distinguished political and social carrier. The time lag Ranga says, "was in their ability to accept latest thoughts, machinery, industrial and commercial techniques". He also found that rural India was found lagging far behind the

⁸ Ibid., p.28.

⁹ Ibid., p30.

urban India in every aspect. This is one of the reasons why he fought for peasants and tried to bring them on par with the urban Indian population. He remained committed to this to the very end. He tried to do this by bringing the rural masses in contact with the programs of the national movement and made them an inherent part of them. This not only gave them exposure and much needed confidence but also the power to solve their own problems. He did not merely preach but led them by example from the front and even conducted night schools to educate the villages and day school for rural kids and children to achieve the desired results

This is the brief sketch of Ranga of the first twenty years. His enthusiasm for the peasants and rural masses, his love for national movement, though went to Oxford to return as ICS officer, brought him back as a more determined patriot with peasant upliftment as his primary motive with Gandhian methods to the core. He came back with B.Litt in Economics¹⁰ and applied all his learning while dealing with the peasants and their problems. His activities among the peasantry will be discussed in the subsequent chapters.

The existing literature on peasant movements studied them mainly from the viewpoint of changes in the agrarian land relations, the impact of depression on the agrarian economy etc. These were studied using the output trends, area of cultivation, growth of production activity etc. The contours of commercialization too were touched. The peasant movements were always studied from various national and local parties and big nationalistic leaders. Very rarely these studies related to the ongoing political activity among peasantry. The

¹⁰ Rangas Doctoral work is "problems of the handloom weavers in Andhra districts".

contribution of Mr. Ranga hailed by everyone now and then as a rock solid leader of the peasantry was never touched upon or treaded by anyone. His work was not confined to Andhra region(my area of study) but engulfed whole of India after and before independence. Even the place of my study also had its share of importance. For this also no adequate attention had been given by anyone but slightly touched by Mr. C.J. Barker in his "South Indian Politics (1917-1937)" but was not adequate.

As I said earlier the literature on peasantry during this period tried to look from a narrow angle. There is however, little evidence of the systematic and explicit attempt in the existing literature to explain the phenomenon of how peasants protested, who led them from the front and how they tried to confront both imperial British oppression and the emerging capitalist onslaught. How they survived economic depression and above all who were the winner even peasants if won was it a 'phyrric' victory or not and who stood with them till the end. As I mentioned practically no full-fledged work has been undertaken so far regarding Mr. Ranga and his rise as the peasant leader.

The period 1920-1947 represented a crucial and high water mark in the history of peasant struggle in India and in Andhra in particular 1920. For the first time peasant were incorporated into the national movement under Rangas leadership after their participation in the Gandhian non cooperation movement and 1947 was regarded as crucial for congress took up the issue of peasants starting with the abolition of Zamindari system. This period also witnessed the great depression of 1931, Peasant uprisings, of organized peasant movements

under able leaders like Prof.N.G.Ranga, Second World War and the peasant participation in the Quit India movement and aftermath uprisings. This period is an epoch making one in Andhra specially because for the first time organized peasant movement was started with associations like Andhra provincial zamin ryots associations (here after referred to as APZRA) and Andhra provincial ryots association (here after referred to as APRA). The former organization was concerned mainly about the zamindari ryots in Andhra whereas the later represented the Riotwari ryots of the Andhra districts as whole. In 1947 congress taking up the mantle of peasant movement under its fold and initiated to solve them through five year plans and other tenancy legislations. The directives of five-year plans helped India develop both agriculturally and industrially.

Our purpose in this study is to relate the historical phenomenon of peasant movement to Rangas work and how he could develop such a huge peasant movements with diversified classes and caste and how far he succeeded in raising the peasants from their historical slumber. What battles he won for the peasantry and what were the sections that benefited most through his struggles. In the end we will briefly survey his ideology and how far it stood the test of times. We will also survey how far congress had helped him in his struggle for the upliftment of the peasantry and also the methods he used in organizing peasantry and mobilizing them.

Before we go in to the detailed study of our topic let us briefly survey the existing literature on peasant movement. Firstly the study about the peasant

movement in colonial Andhra has been a neglected area. The study of the changes in agrarian class structure, their historical backgrounds were yet to be undertaken. The few writings undertaken to study the economic changes and relating them to the ongoing political phenomenon had some lacunae. Such writings were undertaken by Sayana,¹¹ Ramana Rao¹² and Ranga. Since our study is about Rangas work we will be discussing about him fully in the subsequent chapters. Let us examine the former two writings Sayana and Rama Rao.

Sayana claimed, "to have presented the systematic and comprehensive study of the agrarian problems of the Madras province". Though his work is descriptive but found lacking in analysis of the events. But it is a very good research work, for instance when discussing the problem of the Zamindari agrarian structure he tended to overstress the burden of rent and other kinds of exploitation. He argued that "they (the estates) are the symbols of extreme misery and poverty of the peasantry and general backwardness ...the zamin villages and villages present a spectacle of misery and abject poverty and the degradation to which they have been placed ...the reason being difference in assessment". His discussion of tenurial pattern and agrarian legislation is formalistic and unlike Ranga he fails to discuss the implications of such patterns and legislations. He did not for example study the forces and the circumstances that compelled the colonial state to undertake such agrarian legislation and its impact on the agrarian class structure.

¹¹ V. V. Sayana., *Agrarian problems of Madras province*. Madras, 1949.

¹² A. V. Ramna Rao; *The Economic development of Andhra Pradesh 1765 – 1957*.

Ramana Rao too presented a simple picture of colonial agriculture in Andhra during (1757-1957). Since scope of his study (both in terms of region and period is very broad he fails to undertake any specific area or specific field to prove his points .His study seems like a vast narration of events rather than of any historical analysis. However the emphasis through out is about the description of economic conditions. But this was not coupled with any long-term trends of those economic conditions. For instance he generalized about over assessment and repeatedly sited the resettlement rates. It is of course true that revenue and rent skyrocketed but these are not the only factors related with peasants' misery. Many social and political factors too contributed to the misery and poverty of the peasantry. He failed to touch this aspect.

The view advanced by Cambridge school is misleading. The elitist character of nationalistic politics and the extent to which nationalism was divorced from popular aspirations is misleading and far from the truth. Ranga was from a humble background and rose to the position of all India peasants leader and became the secretary of AICC. The works of Wash brook¹³ and Baker. C. J.¹⁴ on Madras presidency belongs to this category. They have attempted to study the changing political institutions and systems of Madras province from the late 19th century to later 1930s. The theme of politicization through the growth of factionalism underlies much of the arguments of their work. For instance Wash brook went to the extent of stating that " the nationalist

¹³ D. Wash brook. The emergence of provincial politics in Madras presidency. Delhi, 1978.

¹⁴ C. J. Baker. The politics of south India. Delhi, 1978

movement in Madras presidency...be explained in terms of factional conflicts... the national agitation was not mass protest rather they were local protest movements stirred up those who had lost in the struggle for political pickings ...and there were no significant class movements". In my writings I want to show how Ranga had organized peasant movement and integrated them into national agitations and as baker says" he lost in the struggle for political pickings".¹⁵ I will show he had risen studily in the rank and file of congress ladder. I also want to show how Prof. Ranga significantly united all sections and classes of the peasantry against zamindari oppression and colonial governments neglect of agriculture. In another context he maintains, " The Justice Party and its alternative the congress were composed of the sama material.... Of transactionally based factors each struggling to get at the center of power. Indeed not only did parties alike but they were composed largely of the same people.

Here I want to say and prove later that Justice party never became alternative to congress party and congress party composed of divergent masses and classes and this had been proved by many historians and negated specially by G. Pandey¹⁶ in his review article. Due to our space constrain we shall isolate Backer for our critical observation.

C.J.Bakers study represents a great sophisticate both in terms of the application of research techniques and utilization of the primary sources. When discussing the political changes he referred to the changes that were occurring

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 368.

¹⁶ G. Pandey's, Review of the works of Anil Seal, Jhon Gallagher, G. Jhonson etc. in Indian Economic and Social History Review, 1974, vol. XI. Nos. 2-3. Pp. 326-40.

with in the economy and the society of Madras Presidency. This was certainly an improvement over the nationalist approach. He examined and analyzed the socio-political structure and his understanding of the effects of the depression of 1930's and its implication on the agrarian society of Madras province is very commendable. He had demonstrated the pattern of the integration of the peasant associations into provincial politics was also good. Still many gaps in his study are apparent. His basic flaw was he identified the peasants struggle against zamindars as between the propertied classes, rich peasants and the zamindar. According to primary data of the period it was found the other way round i.e. it was a fight between zamindar and all the peasantry as whole. The agitation against zamindar was adored and advocated by all sections of the peasantry. This was one of the greatest and the most powerful struggle that Ranga waged for the Peasantry in and outside the legislative bodies. " For the rise of rich prosperous farmers" the causes he gives were more of an empirical nature like expansion of irrigation, rising prices, improved transport etc. Above all these factors like colonial politics, policies, market economy contributed more to their prosperity. He fails to demonstrate in detail as to how the rich peasants emerged with in the zamindari agrarian structure and how internal production mechanism gave birth to the new class of the nascent peasant bourgeoisie.

He attempts to explain the peasant movement in a manner typical of the 'conflict theorist' in sociology. He is content with the presentation of the dominant strains in the structure without evaluating the determinant causes behind them. He identifies a few dominant strains of the system such as 'credit'. He found it as

a significant factor responsible for the movement though he was pointing to the factors of 'stress' and 'strains', which acted as a prelude to the peasant uprising. These might be underlying factors but not the main pillars on which the peasants rose up in the political circle.

Like Washbrook he too tends to explain the growth of the peasant movement and the peasants agitation in terms of factional fighting based on vertical alliances. He fails to explain how factional leader could lead such a big peasant movement and fulfill their aspirations.

The above works only touches the peasantry and their struggle from a superficial way. But what Ranga did was he actually participated and led the movement from the front. Some times independently and at times with the help of congress. On such a great personality who produced a vast sea of peasant literature hardly any work had been done not even stray attempts except mentions here and they're by writers like Sayana, N. Prasad Rao,¹⁷ A. Satyarayana, Ramana Rao etc. In this study we will attempt to analyze the socio-economic basis of the peasant struggle and the role of Ranga in intensifying the constitutional agitation. What were the main issues and how far he succeeded in keeping the whole peasantry united and in achieving peasant upliftment? In what areas Ranga actually succeeded?

In other words our aim is to explain the peasant uprisings as a social phenomenon under the guidance of Ranga. Our endeavor would be to investigate the social transformation initiated by Ranga and his methods of

¹⁷ N. P. Rao, History of modern Andhra. Hyderabad. 1978.

achieving them. How far he succeeded and what were his methods and we will investigate his ideology and perspectives on various social and political issues.

In chapter-II we will be discussing the current background to peasant problems accompanied by peasant structure and ailing problems of the then society. We will be touching very shortly about the work done by Ranga for the hitherto neglected sections too. Historically contradictions with in the peasantry too will be studied. In chapter III we will be discussing very shortly Ranga's life at oxford and beginning of the organized peasant movement. Under his guidance through various Associations like APRA and APZRA. His work during great depression will also be touched. The period will also stands highlight for his struggle against oppressive zamindari system and anti-zamindari agitation all over India from 1920-1932. In chapter-IV we will discuss about the united front strategy and how Ranga could still keep his ideology intact without being brushed under the carpet of communisms. How he fought during this period for the unity of peasantry and how various political parties polarized or divided the unified peasantry and the impact of 'left' on peasant movement. In this chapter we will also about his work during second world war and also his work through congress ministry till 1947 from 1936. Our last Chapter -V will study about ideology of Ranga his view on various issues and some of the important movements he initiated for the welfare and upliftment of the peasantry during 1920-1947.

CHAPTER 2

Historical Background To Andhra¹ Peasant

Structure

This chapter attempts to study the colonial peasant structure and the class differentiation among the peasantry. It mainly discusses the structure of land tenure the form and nature of rent and the relationship between the landlord and the producer. This study is very important for understanding the crisis and downtroddenness of the peasantry during this period. This was the base on which Ranga built up his movement of peasant awakening. Even though he studied at Oxford but the plight of peasants made him a great and dedicated peasant leader. Ranga from his childhood studied the problems of peasantry from very close quarters and being one of them sided with the sufferings peasantry and fought for them throughout his life. This historical background is important to understand his struggle for peasant upliftment. In this chapter, we shall examine the trends of the

¹ The Northern Parts of Madras consisted of 11 districts. They were I. Ganjan, II. Vizagapatnam, III. East IV. Godavari, V. West Godavari, VI. Krishna, VII. Guntur, VIII. Nellore, IX. Kurnool, X. Ananatapur, XI. Cuddaph, XII. Chittoor. The districts from I – VII are know as the coastal districts and the rest were called as Rayalaseema. The coastal districts formally know as Northern circars were obtain by the British East India Company as early as 1765. In 1800 the Nizam of Hyderabad called ceded the districts of Kurnool Anantapur and Cuddaph to the East India Company. The British also obtain the districts of Chittoor and Nellore after abolishing the Karnataka ruler and United the whole of their Andhra area with southern territories constituting the province of Madras. Until independence 1947, Telugu country as a part of Madras Presidency. Telugu speaking areas were separated from the composite. Madras State and new Andhra State came into being by an Act of 1956. Most of the Nizam territory (Telangana Districts) was merged with Andhra. The presents state of Andhra Pradesh came into existence in 1956. For details see Spate, India and Pakistan, London, 1964. Pp. 689-90.

penetration of capitalism against which Ranga fought tooth and nail. Ranga strongly advocated for the socialistic pattern of distribution to fight the menace of capitalism. Before we go into this subject matter we should know that Permanent Settlement Act, which was prevailing at that time, had affected many lives of the peasants. Many historians have studied this in detail in different times and in different areas. On this account Ranga's own family suffered much and his father had to wage a long and bitter legal struggle against the revenue authorities. This incident ironed Ranga's resolve to fight for peasant and make them realise their potential by mass movement and collective strength. Below we will study the existing the tenurial system and the structure of peasantry very briefly.

