Political History in Andhra

It is a general misnomer that pre-independence days were golden. We often hear that, by and large, the British rule was honest and corruption was unknown. Self-praise too is not lacking among freedom fighters regarding their past achievements and heroic deeds. They say that until 1947 sacrifice for the country was everyone’s objective. While abusing the present generation these elders panegyrical talk of how honesty, altruism, and sacrifice worked as vital forces for them. Such people express shock at witnessing degeneration in all walks of life today, at how the means have become the end, how nepotism, favouritism, moneymaking and above all worship at the altar of power, have eaten into the moral fabric of the society.

All this looks very attractive but in reality it is sheer nonsense. There is ample evidence to prove that power, however little of it there was, always corrupted the persons who aspired for it. Without proper means of mass communication in pre-independence days, there existed a wide gap between the ruler and the ruled. Hence, it was natural for innocent people to think that all was well. There was also another psychological factor, which should be mentioned here. Brown skinned Indians nourished an inferiority complex infront of the Britishers. The white skinned rulers were looked at with awe and wonder. People were afraid to go anywhere near the ruling class. A few Indians had access to the British administrators. All sorts of stories were concocted about the white-skinned bureaucrats and their honesty and efficiency.

We now have documentary evidence about the corrupt practices and nasty behaviour of the British in India. Anyone interested in verifying the facts about the corruption of British administration can go through the excellent work of Frykenberg “Guntur district”.

Narisetti Innaiah * 1
Indians under the British rule were a match to the British Officers in corrupt practices, nepotism and groupism. Though they had very little power at various levels, it was quite enough for manipulations and misdemeanours. Some of these facts are discussed by Christopher John Baker, D.A. Washbrook and Eugene F. Irsachick. These three foreign scholars have made valuable contributions to the political history of South India and have also cited a number of instances of the corrupt practices of Indians ranging from the villages to the State.

Andhra Pradesh was formed in 1956. Till 1953 Andhra was a part of the composite Madras State. Eighty percent of the people in the State are agriculture-oriented.

Sir Arthur Cotton made it possible for the middle class in the Krishna-Godavari delta to rise up. The dams on Godavari and Krishna rivers were completed in 1848 and 1852 respectively. Guntur, Vijayawada, Eluru and Kakinada were fast growing into cities. The Marwadis and Vysyas and the Cooperative Banks lent money to the agriculturists, and labourers from dry lands who came to work in the wet areas for cheaper wages. That was how they earned their livelihood. Few villages were aware of urban fashions, the exception being the places which had railways nearby.

As long as the British ruled, the whole authority was centered in London and to some extent, at Delhi. Only nominal power was given to the presidencies like Madras. As much as 70% of the land revenue went to the Centre. The Britishers, due to communication problems, had to depend on local clerks, which gave these local officers a chance to play their corrupt game. From the Collector to the Revenue clerk, corruption was rampant. Selection of jobs had the stench of corruption, casteism and favouritism through and through.

Brahmins migrating from Maharashtra, established themselves in most of the jobs. The Britishers found it beyond their control to stop nepotism. For example, one Mr. Krishna Rao, who was the Hujoor Tahsildar of Ananthapuram, appointed 108 of his kith and

2. *Political History of Andhra Pradesh: 1909-2009*
kin in various jobs. As a punishment he was then transferred to Cuddapah, where he recruited 117 of his men for jobs this time. Among those 117 there were 80 of his own family members. Similar situations arose in the Krishna and Godavari districts. Karanams (village officers who maintain the revenue records) and village Munsifs divided the villages between them and ruled with British help. The wealthy families virtually controlled the people. In Kakinada and Eluru, money lenders had the local people under their thumbs. In other places like Vijayanagaram, Pithapuram, Kalahasthi, Bobbili, Parlakimidi, Nuziveed and Venkatagiri, the Zamindars made use of their power, and squeezed money from the people, a part of which, in the name of taxes, went to the British rulers. Zamindars of Parlakimidi made money by manufacturing locomotives. The Raja of Bobbili excelled others in business. The Raja of Venkatagiri minted money through his mica mines. The Zamindar of Pithapuram lent money to other Zamindars. Small Zamindars hoarded money through money-lending. The Kalahasthi and Polavaram Zamindars lived in opulence till they were impoverished. The Raja of Vizianagaram had an income of 20 lakhs per annum, and was famous for establishing educational institutions and promoting cultural activities. The Zamindar of Nuziveedu supported the cause of the spoken language, Telugu.

The Zamindars collected taxes as they pleased. In Kalahasthi many people went to court against the increase in taxes, and it was years before the land revenues could be collected there. Even Nuziveedu was in trouble due to the inefficient tax collection system.

The wealthy were no different from the zamindars. Many employees in Eluru Collectorate were debtors to Mote Venkatswami. The people twice tried to send a memorandum against him. But he saw that those papers were intercepted and destroyed mid-way before they could reach the Kakinada Collectorate. Such was the audacity of the rich. The families which exerted unchallenged supremacy over the people were the Paida family, M. Satyalingam Nayakar, K. Basivi Reddy in Kakinada, A.V. Jagga Rao in Vizag and G. Appalaswamy in Vijayawada.
Through re-survey and re-settlement the Government had all records of land revenue by 1870 itself. The Karnams and Munsifs with hereditary powers bestowed upon them, played key roles and not only enriched themselves but also exercised unchallenged power over the people. Those who opposed them either became victims of murder or were dragged to courts on false accusations. At the village level they were the law makers and prosecutors. It is impossible to guess the amount of land revenue collected in 168 villages of Cuddapah when Rs. 22,507/- itself was paid to the Government in the year 1875. The British gradually transferred to the local Government the responsibility of maintaining the forests, liquor business, tribunal for incometax appeals, selection of police, settlement of inter-community disputes and irrigation.

The courts were full of cases of corruption. Treasurers were being elected to Temple trusteeship. There was no effective control of crimes. Especially in the Krishna-Godavari delta, thefts were rampant.

Christian Missionaries slowly started preaching among the Hindus of the lowest rung. Various Christian Missions operated in Rayalaseema, especially in Jammalamadugu and at Vijayawada and Eluru in the Coastal area.

The Brahma Samaj branches too extended upto Rajahmundry, Kakinada, Guntur and Machilipatnam.

Gajula Lakshmi Narasu Chetty had drawn the attention of the Andhras in 1852 by founding the Madras Native Association. On 16th May 1894, Mahajanasabha started under the leadership of G. Rangaiah Naidu and P. Anandacharyulu.