TENURIAL SYSTEM: As a result of the British colonial policies in 19th century, with respect to the structure of agrarian relation, had an impact on the new economic forces that was emerging. In this regard Andhra evolved a distinct system of land tenuralism. Though the British attempted to appropriate a large share of the agricultural produced but the Zamindar paid only a small portion of the demand. In 1939 appropriately 8 to 40 % was paid as peshkash and the

Zamindar retained the rest as is evident from the "Zamin ryot" (A Telugu weekly news paper) calculations.²

The Zamindars large estates were know as "seri" lands.³ Over time these were extended by occupation of relinquished and evicted lands. At time they also brought lands from the ryots in lieu of their payments. The Zamindar employed farm servants to cultivate their lands.⁴ But in most of the cases the land was leased out to under-tenants i.e. tenants-at-will. The Zamindar was basically rent receiving landlords and they appropriated a large share from these poor sections leaving very little for their bare needs. Their plight was pathetic and miserable. This was one of the reasons, which made Ranga to take up the cause of Zamin ryots on a national scale. This type of Zamindari⁵ exploitation was prevalent in the Andhra district on a wider scale.

The price data indicates that there was an increase in the food grain production by 100% during the first two decades of the 20th century (see table no:). It is clear that the price rise has reached its highest level during 1919-1920 and started declining from 1922 onwards. The price rise was at its lowest during the depression period. It is interesting to note that during 1915-1920 the prices of cholam

² Zamin Ryots on 28.8.1936 and 4.9.1936. The percentage of Ryots government and Zamindar in gross produce was 50:33:17 respectively.

³ Madras Land Estate Committee Report, 1939, P. 634.

⁴ N G Ranga, Conditions of Zamin Ryots, Vijayawada, 1933, P. 10.

⁵ Mostly Zamindars didn't just own lands but had many villages under them.

increased 106% more than that of the paddy prices 79%.⁶ It meant that the lower sections of the agricultural population were affected very much since most of them consume millets and they produced not for the market but to their daily needs. More over they doesn't have the necessary capital to produce for the market. And most of these were poor peasants who were landless labourers and worked as sharecroppers in the Zamindari lands. They paid exorbitant kind rents to the Zamindars. They paid nearly 50-80% of their gross produced as rent to their superior tenants/land owners. Since they did not possess necessary capital to cultivate independently they were forced to depend on the money lenders/merchants for their credit. The production decisions were not taken by the peasant but by their creditors. Being dependents they did not have any opportunity to benefit from the raising prices and with the increase in the prices landowner began to pay wages in cash instead of paying in kind as per the usual practice.⁷ Hence price raise was not advantageous to the poorer sections of the agricultural population.

Occupancy Ryot: After Zamindar comes the occupancy ryot in the tennurial structure. Generally the tenant's leased in the land from Zamindar by paying a fixed amount of cash as rent and mostly worked

⁶ In Ganjam, Vishakhapatnam and Chittoor more than 50% in Godavari Krishna and Nillore more than 30% source: Statistical atlas of Madras, 1940.

⁷ Ibid.

on contract system. The period of contract was not properly defined by the government and varied from place to place. This also depended on various existing local rules and patta regulations. Ranga in his latter years fought for this unjustified system and tried to bring the rent prices into one single unit. The period of contract varied from 5-10 years. After the expiry of the period the tenant had to get his tenure renewed. For this renewal a fee called 'Nazarana' was collected from the tenant. We are told that every renewal led to an increase in the rent being paid. It can also be assumed safely that renewal fees certainly represented the appropriation by the landlord from a portion of the profit made by the tenant. The non-occupancy tenants were those who held the 'old waste'⁸ or the non-ryotwari lands in the Zamindaris.

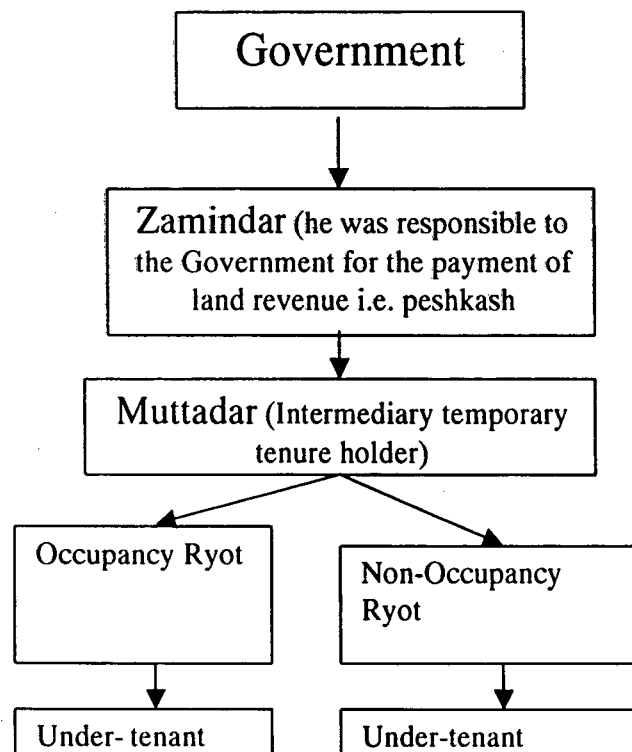
At the bottom of the tenorial ladder was the sub-tenant. Sub-tenancy was the simple lease usually for one-year duration or for a maximum of five years. Most of under tenants were mere tenants-at-will and they were the actual producers. This was the category Ranga identified as the most exploited one in the peasant structure. For them he proposed for special privileges, as they were numerous in population

⁸ 'Old Waste' was a ryotwari lands which didn't carry with it any occupancy rights and fixed rent. T Prakashan, Op. cit., P. 117 (Part II).

figures. The under tenants in Andhra district were of Three categories⁹:

- (a) Zamindar by his rights on the land treated cultivators as mere tenants-at-will.
- (b) The Zamindar leasing the 'Seri' lands to others.
- (c) The occupants of the Zamindari areas sub-letting their lands to under tenants.

Broadly the tennorial position in Andhra can be described as:



⁹ Report of the agrarian reform committee chaired under J C Kumarrapa and Ranga is one of them. Hyderabad 1949, P.13.

For detailed study of the formal categorises and their class relations we can refer to A. Satyanarayan's work who discussed elaborately about these sections in his book "Kisan movement in Andhra".¹⁰

One of the most important Acts that helped zamindar in occupying high position over his tenants was the "Estate land Act of 1908". In this Act Ranga's father also had lost his land. This Act had a tremendous impact on the agrarian relations of Andhra at the beginning of this century. This piece of legislation was discussed descriptively by P.T.GORGE.¹¹ This mere descriptive analysis was not sufficient as this piece of legislation had differential impact on different sections of the society. The act of 1908 was considered "to be perhaps the most important and far-reaching piece of legislation of Madras till 1950"¹². The prominent feature of this Act as Bengal tenancy act of 1885 was to declare the substantive rights of landlords and ryots. Hence it was after the enactment of the 1908, occupancy rights were conferred extensively and guaranteed to the tenants who held lands for twelve consecutive years. The difference in Madras unlike Orissa and Assam is the permanency of tenure enjoyed by zamindari ryots. According to the Act to 1908 the cultivated lands in the estate fell into

¹⁰ A Satyanarayana, Kisan Movement in Madras Presidency, Pp. 29-30. (Unpublished thesis submitted to JNU in 1979.)

¹¹ P T George, Op. cit., P. 362.

¹² Ibid P 362

two main classes viz the Ryoti lands and Zamin lands. The former had enjoyed occupancy privileges and this right was heritable and can be transferred by gift or sale. Thus the ryots on these lands had fixity of tenure, free transfer and were protected from arbitrary enhancement of rent. The act also divided the ryots into the categories those with and without occupancy. The latter did not enjoy the same rights for which Ranga fought for under the APZRA banner.

It should be noted, "the full advantage of act went only to the wealthier sections of the tenants who had money to pay legal dice and who were likely to control village records to prove their occupancy rights".¹³ It was this section, which had occupied permanent land, had played the crucial role in the zamindari agrarian structure and become the vanguard of the peasant movement against the Zamindars in the early 1930's. The category of occupancy ryots was not a homogeneous group and there was differentiation with in it. Generally both the under tenant and occupancy ryots were called tenants which is misleading. Regarding the high rent paid by the subtenants to the immediate tenants the table given below is significant:

¹³ Ibid.

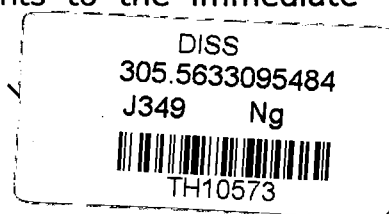


Table: 1.1**Rents paid by the under tenants to pattadar (1938):**

Name of the estate	Patta no.	Extent	Assessment rent paid to zamindar	Amount collected from UT	Net differentiation (In Rs.)	% Of share paid by P To Z
Pitapuram	154	85.28	692	2751	2059	25.15
Pitapuram	14	15.50	334	800	466	41.75
Pitapuram	68	13.10	185	650	465	28.47
Pitapuram	20	5.20	45	274	229	14.53
Pitapuram	N.A.	2.70	20	313	293	6.38
Anakapalli	168	8.00	108	560	452	19.33
Thotada	N.A.	8.00	157	900	743	17.44
Thotada	N.A.	36.00	450	1200	713	40.55
Thotada	N.A.	16.00	156	400	244	39.00
Kurupam	50	12.00	155	450	294	34.00
Kurupam	N.A.	10.00	13	350	336	3.07
Kurupam	6	11.00	24	350	326	6.90
Nizapuram	N.A.	18.00	30	180	130	27.60

Table : 1.2**Grain Rents:**

Name of the Estate	Patta No.	Output	If converted in to Rs	SHARE OF PATTADAR	MONEY VALUE	RENT TO Z	NET DIFF.	% OF SHARE TO Z PAID BY P
Repudi	62	12	120	Half	60	6	54	10.0
Repudi	90	14	140	THE	70	5	65	7.1
Repudi	99	16	160	Gross	80	4	76	5.0
Repudi	31	16	160	Yield	80	5	75	7.5

Note: conversion rate 10/ per bag.

U.T. - Under Tenant, P- Pattadar, Z= Zamindar

Source: Compiled from T. Prakasham Madras Estates Land Act Committee Report Madras 1939.

This rent factor was one of the universal demands of the peasantry during the depression period. One important point to be noted here is that in this tenorial structure the chief victim was the

actual tiller, the subtenant and he become "the source of the varied exaction of the pattadars, izaradars and zamindars...¹⁴. The area under sub-tenancy varied from 25% to 60% of the total area held.

Table: 1.3

Sub-tenure of zamin-villages in West-Godavari District

Name of the Village	Kolamura	Pamlapuram	Vallure	Kumara
Extent of village in areas	2447	825	633	1176
No. Of Pattadars	239	166	156	326
Avg. extent of the holding of a pattadar (in acres)	10	5	5	4
Pattadar Owning more than 30 acres (%)	33	4	1.5	0.9
Pattadar Owning less than 30 acres (%)	61	27	65	32
% Cultivated by Pattadars	39	63	35	68
% Cultivated by tenants of Pattadars	12.5	10	15	12.5
Avg. yield per acre (in bags)	7	7	9	10
Rents paid by tenants to pattadars	4.25	5.25	6	6
Rent paid by Pattadar to Govt. and Zamindar	800	8.00	9.50	9.00

¹⁴ T Prakashan, Op. cit., Supplementary Volume. P. 619.

Note: On an average the under tenant paid 70% of their gross produce as rent.

Source: Compiled from Madras Estates Land Act Committee Report Madras 1938.

It should be kept in mind that the Act of 1980 left out the case of under-tenants who as we have said earlier numerically formed the bulk of the cultivating population. They were in far worse a position than any other class of the cultivators being at the mercy of the direct tenants. The rent was so exorbitant that the under-tenants were left with very little margin for their subsistence. This was one of the classes for which Ranga fought and wanted them to have a say in the constitutional proceeding. For this he envisaged Kisan Mazdoor Praja Rajya, which we will be discussing in a very short while. Driver¹⁵ observed that "the conditions in Madras presidency shows that under land lordism the cultivator is not only exploited by the landlord but by all the natural allies in the system who were protected at the cost of the cultivator.

On the basis of above discussion it can be said that (a) rent paid by the cultivating peasants invariably averaged between 50-80 per cent of the gross produced (b) The direct producers were increasingly

¹⁵ P N Driver, Problems of Zamindar and land tenure Reconstruction, Bombay, 1949, P. 66.

deprived of the total surplus and at times the rent ate into their subsistence (c) The large share 60-90 percent of this surplus was appropriated by the intermediary tenure holder.

Before 1908 there were no legal obligations on the part of the Zamindars to commute the kind rents into cash. However, with the introduction of 1908 Act, the monetisation of rents took place and local officers were instructed how to commute the rent. The Act gave the ryots a new legal right. The most persistent struggle (till the depression) occurred over the peasants demand for the commutation of their produce into money rent. Since the Zamindars wanted the reverse process the struggle ensued. Ranga fought for this cause and organised many marches and could only succeed after 1947 when we got independence. This Act also gave the right to Zamindars to evict the persons from land, if they failed to pay the rent in time. This threat of eviction and execution of numerous decrees was one of the instruments by which peasants were alienated from their land and they became a power weapon to extort more money and more rent. This also reduced the peasants to a pauperised position. The annual statistics of rent suits, sale of application by defaulters etc. shows an enormous increase during this period. This process accelerated dramatically the alienation of peasants from their land. For example

eviction rate was 84 percent during this period in Venkatagiri Zamindari estate.