Kandukuri Veeresalingam had started a branch of Pradhana Samaj, originally founded in Maharashtra.

During 1851, the British issued a communal G.O. stressing the need for the representation of various castes in jobs like Hujoor Sirastadar, head-clerk to distribute jobs among Brahmans and non-Brahmins. The Brahmans formed only 3.2 percent of the total
population. There were 492 graduate Brahmins as against 171 non-Brahmin Graduates in Madras University during the year 1880-81.

This was the background of Andhra at the birth of the Congress.

Between 1885 and 1905, the Congress in the Andhra had existed only in name. Except the All India Congress Conferences held annually, there was no active programme for the Congress in Andhra. Even then, the people in cities only were familiar with the Congress. The villagers were blissfully unaware of it. Local bodies were not efficient in drawing the attention of the villagers. By the time Indians could find a place in the local bodies, the factional groups in Congress were already active. The local factionalism was reflected in the State level politics also.

P. Anandacharyulu, who was in the Congress from the very beginning, proved a misfit at municipal affairs in 1891. That was the year when epidemic spread in Madras, killing many. Investigation into the reasons proved that unqualified people were made Health Officers and the contractors had left the work unfinished. Anandacharyulu supported one of the corrupt men Jesu Dasan Pillai, and consequently forced his own departure from the State Politics. Later, he was to get elected to the imperial Council.

Y.L. Narasimhan and Tanguturi Prakasam belonged to one group in the local politics of Rajahmundry. Nyapathi Subba Rao was their opponent. In the same way, at the State level, Pattabhi Seetharamayya and Mutnuri Krishna Rao were in one group whereas Nyapathi Seetharamayya and Konda Venkatappayya formed the second and Prakasam and Narasimham the third. Tamil Brahmin lawyers and high level officers who favoured the Government were known as the Mailapur group. Nyapathi Subba Rao, Macherla Ramachandra Rao, Puranam Venkata Subbaiah, K. Pera Raju, Kandukuri Veeresalingam joined hands with the Mailapur group and stood as opponents to Prakasam’s group.

Rayalaseema, especially Ananthapuram district which got divided into two between Timma Reddy and Chinnapa Reddy, witnessed at
least two murders in a month. The leading Congressman Gutti Keshava Pillai, a lawyer, helped Chinnapa Reddy with British support. These group politics continued for two decades from 1904 onwards.

The Congress was very much elite - oriented in the beginning.

The people who attended the 1st Congress Session (1885) were - P. Rangaiah Naidu, Anandacharyulu, Gutti Keshava Pillai, N. Venkata Subbarayudu, S.N. Narasimhulu Naidu, S.V.G. Panthulu and some others representing Machilipatnam, Cuddapah, Barahampuram, Ananthapur and Bellary.

In the same year a weekly “Andhra Prakasika” was started by A.P. Parthasarathi Naidu. A.P. Parthasarathi Naidu, Anandacharyulu, Rangaiah Naidu, Nyapathi Subba Rao Panthulu, Keshav Pillai, Sangapalli Ramaswamy Gupta and others from Rajahmundry, Vizag, Gutti, Gudivada, Penugonda and Nellore attended the Second Congress Session in 1886.

The Congress used to appeal to the British Government for many things. It requested them to find place for Indians in the Government.

P. Anandacharyulu played a prominent role in the Third Session of the Congress in Madras. The Raja of Vizianagaram was on the dias. The Raja of Venkatagiri sent his Diwan as his representative and the Raja of Challapalli announced his support to the Congress. Lawyers with western education and businessmen played a major role in this session. The Vysyas from the Northern Circars notably extended a helping hand to it. A.Sabhapathi Mudaliar - a businessman from Bellary, collected money for the session from various parts of Rayalaseema. The Lingayat businessmen from Rayalaseema had participated actively in the Sessions. The Sardars from Ananthapur also took part and the Congress session included people of all castes. The Sessions had the unopposed support of Arcot muslims and the muslims from other parts also participated with all enthusiasm. Caste politics had not yet become rampant at that time.

45 members from Andhra, including Nyapathi Subba Rao

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participated in the Allahabad Congress Session (1888).

The 1889 Congress Session of Bombay attracted 151 people from Andhra. The Calcutta Session of 1890 had 22 representatives.

Anandacharyulu and 43 others attended the Congress Session of 1891 in Nagpur.

Seventeen represented Andhra at the Allahabad Congress Session in 1892.

It was a remarkable fact that 14 Andhras went in those days, when travel facilities were very meagre, to Lahore to attend the Congress Session in 1893. The Congress Session was arranged in Madras in the year 1894. Because of the proximity, as many as 336 Telugu people attended it. Konda Venkatappayya was one of the volunteers in the Session. A proper record is not available of the number of Telugu people who attended the Poona Congress Session of 1895.

After 1890 the political importance of the Congress Sessions began to descend. In the Madras Session, the membership was reduced from 607 to 267. Lethargy found a place in the Congress elite, except appealing to the Government for favours, there was no other activity.

Shankaran Nair presided over the Amethi Congress of 1897. Twenty one members represented Andhra. Anandacharyulu was the Chairman of the Reception Committee to the congress of Madras in 1898. 208 delegates from Andhra participated. The next session was held in Lucknow in 1899 under the Chairmanship of Ramesh Chandra Dutt. Fourteen representatives went form Andhra. It is not known how many attended the Calcutta Congress Session in 1900. Only 143 attended the Madras meetings of 1903 where Lal Mohan Ghosh was the President. Only nine from Andhra participated at the Allahabad Congress Session in 1904. The Banaras Session in 1905 had 29 members from Andhra.

Till 1905 there was no constructive programme or able leadership in Andhra to invite the Congress Sessions to Andhra.
Madras was the provincial capital. Through the Congresssmen a little knowledge of the Congress had spread in the towns and villages. But at the national or State level, Andhra had a very small role to play.

**Groupism in the Congress**

For over two decades Narasimham stood as an opponent to Nyapathi Subba Rao and Kandukuri Veeresalingam. But Narasimham had to bow down before the reforms made by the Government. Tanguturi Prakasam, who continued his studies with the help of Narasimham, lost his hold in Rajahmundry. Narasimham’s prominence in the educational institutions was replaced by that of Veeresalingam and Subba Rao who had the help of the British. Narasimham’s position further deteriorated with an enquiry held against him when he was the Municipal Chairman of Rajahmundry.

P. Venkatappayya had a monopoly over the educational institutions of Krishna. The same situation prevailed in the Municipality as well as at the Bar Association where the opposition was led by Pattabhi Seetharamaiah, Mutnuri Krishna Rao and Konda Venkatappayya. Narasimham and Prakasam in Rajahmundry, Pattabhi and Krishna Rao, in Machilipatnam stood to oppose the influence of Subba Rao and Venkatappayya. The disputes in local politics continued at the state level too. Prakasam and Krishna Rao managed to sustain their opposition through newspapers and magazines. They attacked the Mailapur group and criticised conservatism in the Congress.

**Outside influences**

The decision to divide Bengal into two, taken by Lord Curzon came into force from 10th October, 1905. The movement against this action was intensified, and had its influence in Andhra.

Magazines carried on an anti-British propaganda on a bold footing. “Krishna Patrika” was the result of the efforts of Konda Venkatappayya, (Mutnuri Krishna Rao-Editor) Dasu Narayana Rao and Avutapalli Narayana Rao in 1902. The initiation of a political
atmosphere in Andhra became a strong support to the ‘Vandemataram Movement’. The British felt insulted whenever they heard ‘Vandemataram’. The youth adopted ‘Vandemataram’ as a salutation and wore badges with those words. Kantha Sreeram Sastry brought the song to the masses by singing it. The use of indigenous goods, the boycott of foreign goods, and the promotion of native education formed the nucleus of the ‘Vandemataram Movement’.

Gadicharla Hari Sarvothama Rao and Adipudi Somanatha Rao lent their support to the Vandemataram Movement and participated in the Swadeshi Movement meeting of 24th February 1906 in Madras. Students were encouraged to join the movement by K. Venkata Ramana Rao. The ‘Swadeshi League’ was formed with Nyapathi Subba Rao and Venkata Ramana Rao.

The use of Swadeshi goods was averred at a decision taken in the 1906 Calcutta congress Session. Gadicharla Hari Sarvothama Rao, Munagala Raja, K.V. Lakshmana Rao and Pingali Lakshmi Narayana were the participants. This movement was given impetus by C.Y. Chintamani at the meetings in Nellore, Guntur, Kakinada, Vizag and Vizianagaram.

It was decided to send a few people to Japan for training in the manufacture of swadeshi goods. Funds were collected in Guntur and Kurnool to meet their expenses in Japan. Malladi Venkata Subba Rao and S. Rama Rao were sent to Japan for training in the manufacture of pencils, glass, watches and clocks. With the benevolent charity of A. Bhaskara Ramaiha, Goleti Janaki Ramaiah and Mamidi Devendram were also sent to Japan at a later stage. Munagala Raja came forward to start a weaving factory at Vijayawada.

In 1906 the great leader, Surender Nath Banerjee was arrested. Protest meetings were held at Vizianagaram, Kakinada, Rajahmundry and Gooty. Celebrations were started in the name of Shivaji as encouraged by Tilak. Mutnuri Krishna Rao, the editor of ‘Krishna Patrika’ arranged the visit of Bipin Chandra Pal to Vizianagaram, Kakinada, Rajahmundry, Vijayawada and Machilipatnam. Bipin Chandra Pal, an Arya Samajee, inspired the few educated men to
join the Swadeshi movement by giving it a touch of spiritualism. The youth gave him a warm welcome wherever he went. Under his inspiration, Kopalle Hanumantha Rao of Machilipatnam took an oath to spread national education.

Pal’s tour was made a success by active members like Bhupathiraju Venkatapathi Raju, V. Jagannathan etc. V. Purnaiah, K. Peraraju, Ganti Lakshmanna, Kanchumarthi Ramachandra Rao, Tanguturi Sree Ramulu, Chilukuri Veerabhadra Rao, Chilakamarthi Lakshmi Narasimha Rao, Gadicherla Hari Sarvothama Rao, Gunneswara Rao, Munagala Raja, Ayyadevara Kaleswara Rao, Veerabrahmam, Poddibhotla Veeraiah, Mutnuri Krishna Rao, Kopalle Hanumantha Rao and B.N. Sharma, a rightist, opposed Pal’s views in Vizag and Vizianagaram. Prakasam was the Chairman at Pal’s meeting at Madras.

Attili Suryanarayana’s book - ‘The Indian Poverty’, and ‘Bharatha Mathru Sakatam’ by Mangapudi Venkatasharma were famous during those days as they supported the Swadeshi Movement.

Under the Patronage of Valluri Maharani, Stree Bharatha Sangham (Indian Women’s Association) was formed in Vizag in 1905.

College students participated in large numbers in Pal’s meetings. Action was taken against many students and they were dismissed from colleges as they went to examination halls with badges of ‘Vande Matharam’. Such students promoted the Swadeshi Movement. Kopalle Krishna was beaten up for shouting the slogan ‘Vande Matharam’ against Captain Kemp in Kakinada. It led to a fight wherein even the Collector was hurt. Captain Kemp’s building was damaged. Despite the apologies from the prominent citizens of the town, fifty people and five dock workers were arrested.

Only after an assurance from the Collector, did the dock workers resume their work. Captain Kemp was made to pay Rs. 100/- to Krishna Rao as compensation. All this was understood as the emotional impact of Pal’s tour.
Till Bengal was divided and the Vande Matharam movement started, Andhra remained inert. Once inspired, agitations led to several arrests. The Rightists did not appreciate such actions. The disagreement between the Rightists and Leftists surfaced at the Surat Congress session.

In 1907, the Surat Congress session was attended by Gadicharla Hari Sarvathama Rao, Kopalle Hanumanthu Rao, Ganti Lakshmanna, Tanguturi Prakasam, Peddibhotla Veeraiah and Peri Narayana Murthy who supported the Leftists.

At the Surat congress, Tilak, Aravind Ghosh and Lala Lajpath Rai led the Leftists against Rosh Bihari Ghosh, Surendramath Banerjee and Firoz Shah Mehta. A bitter fight ensued between the Rightists, who consented to the British reforms, and the Leftists, who wanted to go ahead with the Swadeshi Movement. After this, the Congress was divided. The Congress Rightists remained passive for nearly a decade.