Class differentiation:

Our study about Andhra peasantry will be inadequate without studying about the class structure. In relation to this Hamza Alvi's¹⁶ theoretical model of social structure is very useful. In his thesis on the revolutionary potential of the middle peasant "he distinguishes three sectors of rural economy in India". In the first sector land owned by the land lords who do not themselves undertake cultivation. They rent land to poor peasants mainly to share croppers. In the second sector are independent smallholder or middle peasant who own the land they cultivate and do not exploit the labour of others. In the third sector the capitalist farmers own the land or rich peasants who manage the land themselves and employ hired labourers. This needs a drastic change when we look at the Andhra peasant structure.¹⁷

- (a) The situation in Andhra does not allow us to make a Clear-cut distinction between the landlords and capitalist or rich peasant

¹⁶ Hamza Alvi, Peasants and Revolution, in Sharma and Gough (Ed) Pp.291 – 332.

¹⁷ Ibid. Pp.293-94.

sectors nor can either of them be separated from the sectors of middle peasants since all of them employ hired labour.

- (b) It was common for both the Landlords and rich peasants to lease out portion of their lands to poor peasants and to have other portions cultivated by the labourers. The category of pure middle peasant who does not hire the labour was non-existent in Andhra.
- (c) Alvi completely forgets about the rich tenant section i.e., Muttadar and other middlemen who does not necessarily manage the land themselves and employ hired labour but given its intermediary position accumulates profits due to so many factors.

The agrarian class structure in Andhra was an extremely complex one. Data from the census of 1921-31, which classified agricultural population in to rent receiving, rent payers and agricultural labourers reflect the fragmented nature of land rights. However, this kind of data based on occupation cannot be used to differentiate the agrarian classes. There is no data available on the size of land holdings. The only data available was the extent of rent paid by the patta holders to Zamindars.

Table: 1.4

Pattadar paying	Number of Pattas	% of Total Patta	Extent (acre)	% of Total	Amount Paid (Rs.)	% to Total
Between 1-9	205	52.3	148.95	16.8	68.85	10.60
Between 10-29 30-49	152	38.9	442.30	50.0	3256.00	50.60
Between 50 - 99 over 100	34	8.7	291.50	33.1	2497.50	38.5
Total	390	-	882.75	-	6435.15	

Note: - the table includes both single and joint pattas but it may be noted that the number of patta holdings and number of person owning the patta lands concerned was not identical and in many cases they deviate from each other.

(b) The figures relate to Tekkali estate of Ganjam district.

The Zamindar of Tekkali paid a revenue or peshkash of Rs. 44,487 to Government. As is known in permanently settled areas the Zamindars were only responsible for the revenue, which they collected from the ryots only rent (not revenue).

Source: Land Revenue Settlement Report of Ganjam district 1935.

Though it appears as an artificial differentiation but gives a broad picture of the internal differentiation. It suggests that the rich

peasants who held 8.7 percent of the pattas controlled 1/3 of the land. The middle peasant who held 39 per cent of the pattas controlled 50 percent of the land. The poor peasant who held 52 per cent of the pattas controlled only 17 per cent of the land. It indicates infact the existence of small and uneconomic holdings. Some broad internal study can be had on Andhra peasant structure.

Landlords:

They were at the top who paid land revenue directly to the government. Their main sources of income or earnings were rents from land, forests and other cesses. They had private lands known as "seri" lands and got them cultivated by farm servants and wage labourers. They also leased out lands to tenants-at-will on the basis of sharecropping. They also had money-lending business.

Rich Peasants:

This class constituted of substantial landholders, Muttadars and other middlemen. This class draws its income from self-cultivation and money lending. To some extent from trade also. Given its substantial holdings, security of tenancy, fixity of rent etc. this class had got fully integrated into the market economy. This was the main class to

participate in the Telengana movement but withdrew in between. For this group secular rise in prices brought unprecedented returns on cultivating cash crops and food crops.

Middle Peasants: They Owned little land of their forefathers and leased in some lands from both the zamindar and Muttadar. Their position can't be discussed in detail as some of them came under rich peasants category and some under poor peasants category.

Poor Peasants: They leased in almost all the land from landholders. They were too poor to survive on these lands and hence worked for landlords and rich peasants as casual labourers or farm servants. Unlike rich peasants the small and poor peasants were adversely affected by the rise in both rates and rents. Since they were forced to buy in the market a portion of their daily consumption requirements,

Agricultural labourers: It is infact absolutely difficult in this area to precisely demarcate between the poor peasants, agricultural labourers/sharecroppers/tenants-at-will. Nevertheless this constituted the majority amongst the peasantry in population wise. Theoretically speaking an agricultural labour must be defined as person who has been separated from his means of production except his own labour power as he is forced to sell it as community in order to live.¹⁸ This kind of free wage labourer of the pure type formed only a small portion of the peasantry.¹⁹ The agricultural labourers mostly came from certain low castes, which constituted the main labour force in

¹⁸ Selected works of Mao-Tse-Tung abridged by Brunosha, London, 1970, Pp. 45-46.

¹⁹ V V Sayana ..., Op. cit., P. 232.

rural sector.²⁰ They were also called untouchables and the depressed classes like the Malas, the Madigas, the pallans and other tribes like koyas, Erukulas, Goudas etc.

The process of differentiation, which began particularly at the turn of the century, was intensified by 1930s due to indebtedness, arrears, eviction and alienation of land. The condition, which weakened the position of small holders, led to an increase of the agrarian proletariat.

²⁰ Ibid.

Table: 1.5
For 1000 persons engaged in agriculture:

TYPE	1921	1931
Agricultural labourer	27.4	42.9
Cultivating Owner	39.8	39
Cultivating Tennant	24.0	12.0
Non-Cultivating Owner	0.56	0.34
Non-Cultivating Tennant	0.32	0.16

Source: census reports part-I Madras 1931.

Conclusion: The characteristic features of the agricultural structure in Andhra shows how some classes with some Acts and legislations emerged on top controlling or suppressing the others below. The agricultural labourer constituted the majority without having any land in his possession. Ranga fought mainly for these classes before and after the independence. Any price rise affected mainly these sections very badly and very early. Ranga knows this from his own experience and in his childhood he analysed about it thoroughly. All of his life Ranga strived to bring a fundamental change in the lives of these hitherto neglected sections of the society. This is also very important to know exactly the position of the Andhra peasants from various angles and sociological concerns. When we studying these changes we should keep in mind that the changes, which occurred under colonialism, were not uniform. There were many regional variations. In

Andhra the delta region was more susceptible to such changes. The contradiction manifested by these developments led to tremendous strains and conflicts within the agrarian social structure in Andhra. We also tried to explain how rent burden was heavy on some sections whereas some sections enjoyed official colonial favouritism. We have also discussed about the broad categories of peasant structure present in Andhra during 1920s. Though these categories, which we had discussed, were very superficial but a must to get a glimpse of what the society looked like during our period of study. Even though superficial these needs to be mentioned to understand how Ranga could build up his peasant movements in such a highly stratified agrarian society and also how he envisioned to keep the whole peasantry as a unified force. These questions we will be taking up in our subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 3

EMERGENCE OF KISAN MOVEMENT (1920-1932)

Introduction:- Dr Ranga went to Oxford in 1920 to become an ICS Officer but the freedom of political and intellectual realms brought him back as a peasant leader with strong socialistic background. During this period he was highly influenced by the Gandhian methods and his forms of struggle. In London, he formed an Indian Associations to promote the Gandhian struggle that was going on in India. Later when he finished his B. Lit. he didn't go for ICS exam but came back to support the ongoing Gandhian struggle. In this chapter we will also study about the work done by Dr Ranga during the depression period and about his peasant organizations. But before we go in to details about the work done by Dr Ranga during the depression period the world economic depression needs to be studied briefly in particularly about Andhra for its peculiarity. We need to look at how and why several estates in the region faced bankruptcy and how this problem spiraled into a major peasant movement demanding the abolition of Zamindari land holding system. In this chapter we shall attempt to trace the beginnings of ryots associations like ANDHRA PROVINCIAL RYOTS ASSOCIATION and ANDHRA PROVINCIAL ZAMIN RYOTS ASSOCIATION (here after referred as APZRA and APRA respectively).

In this context it will be wise to study about the changing relation between the peasantry and the provincial politics to have a better understanding about the emergence of KISAN MOVEMENT in Andhra.

Life at Oxford and work during 1920s

Dr Ranga went to Oxford in 1920¹ on the wishes of his father to come back as an ICS officer. Dr Ranga got influenced by Gandhian ideals and intended to join the national movement. He spent his time at Oxford by taking up some problems that he observed while in India and started looking at the way English or European nationals solved them or solving them. This helped him in implementing the same in India later. Dr Ranga says, "there in those mansions of Oxford which were politically liberating and intoxicatingly inspiring made me to dream, there one day in India too, our peasants and workers would become the supreme forces wielding power in a free republic"². He not only dreamt but also wanted to contribute whatever he might or can in that realization of his goal.

His work between 1923-28 was not penned much.³ Very little was available in the form of primary or secondary sources. Soon after his return from Oxford in 1924 he started his peasant struggle on the

¹ N G Ranga, Fight for... op. cit., P. 67

² Ibid. P. 70

³ Ibid. P. IV

expected Gandhian methods as he was greatly influenced by his ideas and ideals. On the clarion call of Gandhiji he started collecting signatures for the congress manifesto to be presented to Montague. According to his autobiography "he was busy during this time looking after the local needs of Guntur district. He coordinated programs which are of local importance this time collected Kisan minded congress leaders to fight for local needs and he was busy in it."⁴

Dr Ranga started his full-fledged work among the peasantry in 1928 by organizing "Andhra Provincial Ryots Association"⁵. This was coincided with the onslaught of world economic depression. He along with Kisan minded congressmen like Bapuneedu, Ramanaidu, Satyamurthy etc. started local peasant organization and they grew in stature and work by this time.

The work of organization came to light when the government raised the rent on land from 12.50% to 18.75%.⁶ He vehemently protested against this and government climbed down for an enquiry into the existing conditions of the peasantry. The government appointed Dr Ranga to submit an economic enquiry report regarding the conditions of the peasantry. Dr Ranga suggested in his report the revenue demand should be scaled down. Dr Ranga very explicitly had shown in

⁴ Ibid. P. 89

⁵ Ibid. P. 92

⁶ N G Ranga, Economic Conditions of Zamindari Ryots, Vijay Wada, 1933.

his report about the large-scale transfer of land from the cultivating peasants to the money lending classes and emigration to near or distant parts, which became the order of the day. Due to depression there was fall in prices and peasants did not had enough money to pay their regular tax so Dr Ranga questioned "if that was the case where form they can pay the raised land rent?"⁷

The effects of world economic depression(1928-1934) :

The great depression led to the fall of incomes of the peasantry and decline in the value of their lands and had raised the burden of their debts.⁸ It had also hit them very severely and most of them had to dispose of all they property including their jewelers to hold on to their lands.⁹ It was reported "80% of the peasants were heavily indebt and nearly half of them had to mortgage their lands due to the Shahukars".¹⁰ In fact, the fall in prices led to the expropriation of the middle and petty landholders. "The large scale transfer of land from the cultivating peasant to the money landing classes and emigration to near or distant parts became the order of the day".¹¹ (See chapter-I table no.:). The slumping in grain prices had manly cut the monitory profit of the Zamindar the rich ryot and rich tenant. "In order

⁷ Ibid. P.2

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid. P. 10.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ M B Rao (ed.), Documents of Communists History, P. 481.

to sustain their income large portion of the yield was retained by them making the poor sections who are depending on them still poorer and starving. This led to anti-Zamindari agitation".¹²

Agrarian unrest resulted in a series of offences and rioting¹³ and most of them were violent. At the outset these incidents were sporadic and confine to tribal areas (agency areas). There was no organization, which had mobilized them except their tribal solidarity. In costal areas the peasant protest offers a contrast to the violent and unorganized unrest to passive and organized movement.¹⁴ The effects of depression can also be seen in terms of increase in the coercive processes and large-scale evictions of land by the Zamindars.¹⁵ The number of evictions as we have seen in the earlier chapter reveals the melancholy condition of the poor peasantry in this part of the Madras presidency. Both movable and immovable properties were sold to pay the rent and debts. In Chellapalli and Venkatagiri state the number of rent suits increase by nearly 70% between 1931-1936.¹⁶

¹² N G Ranga, Economic Conditions... Op. cit., P. 21.

¹³ N G Ranga, Fight For ... Op. cit., P. 132.

¹⁴ N G Ranga, Kisan and Congress, Vijay Wada, 1960, P. 23.

¹⁵ Discussed in Chapter 1. P.

¹⁶ Evictions according to Economic Conditions of Zamindari Ryots.

Year	Chellepli	Venkatagir
1931	NA	91
1932	1249	101
1933	897	108
1934	1562	186

By 1930 many ryots found themselves in difficulty both in raising money from the sale of their produce and in finding credit. As a result rent collection had gone down and also considerable part of the state was leased out periodically.

Table: 2.1 Financial Position of Estates (Rs. in Lac.)

Name of the Estate	1928	1929	1930	1931	1933	1934	1935
Chellapalli	4.18	4.39	--	--	--	--	--
Kurupam	2.50	2.08	2.59	2.30	1.95	2.12	1.90
Venkatagiri	5.33	1.43	1.19	1.11	1.07	0.98	1.19
Bobbili	1.39	1.27	1.03	0.80	1.04	--	--

Source: - COURT OF WARDS REPORT MADRAS (1928-1935)

Table: 2.2 Arrear Balance of Estates (Rs. in Lac.)

Name of the Estate	1928	1929	1930	1931	1933	1934
Chellapalli	1.85	2.28	--	--	--	--
Venkatagiri	0.65	0.66	0.87	1.00	1.03	1.09
Bobbili	0.35	0.38	0.41	0.47	0.49	0.50

Source: - COURT OF WARDS REPORT MADRAS (1928-1935)

During the depression period the estates were compelled to borrow money from the moneylender to pay off their rents. For instance the Venkatagiri Zamindar had borrowed an amount of 3.04 lakhs during 1929-31, which was more than twice its annual income. This type of heavy borrowing further ruined the estate.¹⁷ This had tremendous impact on the lower sections as they were the main rent payer to the Zamindar and there was no scaling on the amount to be paid to the Zamindar. This compounded the miseries of the lower sections and helped in the organization of peasant movement on a wider scale. In this regard let us study in detail about the activities of Dr Ranga through APRA and APZRA for the uplift of these lower sections.

ANDHRA PROVINCIAL RYOTS ASSOCIATION :

Between 1923-1928 a number of Kisan minded Congressmen like Dr Ranga and Bapinidu attempted to start local peasant organization. Dr Ranga says "In fact he was busy during this period ministering to the local needs of Guntur and Krishna districts".¹⁸ By 1926 they gradually expanded to other districts. Initially the programme put up by these peasant organizations was one of rural reconstruction scientific agriculture consolidation of peasants for the relief of their immediate

¹⁷ Gazetteer of Madras, 1940, P. 65.

¹⁸ N G Ranga, Fight For Freedom. Op. cit., P. 89.

economic grievances etc.¹⁹ Dr Ranga in his autobiography writes that "a more important development was taking shape during 1926-30 i.e. on an all Andhra basis some of us started a peasant organization called Andhra Peasant Conference".²⁰ Hence, the ryots association called Andhra Provincial Ryots Association came into existence.²¹ In the second meeting, which met in Vijay Wada under the president ship of Dr Ranga in 1929, the objectives of the association were stated as below.²²

1. To fight against resettlement.
2. To fight for the expansion of marketing societies.
3. To fight for the long-term loans at cheaper interest rates.
4. To fight for the expansion of agricultural department and mechanization of agriculture.
5. To present the issues of "ryots" to members of the Legislative council.

During the period of acute depression one more bolt from the blue hit the Andhra peasants i.e. Resettlement Report. The Madras government in its resettlement report raised the land revenue demand

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid. P.134.

²¹ N G Ranga, Revolutionary Peasant, Op. cit. 64.

²² Zamin Ryot (Telgu Weekly), 21.11.1931.

by 18¾ %.²³ Dr Ranga mobilized peasants on this issue though it is affecting the rich peasants more than the lower sections. Dr Ranga never discriminated against the class section within the peasantry but treated them as one coherent single unit who has many commonalities and less contradiction.²⁴ The resettlement report led to the beginning of an all Andhra agitation under the leadership of Dr Ranga. The APCC in its annual meeting on July 7th resolved "the order of the Board of revenue to levy three anas (0.18 rupees) more ----- is entirely unjust, unconstitutional and unbearable."²⁵ Meanwhile the Madras Government had appointed an economic enquiry Committee consisting of the members of Legislative Council with Dr Ranga as the official secretary²⁶.

The committee* studied the economic conditions of the peasantry and recommended that it holds no brief for the principles of the land revenue system and recommends the reduction of the land revenue demand to the level of that prevailing before 1923-1924 and holds that demand be no more than 25% of the net income from the land²⁷.

²³ N G Ranga, *Fight For ...*, Op. cit., P. 43.

²⁴ N G Ranga, *Role of the Old Peasantry ...*, Op. cit., P. 17.

²⁵ *Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (1921-1933)* Vol. III, Document No. 133. APA.

²⁶ N G Ranga, *Fight For ...* Op. cit. P.112.

* The Committee consisted of T Prakashan, Nageshwera Rao, Venkatratnam and Tilakamma.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

Since the Government was reluctant to withdraw the resettlement, a campaign was launched by the A.P.R.A. It organized village kisan committees and recruited volunteers²⁸. November 1, 1931 was named as 'Resettlement Day' and meetings and demonstrations were organized throughout Krishna and Godavari district²⁹. This was followed by first "Andhra peasants protection conference"³⁰ and was followed by other district and Taluk conferences all over Andhara. In the subsequent weeks the government arrested the prominent leaders of the movement including Dr Ranga. Nevertheless, as a result of the organized movement of the ryots the government was compelled to agree to their demand of reduction of rent. In Godavari and Krishna district the collection of additional tax was suspended. This brought Dr Ranga on to the national scene as one of the potential leaders with a large Kisan base. His popularity soared high in the eyes of big Congress leaders like Nehru And Gandhi. Gandhiji after seeing Dr Ranga's sincerity and dedication for the peasant cause made a visit to his place and blessed him by staying at his place and enjoying his constructive work through peasant organizations, which is similar to his own ideals.³¹

²⁸ N G Ranga, Revolutionary Peasant. Op. cit., P. 62.

²⁹ N G Ranga, Fight For ..., P. 114.

³⁰ N G Ranga, Babu Blesses KMP, 1951, Vijaywada.

³¹ N G Ranga, Fight For ... P. 187.

The resettlement campaign or any other issue of peasantry raised by Dr Ranga was not along the class or caste lines but according to the merit of the situation. In fact, Dr Ranga wanted peasants and Mazdoors to participate very actively in the governing process. Dr Ranga was a great visionary who in 1930s, itself proposed KISAN MAZDOORS PRAJA RAJ (here after referred as KMP)³² for which there were no takers at that time. I will be discussing it under the title "IDEOLOGY OF DR RANGA".

The campaign against resettlement organized by Dr Ranga was coincided with the political atmosphere of Gandhian constructive programme.³³ Dhanagare points out "the land owning classes found in Gandhian politics more ways of approaching the masses of peasantry and utilizing them for raising up in political structure".³⁴ Dr Ranga as though he studied the minds of the rich classes encouraged his students (mostly from peasant background and from lower section) to participate and compete for the political power in the congress structure.³⁵

Here we should not that the mobilization of peasantry and their involvement in political upheavals was largely aided by Congress

³² N G Ranga, Fight For ... Op. cit. Chapter on KMP.

³³ B. Stroddart, Op. cit., Pp. 118-19.

³⁴ Dhanagare, Agrarian Movements and Gandhian Politics. Agra, 1975, P. 52.

³⁵ N G Ranga, Kisan Speaks, P.28.

and Gandhian methods. The peasant campaign of 1928-34 coincided with the CIVIL DISOBEDIENT movement. This was for the first time large sections of the peasantry were drawn into national movement and fought against the colonial government. "Many people connected with C.D came from the broad range of middle peasants"³⁶ under the guidance of Dr Ranga Congress followed new methods of propaganda in raising peasant mobilization. In every district SATYAGRAH committees were formed and "sibirams" or military camps were established.³⁷ These sibirams served as the meeting place for the volunteer and for their training too. They were supplied with the information on the nature of satyagrah the meaning of "Swaraj" the importance of handspinning, weaving and other aspects of Gandhian constructive programme. They also went around the villages to carry on the propaganda against the government policies, conducted meetings and displayed the national flag and roused nationalism among the villagers.³⁸ This had considerable effect in strengthening the movement both national as well as peasants. Stroddart says "Congress gained prestige from the spirit of self sacrificed and service to the nation is evident in the rank and file of the workers..... people were proud of their anti-government reputation".³⁹ The above

³⁶ B. Stroddert, Op.cit., P. 121.

³⁷ M. Venketa Raghavaiah. Op. cit. P. 54.

³⁸ Ibid. P. 55.

³⁹ B Stroddert. Op. cit. P. 124-125

discussion had shown us how successful Dr Ranga was in mobilizing the peasantry from all sections and also contributing his might to the ongoing nation movement. In the face of repression and suppression Dr Ranga did not budge back but continued his good work unashamedly. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact came as shock to the peasants. Once Congress withdrew its support to the resettlement campaign it was carried on by the APRA alone. Though Gandhi later took up the social issues Dr Ranga continued with his "Fight for The Freedom" of the peasantry.

ANDHRA PROVINCIAL ZAMIN RYOTS ASSOCIATION :

The precipitous fall in the prices of agricultural commodities the economic depression and the pressure of the merchant moneylender and zamindar accentuated the misery of the Zamin Ryots in Andhra. The Satyagraha movement of Baradoli in 1928 and Civil Disobedience movement gave a fillip to the peasants and to their associations in Andhra.⁴⁰ As we have seen earlier the depression had a peculiar affect on the Zamin peasants "for it provoked certain classes to take up arms against the ailing system".⁴¹

Attempts were made to start Zamin Ryots Association in 1926 mainly to reform the Act of 1908 and to provide protection for the ryots in the

⁴⁰ N. G. Dr Ranga, Revolutionary... Op. cit p. 79

⁴¹ C. J. Baker, Op. cit., p.205.

Zamindari estates.⁴² In 1929, Dr Ranga along with some of his close peasant associates like Ramdasu Pantulu, M Sharma, Bapi Needu etc. formed APZRA with B V Raju as president and him self as secretary.⁴³ It was stated in its conference at ELLORE that the APZRA constituted mainly for protecting the rights of Zamin ryots of Andhra.⁴⁴ It also said "the creed of the association is to work for the economic betterment of the ryots living and working in the area called Zamindar."⁴⁵ The objective as laid down was the elimination of the intermediaries between the state and the Zamin ryot by state action i.e. Legislation.⁴⁶ The conference appreciated the work of the states land Act drafting committee and rejected the bill published by the government as 'unsatisfactory' 'disappointing' and 'reactionary'.⁴⁷ It exhorted the ryots to enlist themselves as members of the APZRA. The conference also resolved to establish district APZRAs and to propagate for the amendment of 1908 Act. The following proposals were suggested⁴⁸:

- (a) Rents should be reduced by half and proper installment should be arranged.⁴⁹
- (b) Premium should be abolished

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ N. G. Dr Ranga, Revolutionary ... Op. cit., p.80.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ N. G. Dr Ranga, Fight For ... Op. cit, p.

⁴⁶ Zamin Ryot. Dt. 22.8.1931.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ This point negates the idea that Dr Ranga worked only for the rich peasants and propertied according to Dhanagare.

- (c) Old waste should be abolished.
- (d) Regulation on patta transfers and registration in the estates should be liberalized.
- (e) Survey and settlement should be conducted regularly.
- (f) Remission should be given in case of crop failures.
- (g) Irrigation facilities should be improved.

Mean while the first district Zamindari ryots association that started in Nellore with the following objectives⁵⁰

- (a) To fight for and improve the conditions of the Zamindari Ryots throughout the district by placing their grievances before the proper authorities and by organizing Zamin ryots to work out their salvation of course non-violently.⁵¹
- (b) To educate the ryots with regard to the origin and working of their troubles and where ever necessary putting pressure for legislation similar to the efforts made in the earlier instances.
- (c) To organize the Zamin ryot electorate and with the cooperation of their forward political bodies fighting for the freedom of the country and by setting up suitable advocates

⁵⁰ N. G. Dr Ranga, *Fight for...* Op. cit., p. 158.

⁵¹ Discussed in the chapter "Dr Ranga's Ideology".

of Zamin ryots as candidates to contest elections and to make the Zamin ryots voice felt in the legislative bodies.⁵²

This clearly shows a deviation from the usual practice of petitioning and pleading. They the 'Rangities' wanted to voice their grievances in the legislator not just through middle man but as far as possible all by them self.⁵³ They had seen the legislative actions as the only way to achieve these reforms. The first Satyagrah launched by them was against Venkatagiri Zamindar under the banner of APZRA.⁵⁴ Let us briefly state about this movement and what lines and issues that it had fought. The main concern of this movement was about the accentuated 'cropwari' rates⁵⁵ and forest claims.⁵⁶ The government had tightened its control over forest zones for revenue purposes by restricting the moment of the peasant. Likewise the Zamindars also tended to establish their control over forest and monopolized the entire grazing facilities.⁵⁷ Rights of peasants for gathering fuel fodder and manure were brushed aside and the right to graze cattle in the neighborhood forest was dismissed.⁵⁸ The venkatagiri satyagraha which started in 1931 was mainly concern with the grazing rights of

⁵² AICC file. No. 4/33 NMML (also expressed the same in his latter to Nehru in his book 'Agony and Solace').

⁵³ N. G. Dr Ranga, Fight for Fr... Op. cit., p. 125.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ N.G.Dr Ranga., Economic Problem ... Op. cit.. P. 59.

⁵⁶ Ibid. p.60

⁵⁷ Ibid

peasants. The grazing rates were high when compared to government grazing rates. The Madras government collected Rs.0.12 per acre as grazing tax whereas the vanketagiri estate collected Rs.1.00 per acre.⁵⁹ Apart from these Zamindars used to collect income tax on grazing (6%)⁶⁰ and also the pasture tax has been raised considerably during this period.⁶¹

Table 2.3

Increase in Grazing Fees between 1908 - 1931

Name of the Village	1908 (in Rs.)	1931 (in Rs.)
Madhavapalem	24	968
Devalapalli	15	444
Malapadi	5	100
Vembalur	25	525
Velampalli	25	361
Total	94	2398

Source: N G Dr Ranga, Economic Conditions of Zamindari ryots. Bezawada, 1933 (Pp. 113-14).

⁵⁹ Zamin Ryot., Dt. 5.9.1932.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ N.G.Dr Ranga, Economic co... Op. cit., p.114.

It should also be pointed out that a tax called 'punitive' tax was to be paid in addition to the pasture fee.⁶² This tax was in the nature of a penalty to the ryots who didn't pay the amount due to the estate forth width. The figures of the above villages demonstrate the extortionate character of the this impost. The main demands of the satyagrahis⁶³ were:

- a) Income tax collection should be abolished
- b) Pasture fees should be collected in the month of September not in the January or February, as was the practice. It should be reduced.
- c) The punitive tax should be abolished
- d) The Ryots Associations should be recognized.