During the State level meetings in Madras (1907), Nyapathi Subba Rao Panthulu and B.N. Sharma emerged as Rightists whereas K. Sreenivasa Rao and Chilakamarthi Lakshmi Narasimha Rao established themselves as Leftists. The same kind of division swept all the cities in Andhra. Meetings took place in Vizag, Nandigama and Tenali. V.S. Sreenivasa Sastry formed District Level Rightists’ Associations in Krishna, Guntur and Godavari. They were condemned by the Left-oriented papers like Andhra Kesari, Navayuga and Krishna Patrika. Pattabhi Seetha Ramaiah, Kopalle Hanumanthu Rao and Naraahari Jogaiah expressed their desire for the unity of both the groups.

The Rightist Congress meetings (1908) in Madras were attended by 116 members. Eighteen of them found place in the decision making body. Prakasam was present at the meetings. K. Pera Raju, V.V. Jogaiah and A.C. Parthasarathi Naidu spoke in the meeting. Later, the Vijayawada Association was founded by Ayyadevara Kaleswara Rao and Tadanki Venkata Narsayya Panthulu.
The exile of Lala Lajpath Rai was received by the Andhras with anger but the release of Bipin Chandra Pal enthused them and they held meetings here and there to express their joy.

For the first time a National School was founded in Andhra by Nyapathi Subba Rao at Rajahmundry and a National College came up in Machilipatnam.

The articles published in Swarajya Patrika (1908) under the editorship of Bodi Narayana Rao were used as a pretext by the Government to arrest people. One Mr. Sarkar from Calcutta had already met Ayyadevara Kaleswara Rao, Hari Sarvothama Rao, Kaseenadhuni Veeramallayya, Kalapatapu Subba Rao, Mutnuri Krishna Rao, Unnava Lakshmi Narayana, Gunneswara Rao Komaraju Lakshmana Rao and Achanta Lakshmi Pathi emphasized the need for manufacturing bombs for an armed struggle. Danthu Subbavadhani took this opportunity to bring pistols from Calcutta and distribute them. Except for one or two people however, no one dared to make bombs. The Government accused one L. Basavaiah, of distributing anti-Government pamphlets.

The Rightists and the Leftists passed resolutions about the Minto-Morley Reforms in 1908, each of them expressing their own viewpoints. Separate constituencies were disagreeable to the Leftists but the Rightists welcomed the move.

Gadicharla Harisarvothama Rao and Bodi Narayana Rao were arrested on 13th July, 1908, but Pingali Lakshmi Narayana went underground in Pondicherry.

A.S. Krishna Rao led a 13-member representation from Andhra to the Lahore Congress Session in 1909.

The slogan of separate Andhra had been heard as early as 1909. The idea that Telugu language should have a special recognition had started after the Allahabad Congress session when Prakasam, Pattabhi, Mutnuri and Konda opposing the Mailapur Brahmin group’s predominance favoured a separate Andhra. This suggestion was opposed by Nyapathi Subba Rao and Macharla Ramachandra Rao.
as they were closely associated with the Mailapur Brahmin group.

This Mailapur Brahmin group of lawyers had their say in the assembly which only strengthened the ‘Separate Andhra’ movement. By 1917 the Mailapur group too differed with the British.

Konda and Pattabhi joined Annie Besant’s Home Rule Movement and were paid for that. (Statement of affairs of the Home Rule League, 10th January, 1919 Theosophical Society Archives.) Konda was elected to the Legislative Council for the first time. But from 1920 onwards, the separate Andhra movement received a setback due to Prakasam and Venkatappaiah’s groupism.

The Rightists held meetings at Kurnool, Guntur and Krishna districts during 1909-1910. ‘Desabhimani Patrika’ said that the Andhras should be united. Challa Seshagiri Rao wrote about the needs of the Andhras and the lack of recognition accorded to them. ‘Andhra’ was published by Jonnavithula Gurunadham from Guntur in 1908.

The ‘Youth Literary Association’ started functioning in Guntur. It was there that Nyapathi Subba Rao expressed, for the first time, the need to have a separate Andhra. It sounded strange to the people as he had earlier opposed such a move.

All the jobs in Andhra fell into the hands of Tamilians or Maharashtrians. A very negligible number of Andhras were in jobs here. When compared to the development facilities available in Tamilnadu, Andhra was lagging far behind. The Tamilians were everywhere, either as teachers or clerks. This made the educated Andhra youth stress the need for a separate State.

The Krishna-Guntur meetings of 1912 in Nidadavolu raised slogans for a separate Andhra which took Kurma Venkatareddy Naidu, Nyapathi Subba Rao and Valluri Surya Narayana by surprise. Unnava Lakshmi Narayana read the resolution and Chilakamarthi Lakshmi Narasimham seconded it. Konda Venkatappaiah was non-committal about it.

In 1911, the Congress sessions were held in Calcutta where 72 Andhras participated. G. Sreenivasa Rao, Vavilala Venkateswarulu and V.V. Jogayya voiced their ideas there.

Among the 16 members that attended the Karachi session, only A.S. Krishna Rao spoke.


352 Andhras went to the Calcutta Congress session in 1917. Nyapathi Subba Rao submitted the appeal for a separate Andhra to Annie Besant, the Chairman. Pattabhi Seetha Ramaiah proposed the resolution. Gandhiji and Annie Besant opposed the proposal but Bala Gangadhar Tilak was in favour of it. The resolution was passed. Prakasam was present at the meeting.

Only 20 members from Andhra could go to Delhi for the Congress session in 1918.

The proposal by Chatti Narasimha Rao to call a State level meeting was agreeable to one and all. A committee was formed with Konda as the secretary and Vinjamuri Bhawanachari, Unnava Lakshmi Narayana, Challa Seshagiri Rao and Jonnavittula Gurunatham as members. It was resolved to hold the Andhra meeting at Bapatla.

The first Andhra meeting at Bapatla, in the summer of 1913, was attended by 800 members. Bayya Narasimheswara Sharma was in the chair. Mutnuri Adinarayanayya, Nyapathi Subba Rao Panthulu, Macherla Ramachandra Rao, Gutti Keshava Pillai spoke.
against the separate Andhra move. The resolution for a separate Andhra, presented by Vemavarapu Ramadasu Panthulu had to be adjourned.

Valluri Surya Narayana Rao supported the resolution. It was decided that the leaders should go round the State with the proposal. Ayyadevara Kaleswara Rao, Bhogaraju Pattabhi Seetharamaiah, Mutnuri Adinarayanayya, Chilakamarthi Lakshmi Narasimham, Mutnuri Krishna Rao and Unnava Lakshmi Narayana were also present at that meeting.

The resolution for a separate Andhra was postponed temporarily as per the appeal of Ganti Venkata Ramaiah and Mutnuri Adinarayana.

Discussions for and against a separate Andhra began to find place in the newspapers.


After the Bapatla meetings, the Committee of Pattabhi, Valluri Suryanarayana, Mutnuri Krishna Rao, and Konda Venkatappayya undertook a tour of Rayalaseema to seek the support of the people in favour of separate Andhra. They gathered a consensus in the Cuddapah, Anantapur, Penugonda, Gutti, Nandyal, Hindupur and the Chittoor meetings. But on the whole, Rayalaseema was not very
much in favour of a separate Andhra. Meanwhile, even at the district level meetings, a consensus was taken. In Rayalaseema and Nellore, people felt that they should not be in a hurry to implement the proposal. But Krishna, Guntur and Godavari districts felt the immediacy of a separate State.

The Second Andhra Mahasabha was organized in Vijayawada in 1914. Ayyadevara Kaleswara Rao, Ayyanki Venkata Ramanayya and Peddibhotla Veeraiah played a major role in it. Even in these meetings where 1,600 people participated, separate Andhra remained a controversial issue. The resolution was introduced by Mandha Suryanarayana and supported by Vemavarapu Ramadasu Panthulu. Though A.S. Krishna Rao, N. Pattabhi Rama Rao were for its adjournment, the resolution for a separate Andhra was passed.

Graduates from all over Andhra had to go outside the State for higher education and proximity prompted many to study in Madras. As all of them could not get admissions there, many had to go to far off universities which involved greater expense. As many as two thousand students were then studying in the Madras universities. Only a few of the remaining nine thousand graduates could afford to study in other states. The Andhra students were disappointed that they could not secure seats in professional and technical institutions. All these grievances made the people desire a separate state. The fact that the separate Andhra movement was, at the outset, meant for only the educated classes should not be forgotten.

In 1915, the Andhra Maha Sabha took place in Nellore. From the beginning, the people of Nellore were anti-separatists. Because of convenience, neighbourly feeling, business connections with Madras they did not wish for separation. The Nellore meetings went on as though a separate state was not an issue at all at that time.

The people of Rayalaseema were distrustful of the credibility of the Circars, hence they were unwilling to join them for a separate Andhra. The Tamilians who were in various jobs in Rayalaseema influenced them better than their Telugu counterparts.
In the North, States were being formed on linguistic basis. Bengal and Bihar were divided according to the Language Formula. This division gave an incentive to the separate Andhra demand. The Sindhis also sent out feelers for a separate State.

A surprising event took place in the third Andhra Mahasabha of 1915 in Vizag. R. Panagal Raja (Rama Rayanim), who was till then a staunch supporter of the British not only chaired the session, but also posed a firm demand for Andhra State which in turn gave moral support to the other separatists. Speeches were made in Telugu. They wanted Telugu to be the medium of instruction in schools. The Telugu papers appreciated the proceedings of the meetings.

Throughout the year, meetings were held in all districts of Andhra. Till then, the Tamilians in Madras were very influential in the congress. There was a proposal in Guntur for a separate Andhra Congress Committee. The Congress Committee of Guntur with Patri Sreenivasa Rao as the first Chairman and Vishnubhotla Suryanarayana as Secretary came into being and provided a stepping stone for the Andhra Congress.

At the 1915 Congress Session in Bombay there were 178 members from Andhra out of whom 46 submitted an appeal for Separate Andhra under the leadership of Konda Venkatappayya. Pattabhi and K.R.V. Krishna Rao were present there.

Polavaram Raja and K.R.V. Krishna Rao, as Reception Committee Presidents, arranged the 4th Andhra Maha Sabha at Kakinada in 1916. Macherla Ramachandra Rao presided over the meeting. The resolution for a separate Andhra after the 1st World war was presented by C.V.S. Narasimha Raju and was accepted. A.P. Patro, K. Venkata Reddy Naidu, C.V.S. Narasimha Raju and K. Venkatappayya made speeches upon the resolution and asserted that Indians should be appointed as high army officials and also be admitted in Naval Training Schools.

It was commonly felt that the Andhras living in Madras were not treated on equal footing with the local people. Andhra Political
Association and Andhra people’s Committee were started in April and May 1917 respectively. The people’s Committee was strengthened under the Chairmanship of B.N. Sharma with V. Ramadasu Panthulu and N. Guruswami Chetty as Vice-Presidents and V. Lakshminarayana and S. Venkatachalam Chetty as Secretaries.

The 5th Andhra Mahasabha was held on 1st June 1917 at Nellore. In spite of the local stand against a separate State, the resolution was passed. Ongole Venkata Rangaiah was the Reception Committee Chairman and Konda Venkatappayya presided over the meeting.

The Congress, which was divided into Rightist and Leftist groups in 1907 came under a single banner again by 1916. The Leftists returned from prisons, and exile and from underground. Bengal was once again united into a single State. The Muslims who were once the supporters of the British came closer to Congress.

The Congress Session of 1916 in Lucknow, witnessed the propagation of the slogan ‘Home Rule’ by Tilak and Annie Besant. Some of the Andhras became enthusiastic about Annie Besant’s Theosophical Society and opened its branches in some places.

Gadicharla took up the responsibility of Home Rule movement in Andhra. Branches of the Theosophical Society in Andhra were also used by him to carry on his work as the Secretary of the Home Rule League. He opened branches in Kakinada, Vijayawada, Machilipatnam and Guntur.

Annie Besant’s tour of Chittoor, Kakinada and Rajahmundry towns resulted in some Rightists (K.R.V. Krishna Rao, Mocherla Ramachandra Rao) joining the League. In an year’s time as many as 52 branches opened all over Andhra. National College was started in Madanapally to promote Annie Besant’s activities. Several meetings were held in Godavari, Krishna, Ganjam and Guntur districts. Andhra Mahasabha gave its support to the movement. The Government brought pressure upon the students not to attend the league meetings. Telugu newspapers objected to the Government’s
attitude. Funds were raised for the movement. Annie Besant’s arrest led to protest meetings in the cities of Andhra.