This Satyagraha campaign organized by Dr Ranga was keenly participated by the congressmen too . As a result of the organized resistance put up by the Ryots Associations the zamindar was compel to come to terms. Finally with the mediation of the government the following agreement was reached.⁶⁴

- a) Income tax was abolished.
- b) Criminal cases were withdrawn.

⁶² Ibid. p. 116

⁶³ Zamin Ryot Dt. 28.10.1931.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

- c) Police out posts were lifted.
- d) The Ryots Associations were recognized.

Commenting on the Venketagiri Satyagrah Dr Ranga says "The peasants gained are regained many of the rights----- more than anything else they gained new self confidence and developed self reliance."⁶⁵

True to their objectives, the Nellore zamin ryots association went in for Local Board elections. It contested for ten out of twelve seats in Venketagiri and Sullure pet Taluk.⁶⁶ The contest was between the nominees of zamindar and the ryots association. Extensive mobilization and propaganda had been carried on through the organ of ZRA... the "zamin ryot" (unofficial news paper of zamindari ryots). As a result out of ten seats zamin ryot candidates won six seats with thumping majority.⁶⁷ Dr Ranga says in his biography the songs of NVR Naidu really helped them in rousing the consciousness of the peasants.⁶⁸

Vote only for the peasant candidates

Your interests will be safe guarded

Only by peasant representatives

⁶⁵ N. G. Dr Ranga, Fight For... Op. cit., p. 142.

⁶⁶ Zamin Ryot. Dt. 15. 1.1933.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ N. G. Dr Ranga, Fight For... Op. cit., p.150.

What have we to do with caste,

To work hard and plough the land is our caste.

The times to come all peasants

Please never sleep

But get ready to play your part.

In this way, an uniform line of action was formulated. Apart from organizing Associations and conferences the APZRA exerted pressure with in the Madras Legislative Council through its representatives and sympathizers. Due to the pressure applied by these organizations (APRA, APZRA) the proposals to amend the 1908 Act took the form of a Bill in 1931 but it put responsibility of proving the land rights i.e. occupancy ryots on the landholder. The ZRA organized "protest days to express their disappointment at the select committees recommendations. It also criticized the then Bobilli Ministry for its inability to pass appropriate legislation to safe guard the Zamindari ryots from the exploitation of Zamindar.

Apart from the work in the legislative council the ZRA in 1933 - 34 also organized peasant marches, ryots varams (weeks) etc. Commenting on this which covered many villages and more then one state for many days Dr Ranga says "That were the most powerful instruments in the armour of our movement to bring home to the public as well as the authorities concern, the strength of the peasant

organization the tempo of feelings of masses in support of a certain demands. The extent of public support for our movement is tremendous."⁶⁹ Apart from the marches, rallies and conferences this period also witnessed the starting of the 'KISAN SCHOOL' at Nidubroulu in December 1933 (it was inaugurated by M K Gandhi).⁷⁰ The aim of the institute was to train Kisan Youths in the method of carrying an agitation and organize the Kisan movement in Gandhian methods and thus to equip the movement with a dedicated and trained independent cadre. Mostly these were of peasant origin and convinced about the peasant problems and strived for peasant upliftment.⁷¹ Objectively the peasant movement received a shot in the arm with publication of Dr Ranga's report on the "Economic Conditions of the Zamindari Ryots" (1933). It alleged that rents were highest in the Zamindari estates than in the neighboring 'Ryotwari' tracts. It also said in its report that Zamindar raised many other illegal dues and exacted labour services and that the Zamindari tenant was held down by terror.⁷² Its suggested survey of lands, settlement of land revenue, grant of remission whenever crops failed, repair of tanks and other irrigational sources were mainly highlighted.⁷³

⁶⁹ N. G. Dr Ranga, Revolutionary ... Op. cit., p.119.

⁷⁰ N. G. Dr Ranga, Fight For... Op. cit., p.145.

⁷¹ N. G. Dr Ranga, Modern Indian Peasant. Madras., 1936. p.102.

⁷² N.G. Dr Ranga, Economic..... Op. cit., Pp.123-45.

⁷³

CONCLUSION:

The above discussion shows that unlike most other regions in India the peasant movement in Andhra was an organized movement right from its inception. It was not like the movements in MALABAR and PABNA were after series of out bursts the movement was fizzled out but channelized into an orderly and constitutional struggle. In Andhra Dr Ranga with the other congressmen had systematically organized the peasant movement through satayagrahas, annual conferences, night schools, marches, protest etc. The whole agitation was on the immediate problems of the peasantry and for their redresses but Dr Ranga took up the peasant problems and tried to solve them with a future vision. Given the specific correlation of forces in Andhra peasantry the APZRA did succeed in gaining allies in the provincial politics. As a result it could exert adequate pressure on the colonial government and got the pre 1937 acts amended... such as the amendment of 1933 and the rent remission Act of 1934 etc

Though the peasant organization were headed by wealthier classes and seems to be dominated by congress but in reality it was full of peasant minded and peasant origin members to the core. Most of the issues taken by them show that they were addressing the most important and immediate problems of the peasantry. These

organizations never distinguished between classes and castes. Whole of the organization worked as a single unit to achieve their common goals. Dr Ranga imbibed the concept of unity among the peasantry through these associations. This is one of the greatest contributions that Dr Ranga could make for the development of the peasantry and other poorer sections by integrating them into the mainstream politics. Though the vision of Dr Ranga had been disrupted by the divisive politics of Communist he didn't get perturbed but once again brought them as a single unified strong unit not only to fight for their own problems but for the national cause too.

CHAPTER 4

UNITED FRONTS STRATEGY AND ITS BREAK UP

Having discussed the rise of congress popularity under the leadership of Ranga through APRA and APZRA it will be incomplete without the discussion of his socialistic ideas and truck with the communist in achieving desired peasant uplift. Moreover Kisan Movement and its history without the mention of communist will be incomplete. Though 'left organization worked on the lines of class differentiation but contributed for the peasant development in making it more revolutionary. It was also to be noted that the radicalism ushered in by the communist left the peasantry divided and it took a while for the Ranga to unite them as a strong unified force once again. This episode also revealed to the peasantry about the sincerity of Ranga and his real intentions. They also recognized that only Ranga stood by them till the very end. This they could realize only after 1942 Communists "Peoples War" slogan. In this chapter we intend to undertake the growth of peasant movement under Ranga and his association with left organizations. We will also discuss how congress socialist party (hereafter referred as CSP) and the communist party (hereafter referred as CP) influenced not only peasant organization but also congress party. In the end critically analyze the nature of congress

legislation and its limitations in terms of implementations of the peasants programme while in the MINISTRY from 1937-39.

Beginnings of CSP

The abandonment of the civil disobedient movement had left a residue of bewilderment and disillusionment among the younger congressmen. A whole generation of young man who had entered the political arena in civil disobedient movement of 1930-32 came out of jails in 1934, were dissatisfied with Gandhian leadership.¹ Many a peasant leaders also felt that the Gandhi-Irwin pact didn't give adequate protection to peasants who suffered in the movement and during the depression period. This feeling of neglect of Kisan interest was the background for the socialist minded man meeting at Gokhale Public Hall at Patna and forming CSP in 1934.²

For Ranga independence didn't mean mere over through of the British but the liberation of common masses from economic, social and political exploitation by establishing socialistic mode of governance.³ Though Andhra witnessed many revolutionary societies during this period but they didn't touch peasant problems. The influence of left was felt all over Andhra. Most of the young man was influenced by the ideology of socialism had provided cadres for forming the CSP. The

¹ J. P. Haithcose, "Left Wing and the Indian Nationalist Movement", In Modern Asian Studies, Vol. 3, No.1, 1969, Pp. 17-56 and N. P. Roa.

² B. R. Nanda (ed.), Socialism in India, Delhi, 1974, P. 618.

³ N G Ranga, Cooperative Farming .., Delhi, P. IV & V.

main aim with which the CSP formed was to convert the congress into an instrument of struggle from what they regarded as merely a forum of compromise. The idea of Ranga in forming the CSP is that it will have a positive and progressive impact on the peasant movement.

One of the interesting functions are CP (Communist party) in Andhra was, they formed secretly as a provincial unit in 1934 and couldn't function openly due to the ban imposed on it by the British Government.⁴ Due to this CP joined the CSP in 1934-35 itself. Whereas in other parts of country it was only after 1935. Meanwhile CP was directed to follow "United Front strategy" from Soviet Union. As a result the whole CP cadre joined the Andhra Provincial Congress Socialist Party (APCSP). Ranga was severely criticized for his democratic and socialistic view by the PCC and warned by AICC in this regard but never budged an inch back in adopting and adhering to his views. In the first All India Congress Socialist Party a decision was taken that provincial CSPs should be organized to further the cause of socialism. Congressman of socialistic views led by Ranga formed the APCSP. The inaugural session was held at Vijaywada in 1934 on June 23rd with Ranga as President.⁵ The main objective of the party was to convert the congress into socialism and encourage the peasant to work

⁴ Selection From Secret Files, APA, P. 2576.

⁵ N G Ranga, Fight For ... , Op. cit., P. 325.

against the Zamindari exploitation.⁶ The agrarian programme of the CSP reads as "The liquidation of debts, the evolution of Zamindari system and the conversion of present land tax into general graded income tax."⁷ It was also decided that those who were members of the Indian National Congress could become members of the Socialist Party. The branches of the party should be organized throughout Andhra to further the cause of peasant enlistment. Accordingly under the guidance of Ranga branches were established at Eluru, Guntur, Ongole, Gudivada and Vijayvada. The other prominent leader who worked for the establishment of provincial CSPs in Andhra is Jai Prakash Narayan. Ranga says, "We both shared many long and cherished movements with similar attitudes and perspectives." In the initial stages the activities of the Party were mainly confined to the AICC, PCC and DCC and holding meetings in furtherance of socialist propaganda as is evident from the secret files of Madras government and Ranga's own writings.⁸ Soon they gained seats in AICC and PCC. In the meantime communist onslaught was felt more and their radical programmes attracted more youth. This very soon resulted in the split of peasant movement on the basis of some for violent action and others for Gandhian constructive programme. APCSP through its well-built organization worked for the peasant and other down trodden

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Fortnightly Reports, 2nd Half July 1934 (Hom. Pol.) GOI.

⁸ N G Ranga, *The Congress and The Peasants*, Delhi, 1940, P. 32.

sections of the societies. As a result the popularity of the APCSP was soaring high. Even AICC in its annual meeting at FAIZPUR commended the work being done by APCSP in Andhra districts. With the strong clout of Kisan minded socialists in AICC Ranga brought the peasant problem on to the national scene. The greatest triumph of the APCSP was the inclusion of AIKS (All India Kisan Sabha) proposals in Faizpur AICC.⁹ We will be discussing about the formation of AIKS and AICKS (All India Congress Kisan Sabha) very shortly. These organizations were formed mainly to cater to the needs of the nation wide peasants and mazdoors.

The organizational capacities of Ranga and his understanding of the peasant problem had been rightly used by CSP and CP in increasing their mass base. Even AICC was also being influenced by left (due to all these combined efforts) CSP and CP. Ranga had been elevated to the national scene with the formation of AIKS in 1936.¹⁰ Rangas success with the peasants made him to take up the problems of agriculture labor. Rangas aim was to bring a common understanding between the peasants and the agricultural labor as these two classes needed more cooperation than conflict for each others progress and development. His vision was to give real power to the peasantry. In this regard Ranga started "South Indian Federation of Peasants and Workers

⁹ N G Ranga, *Fight For ...*, Op. cit., P. 205.

¹⁰ Ibid. P. 206.

Union". He says "It will be the aim of this federation to bring about a cooperation between peasants and agriculture workers and industrial labors by the establishment of a suitable conciliatory mechanism.¹¹ It intended to work on compromise whereby the ryots concede the minimum demands of the laborers and the latter agreed to cooperate with the former. This was an effort in the direction of forging unity among the peasantry and rightly to gain maximum from the prevailing socialistic onslaught. Ranga always looked out for the maximum benefit for the peasantry and the toiling masses, as they were the most neglected lot. If demands were not conceded Ranga didn't hesitate to show his displeasure or anger by organizing the peasants for their just rights. Even against the congress Ranga raised his banner of revolt many a times for peasants cause. Many a times he fought with congress leaders of AICC for inclusion of peasant problems in their annual meetings and peasant leaders in their Boards.¹² Ranga formed the SIFW with a view to forestall the divisible politics of CPI. and to forge a greater unity among the peasants He says that "by founding the SIFW we forestalled the CPI move to split the ranks of these two sections "ryots and workers" and set them one against the other... I commenced my work with the conviction that there be no irreconcilable conflict of interest between these two sections. He goes

¹¹ Ibid. P.209.

¹² N G Ranga, The Congress and The ... Op. cit., P. 11.

on to say that "I disagreed with their (CP) approach. I felt that an approach of conflict was inappropriate and pleaded that the proper thing to do was to press government to prescribe and enforce minimum wages, establish trade boards with representations from all sections of the peasantry... but the CP wanted to pursue the Leninist tactics of splitting up the peasantry..."¹³

WORK TROUGH CSP:

Ranga was not only a pragmatist but a very practical visionary too. He advocated that the lot of the agricultural workers can be bettered if the government would place at their disposal the vast unoccupied but cultivable lands through a suitable tenancy legislation. To achieve this he also formed Agricultural Labor Congress Committee through which he could compel the government to grant more than a thousand acres of land in Nellore. He also pleaded with the government about the need of the house sites and better housing facilities for the agricultural workers.¹⁴ Ranga emphasized the need to fight against the colonial government to get remunerative prizes for agricultural products and he had seen more of common interest between various classes of peasantry than constrain and contradictions between them. He stated, "It (Kisan Congress) is convinced that both these sections of peasants have common interests to serve and common enemies to fight despite

¹³ N G Ranga, *Fight For ...*, Op. cit., P. 208.