Some suggested a Satyagraha in favour of Annie Besant, but others felt it wise to keep quiet in view of the Montague-Chelmsford Reform Committee. These controversies came up in the newspapers. Andhra Patrika and Andhra Prakasika were anti-Satyagraha whereas Desabhimani was for it. The need for Satyagraha was the content of the meeting at Rajahmundry, Guntur and Machilipatnam. E.N. Sharma, V.S. Sreenivasa Sastry, N. Subba Rao Panthulu, M. Ramachandra Rao Panthulu, P. Siva Rao, P. Venkatapathi Raju, V.P. Madhava Rao, Gollapudi Ramanayya, Chatti Narasimha Rao, P. Suryanarayana Rao and Sree Ram were led by Gadicharla to lend support to the Satyagraha. Annie Besant was arrested on 16th June, 1917 and released in September. She once again went round Andhra.

At a meeting of the Krishna District Congress on 26th January, 1918, it was decided to send Pattabhi to England to safeguard the Montague Reforms.

The special feature of the Andhra Mahasabha on 31st March, 1918 in Vijayawada, under Bhupathi Raju Venkatapathi Raju was the assent given by the Rayalaseema leaders for a separate Andhra.

Resolutions for the separate Andhra were being passed at Vijayawada, Vizag and Cuddapah.

Tilak came forward with a substantial proposal at the Congress Session in Bombay that they should be willing to join the War if the Government accepted Home Rule. Konda Venkatappayya, Oruganti Venkatappayya and Ayyadevara Kaleswara Rao were the supporters of Tilak’s proposed move. There was bitter dissension over the Montegu-Chelmsford Reforms between two groups in Andhra Mahasabha in Guntur. One group led by B.N. Sharma presented a resolution welcoming the Reforms with certain modifications. The other group was for total rejection of the Reforms. 97 members voted in favour of the resolution and 76 against, and the resolution was passed.
At the end of the First World War, the Andhra Congress met on 8th December, 1918, and decided to send Tilak to represent India at the Congress meet for peace in London.

The formation of a separate Andhra Congress Committee was an encouragement for the strong desire for separation from Madras. Separate Andhra Congress was formulated in spite of the antagonism of Gandhi and Annie Besant as it was approved by the Calcutta Congress Session, 1917.

The first Andhra Congress Meet took place in Vijayawada, on 20th January, 1918 with Nyapathi Subba Rao in the Chair. He was made the first President of Andhra Congress by the 185 representatives present. One can see the paradox of politics in the fact that the same man, who was opposed to separate Andhra, was made the first President of State Congress. Konda Venkatappayya was the first secretary, Kasinathuni, C.R. Parthasarathy Ayyangar, P. Shiva Shankaran Pillai were elected as Joint Secretaries. The branches of Ganjam, Vizag, Godavari, Krishna, Nellore, Kurnool, Ananthapuram, Dharmavaram, Rajahmundry and Vijayawada were affiliated to it.

The politics in Andhra commenced mainly as Brahmin and non-Brahmin groupism. The Brahmins, especially the Madras and Maharashtra Brahmins were predominant in jobs. Even here, the educated Telugu Brahmins found fewer job opportunities. Hence, they were all against Tamil Brahmin supremacy. The non Brahmins who entered politics much later found the political field totally dominated by the Brahmins and they felt the urgency of an ‘anti-Brahmin move’. The friction was limited to the upper-classes only.

The British were always cautious with the Brahmins though they had employed them in a number of jobs. They were not only happy with the anti-Brahmin movement but also extended their support to the movement as a check against the Brahmins. They encouraged them against one another as theirs was a divide and rule policy. They also offered more jobs to the non-Brahmins.
The Brahmins Constituted only 3.2 percent of the Andhra population when the Congress was born. But one cannot be oblivious to the fact that more Brahmins were educated and occupied jobs, and acted as agents to the British and also had an upperhand in the National Movement. They were the people who sacrificed their comfort for the nation. Most of them left legal practice for the freedom fight. It was but natural that the British were wary of them.

As early as 1815, the British had to issue orders that both Brahmins and Non-Brahmins should have equal job opportunities because of the differences that existed between them. In jobs like Huzoor Sirastadar and English Head-Clerk, the Brahmins and Non-Brahmins were to be employed alternately. But this order was not executed due to unforeseen circumstances. The British found, on investigation, that G. Venkata Ramanaiah, a Niyogi introduced as many as 49 of his relatives into jobs in the Revenue Department. The British once again tried to enforce their order in 1890 but with little success. Only Brahmins were successful in competitive examinations and occupied all the jobs during 1893-95. The British did not want Brahmin monopoly in the services and they started taking a number of non-Brahmins too into service.

The Government once again ordered all the Collectors in 1912 to strictly adhere to their orders passed in 1851. (The 1-1/3 millions among the total population of 41.5 millions, thus forming 3%). 72% of the 8821 graduates in Madras were Brahmins. In the competitive examinations for services between 1892 and 1904, 94% of the Brahmins were selected, out of 16 jobs 15 went to the Brahmins. A new slogan saying that Competitive examinations should be conducted separately for the Brahmins and non-Brahmins.

The posts offered to the Indians were very low as the British held all the key-posts. The education, bank services, clerks to Government, Deputy Collectors, Sub-Judges, Munisifs, Tahsildars, Head-Clerks, Sirastadars were all Tamil Brahmins. It was but natural for the Telugu Brahmins to protest against such domination.
At the inception of the Congress, there were 492 Brahmin Graduates against 171 non-Brahmin graduates in the Madras University. Muslims, Christians and Foreigners comprised 107 graduates.

The number of graduates increased in 1890. The Brahmin graduates were 1461, non-Brahmin 445, and others 263. Between 1901 and 1911, Brahmin graduates were 4074, non-Brahmins 1035, and others 551.

In the services too, there were 17 Brahmin Engineers, 4 non-Brahmins. There were 77 Brahmin Deputy Collectors in the Accounts Section as against 30 non-Brahmins.

By 1913, in the post of District Munsifs, there were 93 Brahmins, whereas there were only 25 non-Brahmins. Key posts like Secretary to the Government, Revenue Board Secretary were held by the Brahmins. One of the two Collectors was a Brahmin.

This difference of Brahmin and non-Brahmin in jobs had reached its climax in 1917. There were 135 Brahmin and 60 non-Brahmin Tahsildars. 214 deputy Tahsildars were Brahmins and only 65 were non-Brahmins. For 16 Brahmin head-clerks only 5 non-Brahmins were there. 28 Brahmins worked as Sirastidars in District Courts and also in the sub-Courts. There were only 10 non-Brahmins.

Non-Brahmins did not include Muslims and Christians. The non-Brahmin communities like Velama, Kamma, Baliya, Kapu, Reddy, Vysyas participated in the non-Brahmin movement. Even these were from among the affluent and the middle classes only.

The Madras Colleges had separate hostels for Brahmins and non-Brahmins. The Government had, in principle accepted the argument of A. Venugopal Chetty, as IPS member that there should be reservations for non-Brahmins.

The Brahmin and the non-Brahmin dispute was mounting when Annie Besant switched over from theosophy to politics. She was full of appreciation for Hindu culture and Aryan tradition. She exalted
the puranas and Manu Dharma Shastra. Her presence in Madras and the support of Brahmins to the Theosophical Society were the contributing factors. Telugu people started resenting her as she was against the promotion of Congress and a Separate State for them. Some Telugu and Tamil non-Brahmins joined hands against Brahmins. In 1912, the Dravidian Association was found in Madras, under the Chairmanship of C. Natesa Mudaliar. These developments were a prelude to the birth of the Justice Party. The ‘Dravida’ literature of 1915, and the establishment of non-Brahmin hostels in 1916 also contributed to it. Thirty members under Thyaga Raja Chetty, met in Victoria Hall, Madras on 20th November, 1916 and named themselves as the South Indian People’s Association which was the initiation of the Justice Party. After a month, they founded the India Liberal Federation and released an anti-Brahmin Manifesto. Andhra Prakasika, under A.P. Parthasarathi Naidu’s editorship helped in promoting this movement.

**Anti - Brahmin stand**

The Justice Party had its branches in many places and held meetings there. It was strengthened by the Velama, Kamma, Reddy and Kapu communities in Andhra. The Brahmin and non-Brahmin relations in Andhra were not strained, like in Madras. The purpose of non-Brahmins was to prove their mettle. It was a party of old people and no efforts whatsoever made to attract the youth to it.

Though the Justice Party emerged to help the non-Brahmins, it scrambled for power in politics. Some branches of the Justice Party were opened in Andhra though it started in Madras in 1916. Before 1920, it was a big task to get a hold in Municipal Administration, the voters being very few. Only tax-payers were the voters. To get the post of a Village Munsif, they used to offer bribes upto Rs. 5,000. The Vysyas of Guntur, Eluru and Kakinada used to struggle in vain to come to power through their business contacts. But in Guntur from the President to the peon, only Kammas could come in. Brahmins and Vysyas tried their best to enter the local bodies. Many new Panchayats were formed. In towns like Vijayawada, there were bitter
relations between the lawyers and businessmen. At the time of elections to the Madras Assembly, both the Justice Party and the new Pradesh Congress launched into elections. Pamphlets and Bhajans were introduced at that time. A number of journals like Krishna Patrika, Swatantra, Chitta Ranjan, Thelaga, Sree Sujana Ranjani, Hitakarini, Kapu, Satyagraham, Janma Bhumi, Kammakula Patrika, Kaliyuga, Sharada were in vogue. Madireddy Venkata Rathnam, a Zilla Board President canvassed for the Justice Party. There were objections from many sides that he should not canvass for the Assembly as he was exerting his influence as the Zilla Board President. It was the other-way round in Krishna District, where they insisted that the Zilla Board President should contest. In Guntur District, politics of the Congress as well as the Justice Party fell into the hands of rowdies and the influential tobacco merchants. The Zilla Board Presidents tried to attract the voters through various promises and even the zamindars were on the side of the Justice Party.

The Legislative Assembly of 1920 consisted of 48 lawyers, 28 landlords, 10 professional people and 15 officials.

The Government had issued orders to the collectors in 1919 itself not to allow more than half the places in service to Brahmans and that the allocation of jobs should be equally divided between the Telugu and the Tamil personnel. After the Justice Party came into power, a communal order was issued in September 1921, according to which there would be reservations for non-Brahmins in all the government jobs. They ordered statistical data to be maintained as to the total number of job facilities available and their allocation on caste basis. Justice Party having taken up the cause of the non-Brahmin movement ignored the Muslims and Harijans.

K.V.R. Reddy Naidu, Koka Appa Rao Naidu and Panagal Raja were sent to England in 1921, on behalf of the Justice Party and the party won the support of the British newspapers. The distribution of seats was a point of dispute and disagreement. M.Rama Chandra Rao from Congress criticized the Justice Party. A.P. Patro, Panagal Raja and Reddy Naidu were in the Justice Party cabinet. The party
started interfering in local politics. Zilla Board Presidents had much power in their hands, hence they could influence the State politics. Through marriage alliances from Chittoor to Godavari, the families of Yarlagadda, Vasireddy, Adusumilli, Challapalli and Kommareddy widened their circle and later used their influence for political purposes.

Only a person paying Rs.10/- as tax was allowed to vote in Rural Boards. This enabled the Zamindars and Landlords to capture the seats easily.

People rallied around the party in power and many associations based on caste formed and meetings were held. On the other hand, the Congress men in the Local bodies used their influence for political agitations. The Justice Party levied tax on education in municipalities which was objected by the Congress men. The All India Congress meeting at Kakinada gave an additional fillip to the local Congress people to fight against the Justice Party.

The difference of opinion in Congress about contesting the elections gave rise to the Swarajya party. The party very soon had its branches all over Andhra. C.V.N. Narasimha Raju founded the Independent Party in 1923 but it did not last for long. The Justice Party which was in power, with its partialities and favouritism, ignored the fact that it should strengthen the party. Before it could have any constitution, disputes started.

The Justice party was known as the Zamindars party. The Chief Minister, Panagal Raja, was very shrewd and practical. The party under his guidance forgot its anti-Brahmin stand, and tried to get Brahmins to their side. The Raja nominated four Brahmins as Zilla Board Presidents. Fifteen out of the 24 Zilla Board nominations were made by him according to his fancy. He made nominations even where elections were a must. He postponed elections to the Municipal Chairman’s posts three times till he could get men of his own choice. He nominated Yathirajulu Naidu to the Zilla Board and also to the Municipal Chairmanship of Guntur. Similarly, nominations were made in Ganjam of Kallikota, Zamindar Balajee Rao in Krishna and Munuswami Naidu in Chittoor. Cattamanchi Ramalinga Reddy

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proposed a no confidence motion against the Justice Party cabinet when he founded the Democratic party after leaving the Justice Party. Panagal Raja saved himself by coaxing the Brahmin members to help him. He removed K.V. Reddy Naidu from the cabinet and he became more powerful because he was in the good looks of the British. He was however severely censured for neglecting party stability. A committee was appointed in 1924 to frame the party constitution. Though rough draft of the constitution was prepared, it was not brought out. The legislators and party workers were greatly displeased with the party.