¹⁴ Ibid. P. 321.

very serious internal contradictions. It has been trying to develop a United Front between the landed and the landless."¹⁵ APCSP also used as a platform by Ranga in uplifting the down trodden and other neglected sections of the peasantry. If we examine the minimum chapter of demands the point that we are making will be clear:

- a) To oppose wrong measures and forced labor.
- b) To put down bribery.
- c) To denounce socially treatment and insults.
- d) To demand compulsory free education.
- e) To demand right for free supply of fuel, fodder and house hold timber from forest.
- f) To ask for free house sites, cheap loans, relieve and minimum number of paid holidays for annual servants and reduction of tax burden and the cancellation of the existing indebtedness and the sanction of government lands to the agricultural laborers.¹⁶

During this period Ranga with the help of CSP, Congress and SIFW organized the Andhra Agricultural Labor Movement coupled with extensive marches and strikes. Due to its vast mass base the government banned the agricultural labor association in 1936.¹⁷ The demands raised by the associations on its marches were:

¹⁵ N G Ranga, Revolutionary Peasants, Op. cit., P. 91-92.

¹⁶ N G Ranga, The Congress and The Peasants, P. 17.

¹⁷ Ibid. P.18.

- a) Kind wages should be paid by the organized measures and they should be increased by 100%
- b) Advances should be raised from two bags to four and fifty percent of it should be interest free.
- c) Lunch break should be given.
- d) Twenty paid holidays should be there in a year.
- e) Sick leaves should be granted and wage cut should be abolished during the period of sickness and ill health.
- f) Namu* should be abolished
- g) Present debts should be abolished¹⁸

The marches of July 1938 were one of the greatest in the history of peasant movement for the coverage of area and the amount of peasant participation in it. The marches had brought many thousands of agricultural workers in more than 100 villagers on to the streets. The strikes, Ranga remarks, "had dramatically opened the eyes of the workers and the possibilities and potentialities of their combined action against the persecution carried on by their employers."¹⁹ Nevertheless, these marches were significant in a fact that peasantry once again brought to the forefront in the AICC discussions. In this regard Ranga advocated, "Peasants should not believe in Congress blindly but should

* Namu 'In a extra rate of interest during harvest time may be in form of giving in kind.'

¹⁸ Zamin Ryots, 8/7/1937.

¹⁹ N G Ranga, The Congress and ..., Op. cit., P. 16.

exert pressure in getting their bill passed and resolutions accepted.²⁰ The CP in this mass base created a rift within the agricultural laborers and the ryots, which Ranga tried to prevent with all his might. Ranga says "It is the communist plan to drive a wedge between the land holding peasants and landless agricultural laborers."²¹ Ranga says with regard to the policies and politics of CP "I am having apprehensions of how far this united front strategy can last long."²² His fears proved to be correct in 1942 when communists gave "peoples war" slogan not only hampering the ongoing national movement but also dividing the united peasantry vertically into two halves. During this time Ranga was languishing in jail²³. After coming out he once again started to build a strong peasant movement with much stronger enthusiasm for forging unity in the ranks of peasantry. Ranga realized the real motives of CP and CSP joining the AICC. But he says, "I was ordered to work in cooperation with CSP and CP through out 1936-40."²⁴ He further says, "I had to decide at a very early stage how for this united front could be implemented in the actual working of the Kisan Congress".²⁵ Ranga mainly worked in cooperation with 'left' forces so as to reach out to hitherto neglected sections like Kalakars, Karmiks

²⁰ Ibid. P.6.

²¹ Ibid. P.17.

²² N G Ranga, Fight For ... , Op. cit., P. 213.

²³ N G Ranga, Fight For ... , Op. cit., P. 215.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid. 218.

etc and later he could develop a concept called "Kisan, Mazadoor Praja Raj".²⁶ This is very bold initiative and gave a jolt to the leadership of Nehru during the 1957 elections²⁷. Rangas concept was defeated, as people couldn't think beyond congress regime or power to the peasants. These points we will elaborate in my last chapter.

ULTIMATE OF THE UNITED FRONT:

The united front strategy did incalculable harm to the Indian Peasants Cause. Instead of being able to develop their own independent class organization the Kisan Congress become the plaything and war front between the rival political groups. This not only weakened the Kisan Congress but strong peasant movement that had been so laboriously built by Ranga and exclaimed, "That it was indeed a tragedy."²⁸

This united front reached its ultimate when Subhas Chandrabose was elected for the Second time as AICC President in spite of Gandhis opposition to him. Communists took full advantage of the situation and forced the issue between constitutionalism and communism. This situation brought not only confusion but also conflict in the nationalist ranks. To bring CPI into its proper place Ranga conceived the idea of "Left consolidation committee"²⁹ so that Royists, socialist, CPI, CSP, Independent Communist Kissan Congress, Mazadoor Sobhais could all

²⁶ N G Ranga, *Bapu Blesses Kisan, Mazadoor, Praja Raj*, P. I.

²⁷ N G Ranga, *Fight For ...*, Op. cit., P. 259.

²⁸ N G Ranga, *Revolutionary ...*, Op. cit., P. 15.

²⁹ N G Ranga, *Fight For ...*, Op. cit., P. 238.

be brought together. In this regard Jai Prakash Narayan aided him.³⁰ He strongly resisted the Communist maneuver to divide the kisans into three categories, the poor, the middle and rich peasant and to confine the activities of the Kisan Congress only to the peasants of poor and middle categories. He says, "I knew the danger of such a division and I was determined to keep all peasants together. It was only later I was able to realize fully how through such a maneuver the soviet leaders destroyed the hegemony of Soviet peasants."³¹

The danger that Ranga feared about communists and their divisive politics came to the front in 1944 when they divided Kisan Sabha vertically into two, rich and poor, communists and others. Communist achieved a great propaganda hit by organizing the sessions of their All India Kisan Sabha in Vijayawada in May 1944, gathered a huge audience from almost all the districts. Prof. Rnaga appreciates their dynamism. He says "they distributed many pamphlets published so many books and almost monopolized the public sphere of propaganda, thanks to their dynamism, Plethora of paid workers and high sense of discipline"³² Through their campaign they saturated the minds of the peasants against Ranga. Soon they (the peasants) realized their fault and returned to the fold of congress under the able leadership of Ranga.

³⁰ N G Ranga, *The Great People ...*, Op. cit., P. 155.

³¹ N G Ranga, *Revolutionary ...*, Op. cit., P. 16.

³² Ibid.

When all these were happening Ranga was languishing in jail in 1944.³³ As soon as he realized from the jail Ranga without wasting anytime took up the challenge on behalf of Congress and Kisan movements against the "peoples war" movement of communists and joined against them on every issue and on every political and kisan platform. His interviews with Gandhi about KMP Raj³⁴ strengthened his campaign against the communists.

To bring that unity in the kisan movement he made common cause with all those Andhra Congressmen of the old groups in his campaign against the unpatriotic activities of communists. Unfortunately even at that critical juncture the congress old stalwarts were not ready to give their full support to Ranga and his constructive programme. He even organized a huge kisan congress session in Vijaiwada in 1944.³⁵ It was violently disturbed by the communists and opened the eyes of kisans about the true colors of communists. A part from this type of meetings Ranga took vigorous steps to tone up and rebuild the students Congress through his inspiring book "Students role in National Revolution"³⁶ which provided the necessary impetus for this.

Ranga was not just happy with talks and books he organized swaraj political training camps and classes for the youth to train them in

³³ N G Ranga, Fight For ... , Op. cit., P. 215.

³⁴ N G Ranga, Babu Blesses ... , Op. cit., P. 6.

³⁵ N G Ranga, Fight For ... , Op. cit., P. 218.

³⁶ Small Book written by Ranga in 1944 about the Strengths and Possibilities of Youth.

fighting the lurking danger of communism. The All India trade Union congress too was captured and exploited by the communists during the war period. To build once again a strong working force movement Ranga along with Namdajee and Giri formed the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) and began organizing patriotic workers into their own independent platform, with the result by 1948 the INTUC became the principal all India labor platform, which had also been recognized by the I.L.O.³⁷

It was during this nation-wide fight against Communist political offensive, congress were able to tell the public how Communists hoped for the Red Army to march into India through the N.W. Frontier and to capture power from the weakened British Empire and hand it over to the CPI to established their proletarian dictatorship. Plenty of CPI literature proved their aims and machinations available during that period. In spite of all they did, their General Secretary Shri P C Joshi dared to claim in his correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi, "that the Communists did not violate the congress ideals and that their role alone was patriotic and it was the Congress which deviated from the patriotic path."³⁸ At Gandhi suggestion Prof. N G Ranga started reorganizing Kisan Congress with the active cooperation of Sardar Patel, he was advised by Gandhijee to look more keenly into the

³⁷ N G Ranga, Fight For ... , Op. cit., P. 229.

³⁸ Ibid. P. 236

constructive programmes initiated by him. RANGA says in his writings on Gandhi "I am glad to say that I continued to enjoy this coveted status right up to the day of his death, of course only in so far as the Kisan, Student and Youth mass wise activities were concerned. It was because of that privilege I enjoyed to tender him for more information and advice regarding the sufferings of the masses from the 'Control Raj'.³⁹ When eventually Ranga was elected the President of the APCC in 1946, He was able to utilize fully in a dynamic manner, the Congress resources in men and influence with the press and platform to combat the menace of communist propaganda and also the rising evils of colonial government.

The Congress Ministry and the peasantry:

C. Raja Gopalachari headed the first congress ministry in Madras on 14th July 1937.⁴⁰ It should be noted that the congress had outshone the Justice party as well as people's party (both were basically land lord parties) by the massive support extended by the Ryots Associations and Labor organizations. As we had stated earlier, due to high rates of rent and arrears the ryot was compelled to borrow money from the Shahukar and particularly during the depression period. The purchasing power of the ryot has fallen down, resulting in the

³⁹ Ibid. P. 320.

⁴⁰ Ibid. P. 198.

occurrence of high debts.⁴¹ What exactly was the (ryot) cause of the rise in the debt on account of which the average agriculturalist suffered? "In most cases" says Ranga "major portion of the debt of these agriculturalists has been incurred year after year by their having to comply with demand for the payment of kist".⁴² It was found that for every rupee of land revenue assessment of the burden of debt nearly Rs.30 on the small landholders.⁴³ According to a moderate estimate the debt burden was as follows:

Percentage of debt:

Land owing above 25 acres	2.9
Land owing between 25.5 acres	24.6
Land owing below 5 acres	44.3
cowldars	13.2
Agriculture labor	15.0
Total	100

Source: V. Gopal Krishna, Vishalandram, Vizag, 1948.

As per its election manifesto the congress ministry had to enact legislation to bring down the debt burden on the peasantry. Meanwhile unrest among the Kisan was growing by leaps and bounds and the "peasant marches had come to be a powerful weapon. As a result the

⁴¹ Raitu Oipavan, Telugu, Madras, 1956. P. 7.

⁴² Zamin Ryot, 28/11/1938.

⁴³ Ibid.

Madras government declared "Moratorium" on debts followed by "Debt Relief Bill" and finally the Act came into force on the 2nd March 1938. The object of the Act was "to give relief to indebted agriculturalists by scaling down their existing debts, reducing the rate of interest on their future debts 6 and ¼% per annum and writing off the arrears of rent due to the Zamindars, Jamins and other land holders, by the tenants".⁴⁴

"A sum of Rs. 50 lakhs has been set apart to give loans to agriculturalists and to pay off their scaled down debts. Land revenue remission has been sanctioned to the extent of 25 lakhs of rupees every year".⁴⁵

The measures taken by the Ministry were below the expectations of the peasantry. Despite the disappointment caused by the Act, the Ryots Associations had stood by the ministry and supported it. In regard to rent burden Ranga raised the British government but very little had been conceded to his powerful voice. Ranga was quiet successful in regard to the question of Zamin ryots and the amendment of it in 1938. Before Ranga could fulfill his plans for the relief of peasantry Congress resigned from the Ministry due to the dragging of India into the second world war without its consent.

⁴⁴ N G Ranga, *Fight For ...*, Op. cit., P.

⁴⁵ From the extracts of Interview from Jakkampudi, Sita Rama Raju, Dt. 20/9/2001 (Chilakaluripet) AP.

Conclusion: So far in this chapter you have discussed how Ranga conducted himself with 'left forces' and how his socialistic views came to forefront. Here we have also noticed Ranga work through Congress Ministry and during Second World War. Rangas work through socialist party is as same as his work in Congress Party further peasant uplift by joining CSP. He gave real independence to peasants by giving them responsibilities in the ongoing struggle for power.

CHAPTER 5

Popular Movements and Dr Ranga's Ideology

"As Gandhiji is father of the nation so Rangaji is Father of the Peasantry" - INDIRA GANDHI

Dr Ranga's ideology was very simple and always the same peasant development and their progress in all angles and in all directions. He also knows very well that this cannot be possible with one day or with a single section of peasantry unity. He had many views on many peasant problems and however, backup from becoming the mistakes.

The ideology background for Dr Ranga had been formulated in his childhood only. His service mindedness was seen in his youth it self when he was barely 12 years of age he used to gather Harijan boys and girls in his village and used to take classes for them.¹ For he know that without education no progress is possible. Even in his later years also he gave highest priority to adult education and night schools.² At a very early age he decided about the path that he is going to travel. Keeping this in mind he studied the peasant problems from very close range with all possible solutions³. Above all we should always remember that he is one among them and he is always proud of his peasant background. Apart from this he produced vast sea of literature

¹ N G Ranga, Fight For ... , Op. cit., P. 38.

² Ibid.

³ Centenary Celebration of N G Ranga in special edition. (Telugu), P. III.

with which we can assess his ideology and views on various issues that were plaguing peasantry for a long time. Let us briefly review some of the popular issues that were undertaken by Dr Ranga for the general well-being and progress of the peasants.

The Village Panchayat Movement

Dr Ranga while in Oxford was greatly influenced by the political and democratic structure that existed there. He dreams for the same in India too.⁴ In this direction he visualized that it can be attained only through democratic village panchayat system. During 1933-35, he was very busy in establishing village panchayats along with Shri P V Narsimha Rao. He was greatly influenced by the ideas of Annie Besant regarding village republic and its importance. Dr Ranga says "he was greatly influenced by the talks of Annie Besant about the role of village republic in the days Cholas."⁵ He visioned to emulate the same to our present conditions. To achieve this Dr Ranga organized Taluk and District Panchayat Conferences as well as seminars where the Presidents of the Panchayat Boards were taught how to prepare plans and estimates for various schemes of village development, submit them in the most acceptable manner to the Revenue Officer, District Board and Engineering Departments, get them endorsed by them all with suitable alternations and send them up to the Registrar's Office.

⁴ N G Ranga, Fight For ... , Op. cit., P. 81.

⁵ N G Ranga, The Great People Whom I know, Delhi, 1978. P. 4.

These seminars helped to quicken the pace of the village constructive work. These Boards also helped the presidents to make suitable improvements in their plans and schemes, in the light of the experience gained by other Presidents with their schemes.

Dr Ranga realized very soon that majority rule was unsuited to village life⁶. Dr Ranga also says, "Village factiousness caste ridden conceptions of gradations and superiority, and political prejudices found vent through panchayat board elections"⁷. To overcome this Dr Ranga suggested that "The British practice of giving adequate representations to the minorities and all communities and well coming leaders of minorities to work as the chairman of a fair number of communities etc."⁸ Due to this panchayats are being invested with punitive, and compulsory powers to order peasants as to how to plan their crop economy, raise crops, store, sell and distribute food grains etc. It is also being proposed that even the functions of Land Revenue Collections, Postal work, distribution of manures, Government subsidies should be entrusted to Panchayats⁹. This in fact is a very novel idea for which people are demanding even to this day.

In this way, Dr Ranga put his democratic ideas without hampering the growth and development of minorities. Our administrators were

⁶ N G Ranga, Fight For ... , Op. cit., P. 189.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid. P.190.

⁹ Ibid. P. 192.

studying his contribution to village panchayat movement even to this day. Above all, his sincerity had been noticed by one and all in this regard.

Harijan Uplift Activities:

From the childhood Dr Ranga was closely associated with the lives of Harijans and other neglected sections of the society. Seeing their plight Dr Ranga decided "I will do something for them in future."¹⁰ Under the influence of Gandhi's constructive programme he came forward for Harijans to fight for their basic civil rights and to liberate them from untouchability. Dr Ranga became the president of "District Harijan Sevak Sangh" of Guntur¹¹. Dr Ranga organized Taluk branches trained and appointed a few whole time Harijan propagandists and built up an efficient network of anti-untouchability organizations. Dr Ranga organized and led the first Harijan "Seva Dal" in India in February 1933, with ten Harijans¹². He toured through scores of villages in Repalle and Tenali Taluks, camped in both the Harijans and the other quarters in every village, carried on processions shouting slogans and singing songs, and organized a number of public meetings, besides street corner exhortations, all in favor of removing untouchability and treating Harijans as equal and honorable citizens in

¹⁰ Ibid. P.42.

¹¹ Ibid. P.235.

¹² Ibid. P. 236.

every sense of the term¹³. He was not satisfied by merely taking out processions and marches but fought for them and for their development in real sense. He pleaded with government for the granting of unoccupied cultivable lands to the harijans¹⁴.

Since 1923, Dr Ranga along with his brother G B Appayya, A Naggayya worked in this direction of uplifting the harijans. He succeeded in getting some of the wasteland to the harijans. Dr Ranga says "I had the satisfaction that harijan Christians had about 5000 acres out of the 60000 acres of land for which I succeeded in getting irrigation facilities in the Pedda Vadlapudi-Paturu Projects during 1926-32. When I found that at Vovveru in Nellore District, as much as 2000 acres of Government land was likely to be irrigated and the bigger local land holders were trying to grab it for themselves or to their favorites."¹⁵

Dr Ranga while touring harijans villages taught them about housing conditions and sanitary environment improvisation and growing of vegetables all around their houses and he also thought correctly that "most of the harijans happened to be agricultural workers and their economic progress is bound up with the uplift of agriculture labor".¹⁶

The "Royal Commission of Labor"¹⁷ was appointed in 1929 by British government as answer to the efforts of the national leaders like Dr

¹³ Ibid. P. 237.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid. P. 238.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Sumit Sarkar, Modern India. P.

Ranga and Gandhi for uplift of downtrodden sections. He stressed the need for extending to agricultural labor such legislation as the 'workmen's Compensation Act', the Trade Unions Act etc with suitable modifications and also for further legislation to achieve decasualisation, to organize labor exchanges and to ensure proper payment of wages.

Fight For Adult Franchise:

Dr Ranga has attached a great importance for adult franchise since his days from Oxford. While he was in England, he carefully studied political structures of different European countries and came to a conclusion that their progress mainly based on Universal Adult Franchise.¹⁸ He deramed of the same in India too, Dr Ranga never likes his dreams to be mere wishes but fights for them with all his strength and intellect to bring make them to reality. He felt that adult franchise is another effective means not only to uplift the harijans but also to equip the peasantry with the power of political decision through ballot. He also recommended in the Nehru Committee¹⁹ about the idea of joint electorate and reservation of certain seats for the harijans. Dr Ranga also knows that this will be the only weapon in the hands of the

¹⁸ N G Ranga, Fight For ... , Op. cit., P. 240.

¹⁹ Formed to look into the question of Adult franchise and reservations.

people to exercise their control over the government from developing into autocratic institutions.²⁰

Handloom Weavers Movement

During the period of united front and the emergence of Kisan Movement on All India Plane Dr Ranga revived his works among the handloom weavers, which he had started in 1925. During 1935- 1947 Dr Ranga organized a number of weavers cooperatives on the initiative of the government through the subsidies. In this movement too the CSP and CPI started as scoffers and ended as rivals to the patriotic weavers leaders. In this regard only Gandhiji encouraged Dr Ranga and unfortunately a large number of narrow-minded Congressmen refuse it to cooperate with him Saying, "Weavers working on Mill yarn didn't deserve any sympathy"²¹. Unfortunately, many of the weaver leaders and others have come to be so much interested in the plums of power and favors of the congress and positions of responsibility in the cooperatives, that the general movement for the protection of fundamental rights and demands of weavers, oil mongers are not being as fully voiced as is necessary and as Dr Ranga intended it to be.

Dr Rangas stature had been tremendous not only among the Peasantry but even among the great congress leaders. This was not

²⁰ N G Ranga, Kisan Handbook, Madras, 1938. P. 9.

²¹ How Self Employment Works?, (Speech in Telugu in 1933)

just the result of his sincerity for Peasants cause but also for his organizational abilities. He is to mobilize Peasants from all section and a study about his mobilizing capacities will reveal some of his ideological traits also. We will also see not only who were the real participants in his programs but also who benefited the most. Now let us examine why Dr Ranga is so successful in mobilizing Peasantry and let us discuss his modes of mobilization

Methods of Mobilization:

So far we have discussed the popular movements that Dr Ranga undertook and his peasant Associations. The methods devised by Dr Ranga to rally the mass of peasantry were highly advanced and most effective when compared to other peasant Associations in India.

The foremost form of mobilization by Dr Ranga was to go into the investigation of economic conditions of the peasantry in any area where the condition of the peasantry was said to be pathetic. The first such enquiry was initiated in the Venkatagiri estate in 1931. (The basic aim of these committees was to study actual conditions of the peasants and suggest remedies).²² Then the proceedings of such an enquiry were published widely in the press through Zamin Ryot (a Telugu weekly), Hindu, Indian express and other papers. Dr Ranga, being an Economist, first initiated this method in his home district

²² Economic Conditions of The Zamindari Ryots, A committee report.

Guntur and he did extensive rural surveys elsewhere²³. He carried a survey of almost all the major Estates in Andhra and published his report in 1933²⁴. These surveys and reports became the basis of the formulation of the Dr Ranga's programme. Generally these reports highlighted the evils of the Zamindari System. These constantly emphasized the high rate of rent in the estates, lack of irrigation facilities, mal-administration in estates etc.

On the basis of such reports schedules of minimum demands were prepared at the village, estate, taluk, district and provisional levels. In order to acquaint the 'peasants' of such demands, to educate and help them to become vociferous in their support for these just causes. Innumerable propaganda meetings and conferences were arranged to promote these causes. In fact the conferences promoted by Dr Ranga at all levels served this purpose well. It was at such conferences the minimum demands adopted by the provincial conferences were given the shape of resolutions among the lower units. To encourage the organization of these meetings and conferences Dr Ranga had organized peasant weeks and protest days. Similarly peasant Volunteer corps was also raised to carry out propaganda in the countryside.

²³ N G Ranga, *Fight For ...*, Op. cit., P. 115.

²⁴ See Footnote No. 22.

During the mid - 1930's peasant marches and rallies either to conferences or to government offices became the most common propagandistic method.²⁵ Usually, a march was for a number of days and it went through a large number of Villages. Along the route meetings were held, speeches were delivered and placards were exhibited. Contradictory accounts were given by both the nationalists and Madras Government (Home Department)²⁶ With regard to the impact of these marches. Nevertheless, by 1930-38 with the emergence of the leftist forces the marches became wide spread. They too concentrated on propaganda meetings and marches.

Peasant songs, which became popular, helped in the spread and growth of the peasant enthusiasm. The songs written by one peasant poet N V R Naidu of Nellore became most popular. In these songs he exposed the sufferings of the peasant and Zamindari exploitation by means of high taxes and coercion. He described the miserable conditions of the peasants and advised them to unite in their fight against the Zamindars and colonial oppressors. He infused in them a sense of self-importance by honoring them as "The true king of the earth".²⁷ He wrote.

Wading through mad,

Walking through thorns,

²⁵ N G Ranga, Modern Indian ..., Op. cit., P. 10.

²⁶ Madras Home Department Files., Madras

²⁷ N G Ranga, Fight For ... , Op. cit., P. 216.

You raise your crops with untold sufferings.

Yet you don't find enough to eat!

Is there no limit to your slavery?

*Look at these parks these palaces and pleasure grounds
can't you recognize your own sweat?*

*You drive the plough break upon our beloved mother
earth.*

The strike is the weapon, divine of this age

O, raise your class as now you raise the crops.

Dr Ranga utilized the traditional methods of spreading enlightenment among the peasantry. It popularized Bhajanas, traditional bards such as the Burraktha, Jangam katha, Veera Katha etc. (Burrakathe a balled told to the rhythm of wooden instruments for a group of audience).

Burris clicked together by the performers; with its simple ballat sequence the Burrakatha can be staged without scenery and requires few performers. Another important indigenous medium of communication was Bhajan Mandali (A devotional choral group singing hymns.).

This was very much popularized by the peasant Institute of Nidubrolu. It was very familiar association in rural Andhra and people from all sections participated in it regularly. such is the popularity of Dr Ranga not only among the peasantry but also among the general

population. These mandalis recited devotional-cum-political songs. Later communist successfully developed them and made effective use of them.

The first peasant school was a organized by Dr Ranga at Nitubrola in 1934. He said, "It was aimed to counteract the mischievous propaganda of both the Government and Zamindar and to train and sent out regular stream of self conscious workers".²⁸ Many subjects were taught in this institute, such as the history of capitalism, fascism, socialism, agrarian structure of India, labor movement etc. Students trained by this institute became the most prominent organizers of the Zamin Ryot movement in their respective districts and Taluks.²⁹ The main initiative to organize both the Peasant Seva Dals and marches came from these studies alone. Their contribution to the success of the congress and Dr Ranga in the elections was also noticeable. Besides they were very active in other social activities, such as Harijan relief, famine relief, medical relief etc. Students were drawn from all castes and from all districts. However, most of the caste Hindu students came from "Middle class peasant families. The institutes of had also invited most of the prominent leaders from all over the Andhra to deliver lectures on Socio-economic and political problems of India. It is

²⁸ Ibid. P. 217.

²⁹ Ibid.

interesting to note that nearly 60% of the students of this institute became the members of CSP and CP between 1935-38.³⁰

Later, socialists and communists also carried on this tradition of organizing schools. They had organized summer schools between 1936-39 and mainly taught Marxism. They had also invited other communists from North India like A.k.Ghosh. Commenting on Summer School activities of the socialists, the fortnightly reports of Madras Government remarked that "There was considerable influence of communists from the north of India to these schools.... There are indications that prohibited literature is enjoying a considerable circulation in the Andhra district.. There is a tendency to extend the publication of books of this type."³¹ Propaganda by press is of the most effective the publication of books of this type. Propaganda by press is of the most effective means of mobilization. Dr Ranga had his own press and published papers and Journals. Special mention may be made of the contributions of Zamin Ryot Patrika, Published weekly in Telugu. It had reached every corner of the coastal districts in Andhra. It had 10-14 pages of news, speeches by peasant and congress leaders. Its language was simple and colloquial, replete with familiar analogies and charged with satire. Each issue was full of exciting reportage of events as well as songs, short stories plays and humorous

³⁰ N G Ranga, Modern Indian... , Op. cit., P. 8.

³¹ N G Ranga, Fight For ... , Op. cit., P. 192.

skits lampooning the Zamindar and their officials. NVR Naidu, a noted peasant poet edited it from Nellore. Besides, the other nationalist papers like the Hindu, Andhra Patrika, Kristna Patrika, Indian Express, etc., also helped considerably. Commenting on the help rendered by Andhra patrika, Dr Ranga noted that the patrika helped us to spread the message of peasant movement and institution to the whole of the political minded Andhra Pubic during our sessions by giving widest publication.³²

Compared to Bardoli, the emphasis on the identification of caste was relatively nil caste solidarity did not play any considerable role in the mobilization of the peasantry. It was not very significant in the formation of the Programmes or demands, which tended to represent the general agrarian class interests. Baker has exaggerated the role of the caste to a large extent and by Harrison and to a lesser extent. They have over emphasized its role and tried to explain the whole political development only interns of caste politics. For them, the caste identity was the sole means of mobilization. In other words, they try to explain the political movement in terms of vertical alliances. Actually, the peasant movement represented a class and not merely caste antagonisms. For instance, in Andhra the Kamma peasant fought against the Kamma Zamindar. Baker and other have also failed to

³² N G Ranga, Revolutionary ..., Op. cit., P. 27.

show how the programme of the peasant movement in Andhra was determined by caste. This becomes clear if we understood the ideology of Dr Ranga. For instance, Dr Ranga remarks that " I preached boldly the need for them (to Kamma peasant) to cease thinking in terms of merely caste but think in terms of economic class interests"³³.

In Andhra the Reddis the Kammas and the kapus were the dominant peasant castes like the partes in Bardoli. No doubt, these castes had their own caste organizations.³⁴ These associations were made the primary-organizing units of political mobilization in Andhra. In this context of growing mass movements the distance between the caste organization and political leadership was reduced. In these changed circumstances the caste leaders played a new role by mediating between their own (local) communities and the wider national and provincial organization. The role of Dr Ranga under Gandhiji direction was very much evident in this regard.

Apart from indirect means i.e. through book, journals, leaflets, Pamphlets, etc. direct Communication by means of speeches by the leaders was also made use by Dr Ranga were also most effective in mobilizing the mass of the peasantry.

The speeches of national leaders like Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, Rajendra Prasad etc. had also an effect on the peasant movement in Andhra (all

³³ Fortnightly Report, 2nd half June, 1938. (Home Pol.) NAI.

³⁴ N G Ranga, Ranga's Rural Entry in Rural India, Feb. 1975. P. 8.

of them toured Andhra between 1934-37). During his tour in Andhra districts (1936) Jawaharlal Nehru put forward the agrarian problems of Zamin ryots in the forefront speaking from Venkatgiri, the seat of a powerful anti-Zamindari movement he said there is no way of getting rid of the trouble (of ryots) except by developing your own strength. You can't improve your condition either by begging or petitioning to the government or the Zamindar. He also encouraged the Peasant saying "in this part of the country I have been coming across your association. ...I am glad they exist." He further remarked, "I was glad to notice peasant association in Andhra appear to be doing good work for the peasants... such organizations are helpful not only to agitate for the removal of the peasant's grievances but to help the larger cause of swaraj. No doubt these kinds of speeches helped in rousing the political consciousness within the peasantry to link their movement within main-stream of the anti-imperialistic national struggle. This was the main aim of Dr Ranga throughout his life, to integrate peasants with national mainstream national politics.

Satya graha was also one of the chief methods fused by Dr Ranga. As we have seen, during 1930-39, Dr Ranga had organized three satyagraha movements and partially succeeded in fulfilling the peasant demands. However satyagraha had a greater impact on the minds of peasants. One of the interesting things about the satyagraha

movement in Andhra was that a few of those follower of Gandhi who had taken part in Bardoli satyagraha, such as Kaka Kalelkar and Dr. J C Kumarappa were invited to tour the districts.³⁵

We have so far discussed different forms of mobilization that were followed by the Dr Ranga in mobilizing the peasantry. The language of both the direct (i.e. speeches) and indirect (reports leaflets) communication media (during this movement) was indigenous. The political issues were conveyed to the mass of the peasantry both through social (caste) and religious (Bhajan) idioms and symbols, which could draw the tradition, bound peasants into the political mainstrain. In other words, the peasant problems became the convenient instrument of political mobilization. The methods of mobilization remained with in the frame work of passive resistance has to be seen in relation to the leadership and ideology of the movement.

Dr Ranga's Ideology: Dr Ranga was the representative of the peasants to the core. In terms of ideology he vacillated between Gandhism, Fabian, Socialism and Marxism,³⁶ and he rejected aristocracy and dictatorship. Dr Ranga influenced by Gandhi ji and his 'ism' was evident in his later life. Dr Ranga was so much attracted by Gandhism and his method of non-violence. This he practiced throughout his life. Like all other great leaders, Marxism and Russian mode of

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ N G Ranga, Fight For ... , Op. cit., P. 236.

intellectualism powerfully influenced Dr Ranga. Dr Ranga writes, "Influenced so powerfully as I had been by the inspiring Russian achievements and Leninist distraction of the monopoly of our held by the tradition from the feudal, princely, commercial and industrial classes...³⁷. Later on Dr Ranga realized how destructive the Russian model is and how constructive and suitable the Gandhian socialism. Dr Ranga wanted to make appeal to the masses not through force but by sacrifice. Dr Ranga's whole life itself is a big sacrifice for the cause of peasantry. In this regard he says, "We neither can nor wish to use arms and ammunition to strength and struggle against our opponents... our sacrifices alone ... can strengthen them. Non-violence and unarmed as we are bound to be."³⁸ Dr Ranga also stresses the need to do away with the inequalities of wealth and income between the exploiters and the exploited by means of the Gandhian weapon of Dharma.³⁹ Dr Ranga always argued for the protection of peasant property and the preservation of cottage and small industries. Dr Ranga has firm believe that India can grow economically only when the village industries were taken care off. Dr Ranga says, "India can have no salvation without the village economy being vitalized by the self employed peasants."⁴⁰ Dr Ranga articulated for the peasant

³⁷ N G Ranga, *Revolutionary Peasants*, Op. cit., P. 23.

³⁸ N G Ranga, *Kisan and ...*, Op. cit., P. 23.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ N G Ranga, *Freedom in Rent*, Speech in Delhi, 1952.

internationalism and the peasant socialist theory. Dr Ranga wanted not only, "Indian peasantry but world peasantry to stand unite and fight for their rights". As we have seen in our earlier chapters he tried to develop them in India through associations like, APRA, APZRA, SIFPW, and AIKS etc.

Power to the Peasants:

The main aim of Dr Ranga in organizing these associations was to give power to the peasantry, which is not indirect but direct. He envisaged giving genuine direct political power to the peasant, as they were the most neglected lot. No other leader in India or Congress tried as much as he tried to give power to the peasantry. Only Gandhi supported him in this regard. Dr Ranga tried to give power to peasants through his KMPR. Dr Ranga says, "Those who were advising us not to enter into politics were either deluding themselves or trying to mislead us. How can our peasants hope to achieve any of the demands unless they learn to play their part in the politics?"

Dr Ranga not merely advocated about power to the peasant but tried to get power for them. By organizing peasants as a separate unit within the Congress Dr Ranga wants to create a pressure group. This was not only an idea but behind it he had in his mind to infuse confidence within the peasantry about their strength and representation. In this

regard, he corresponded with Nehru but with no positive reply.⁴¹ Dr Ranga even advocated to the peasants to be careful about congress politics he advised them to play their part in the Congress politics by gaining more seats in the PCC and DCC and Village Level Committees.⁴²

Peasants Unity:

Dr Ranga stressed for the unity within the peasantry to be a potent force. Dr Ranga tried to garner all forces, which wanted to work for the peasant's upliftment. Dr Ranga even gathered support of rich landlord to fight for the peasant cause. "To prevent our peasants from being coerced into paying ... to achieve this almost a negative object our peasant needs all the help they can get from every progressive organization in the country."⁴³ At the same time, Dr Ranga warns peasants to be careful of the motives of the help they were getting. He further says, "Yet they can't be any direct or indirect alliance with any party which seeks to shelter and bolster up the vested interest".⁴⁴ To counteract, this vested interests peasants need to have 100% participation and 100% representation in the legislatures.⁴⁵

In a nutshell Dr Ranga's ideology was socialism in the Indian context with 100% peasant representation in the legislative bodies and voicing of the peasant problems not by a third party but by peasants

⁴¹ N G Ranga, *Modern Indian ...*, Op. cit., P. 7.

⁴² Letter from Nehru, NMML, 5/8.1936.

⁴³ N G Ranga, *Revolutionary Peasant ...*, Op. cit., P. 72.

⁴⁴ N G Ranga, *Congress and Peasantry*, Op. cit., P. 23.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* P. 24.

themselves. In all these Dr Ranga adhered to the Gandhian mood of fighting and passive revolution. Many people criticized Dr Ranga on this ground but his conception of what is good for the independent peasantry as per the circumstances is the polestar in his ideological life. As we have already seen to achieve this Dr Ranga started peasant schools to train peasant. Unfortunately the successors of Dr Ranga couldn't continue them. Nevertheless, the schools had a tremendous impact in raising the peasant consciousness and raising the peasant leaders.

Conclusion:

Dr Ranga was such a tireless peasant worker that, in his lifetime on many grounds and on many angles, he fought for the alleviation of peasants both in terms of political and economical terms. Whatever we have discussed in this chapter is just a glimpse of his vast work for the peasantry. Due to space constrain we could not discuss all of them. Coming to Dr Ranga's ideology it always revolved around one point. i.e. power to the peasantry for their real growth. Even though Dr Ranga was influenced by the socialistic ideas he never allowed it to grow into dictatorial proportions. On this dictatorial ideology he even fought with Nehru. We have showed in ample about the sincerity of Dr Ranga for the peasant's cause, which was displayed throughout our analysis.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

An attempt had been made in our study to trace the work of Dr Ranga among the peasantry during 1920-1947. In this systematic study we have analysed the then trends in agrarian societal structure along with some important Acts and Legislations. We have also seen how peasants hierarchy got involved in the peasant movement in the various movements. This has entailed an effort at the identification of important forces that influenced and shaped the features of the agrarian structure during this period. We have also attempted to understand the means of an analysis of the process of differentiation and how Dr Ranga could unite peasants with his innovative programmes in spite of serious internal contradictions. Our attempt in this has been to identify the areas of the class harmony and class conflict so as to understand the contradiction within the agrarian structure and later Ranga's work among the peasantry.

In chapter 2 we have traced the Kisan Movements and its growth under APRA and APZRA. We have also seen how Ranga had been influenced by the plight of peasants to work for their own emancipation. We have also seen his socialistic and core democratic attitudes. Dr Ranga's sincerity for the cause of the peasantry had been portrayed in every aura of this chapter. We have noticed how Ranga emerged on the national scene during the depression period and how he kept whole

peasantry united to fight against the colonial oppressive policies and zamindaris exploitation. We have also seen how Dr Ranga established APRA and APZRA to fight for specific causes of peasantry in specific areas as their having different set of rules and regulations in different regions. This has been highlighted in our analysis of this chapter. A study of depression has also political significance because (a) It witnessed the changing the relationship between producer and appropriator (b) Upset the traditional class relations and brought peasantry into chaos. (c) This crisis certainly induced dynamism into Andhra peasant politics under the able guidance of Dr Ranga.

We have also explained the impact of 'left' forces (Chapter III) in the course of the development of peasant movement. We have also seen how these new political alignment brought rebellious attitude in the peasant circle which otherwise are silent. We have also seen how Dr Ranga during this period helped the promotion of peasants cause through Congress Ministry (1937-39). We have also noticed about the divisive politics ushered in by CP into the ranks of peasantry. This not only weekend the peasant movement but also the ongoing national movement. We have also noticed the constructive work undertaken by Dr Ranga in rebuilding the broken peasant movement. Here, we have also noticed the work done by Dr Ranga during the Second World War. Our next chapter is the highlight of our study. This chapter studied

about various popular movements that were initiated by Dr Ranga and his ideology. We have tried to analyze his socialistic and Gandhian thoughts in an elaborate manner. We have also analyzed Dr Ranga's views on power to the peasantry and what is its significance. Due to our space and time (1920-1947) constrain we have studied very few moments that were undertaken by Dr Ranga. Dr Ranga's ideology as we have seen was simple and always the same peasants progress and their development in all directions. This was the polestar of his ideology. His socialistic ideas, which stood the taste of times, certainly needs a mentioned. As we have seen he didn't nearly preach for the power to peasants but always strived in the direction. Dr Ranga did not believe in any form of dictatorship but in the spirit of responsibility, accountability and equality believe. To advocate this idea Dr Ranga started KMPR as the ideal form of political structure.

Our narrative of Dr Ranga worked was to trace the growth of peasant movement under his guidance. We have also successfully disprove the idea expressed by C J Baker that Ranga last in the central politics and came to take up the peasant politics. But we have seen how Dr Ranga steadily raised in the Congress ladder with peasants politics as his center. We have also shown successfully the CP stand that due to differences in peasant class structure no unity can be possible but Dr Ranga with his innovative programmes not only brought peasantry

under one umbrella but fought the colonial as well as zamindari operations. In his ideology, we have seen the importance attached by Dr Ranga to the concept of 'power'. He is only leader who openly fought for power for peasants. We can certainly infer that by the work of such great-dedicated leaders Kisans could raise to power in 1979.

We may get this question in our minds why he couldn't raise up in the congress hierarchy? Dr Ranga in his speeches, (taped transcript) "If I accept post in the cabinet I was bound by the central authority and can't raise my voice. If I am outside I can bring more pressure and its better not to be inside and be silent." He had been invited by Nehru to take up Agricultural Ministry a cabinet rank in 1951 but he had refused on above grounds. His defect was he never tried to build any personal cloud for himself. Dr Ranga treated everyone equal and his central question was not individual but peasants. In this way Dr Ranga was a peasants leader with clear ideology and perspective to the core.

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