The non-Brahmins met in Pulivendula of Kurnool district on 3rd and 4th November, 1917. Barrister K. Subba Rao was in the Chair. Earlier on 27th October, a meeting was convened in Bikkavol, East Godavari district. On 11th and 12th November another meeting was held in Vijayawada under the Chairmanship of Pitti Thyagaraya Chettiar. Many prominent Andhra representatives attended the state meeting held in Tamilnadu. They were very critical of Gandhiji’s call for non-co-operation and the Qilafat movement. When Gandhi announced that he would win freedom for India by September, 1922, C.R. Reddy made fun of him saying that he should have given the date as 1st April. However, the Justice party continued in power in the Madras State between 1920 and 1923, and again in 1923-26. It adopted several undesirable attitudes while in power. The result was that it went out of power with the same speed as it had come to power. One or two major achievements of the Justice party while in power should not be ignored. For the first time Justice Party established a separate university for Andhras. Both the Congress and the Justice party were united in the demand for separate university for the Andhras. One of its members, M. Suryanarayana from Vizag introduced the resolution for a separate university. The justice party of Tamilnadu, while justifying the demand of Andhras, requested for another university in their area. Thanks to the Andhras, Tamilnadu got one more university. ‘The Separate University’ remained only in a resolution.

Andhras and non-Brahmins were not able to secure seats in
The Madras university. Therefore, strong efforts were made for the Andhra university by A.P. Pathro, the then Education Minister, and one C. Natesa Mudaliar who were the first men to propose this but no heed was paid to the proposal under the assumption that it was difficult to decide the boundaries for Andhra province as the Andhras were spread all over Madras State. They expressed their doubts that there may be a breach among the non-Brahmins in the event of formation of separate Andhra University. It was suggested that K.V. Reddy Naidu should step down in favour of T.N. Sivagnan Pillai as the Tamilians too should find a place in the Cabinet. The Chief Minister, Panagal Raja immediately dropped K.V. Reddy Naidu who was his opponent. The Tamilians supported the establishment of Andhra University. K.V. Reddy Naidu pleaded for the University saying that the word ‘Andhra’ denoted Aryan connections, whereas the Southern people were Dravidians. So it was justified that it should be named as Telugu University. But his argument could not hold water. The bill was passed on 6th November, 1925 which cleared the way for Andhra University. The candidate for the first Vice-Chancellor’s post was a controversial point. At last, C.R. Reddy was appointed as the Vice-Chancellor. Attempts were made to bring about unity subsidizing the differences in the Justice party. They met on 25th May, 1925 for unity talks. K.V. Reddy Naidu again came back to the party. Panagal Raja once again became the leader.

Another achievement of the Justice Party was to provide the non-Brahmins with opportunities for Government jobs. Every notable caste was represented in jobs. According to their plan the jobs were to be occupied in the following way:

22% Brahmins, 48% non-Brahmins, 10% Indian Christians, 15% Muslims, 2% Foreign Christians, 3% others.

The British Government modified the Municipal Acts before the reforms of Montague Chelmsford could come into force. There were a few reservations in Municipality. All the members had to come to the elections and the number of voters increased. The collectors had less powers over the municipality. The Municipalities had more rights.
as well as duties. They were empowered to levy fresh taxes on tourism, amusement, street lights, sanitation and education. It was the usual gimmick to reduce taxes before elections. But the people in power with their renewed authority changed the registers levying more taxes upon their opponents and favouring friends with less taxes. There were many such instances in Vijayawada and Guntur. The business people in Vijayawada tried their best to demote Appalaswami who was for the Justice Party. That made his opponents cling more to Congress. There was a big fight between Appalaswami’s group and his opponents in the non-cooperation movement of the Congress in 1920, which made the Government summon the army for its rescue.

The Government decided to convert Cheerala-Perala into a municipality. The business people saw more disadvantages like more taxes and more domination by the Government in this, so they were against the new municipality. But the Government prevailed over their decision and made Cheerala-Perala a Municipality.

Duggirala Gopalakrishnaiah got the town vacated in April 1921, convincing people about non-cooperation. Very few people were left in the town. The people had to face a number of difficulties in this bold act of theirs. The Government penalized the people for not paying the taxes. The people returned to their homes with their conviction gradually weakening.

Even in the Municipalities of Narasaraopet, Repalle, Guntur, Tenali and Vijayawada, the non-cooperation movement was successful to a certain extent only.

The All India Congress Session was held in Vijayawada, on 31st March and 1st April. The Andhra Congress office, with Konda as the Chairman, and Duggirala as Secretary was temporarily shifted to Vijayawada. Gandhiji was present at the session and it was resolved to propagate the ‘Charkha Movement’ to increase membership in the Congress.. Gandhiji toured in some major cities. In Palnadu and Vijayawada talukas, people violated the forest rules as a part of their non-cooperation movement. They opposed the
instructions that cattle should not graze in the forests, that woodcutters should not cut wood. The Congress appointed a Committee with Unnava Lakshminarayana and Madabhushi Vedanta Lakshmi Narasimhachari as members to look into the problems of Palnadu. There were strikes everywhere and several people were arrested by the Government. As per the call given by Congress the movement for prohibition of foreign goods and liquor caught up in many places. The no tax-payment movement continued. It took a severe turn in Pedanandipadu, under the leadership of Parvathaneni Veeraiah Chowdary. But the Government suppressed it very soon with the help of the police. The Congress turned its attention from civil disobedience to constructive programmes attracting the attention of the people. On the contrary, the Justice Party went on opposing their movements which only helped to weaken their party.

When the Justice party was in power, Alluri Seetharama Raju rebelled in Godavari Agency area in 1922. The Government adopted all methods to supress this revolution by the Girijans, and the Congress did not come out openly in favour of this revolution inspite of the people’s sympathy for Rama Raju.

The Congress party was, in a way, lagging behind the Justice Party in internal disputes and jockeying for positions. By 1925, Duggirala Gopalakrishnaiah, Ayyadevara Kaleswara Rao and Konda Venkatappayya were at logger-heads. Pattabhi was not even allowed to be a member of the State Congress. With the connivance of Bulusu Sambamurty and B.H. Satyanarayana, Konda was forced to give up the Chairmanship of the State Congress.

Chitta Ranjan Das and Motilal Nehru differed from congress in their conviction to compete in elections and founded the Swarajya Party. C.R.Das opened many branches of the party during his tour of Andhra. The party functioned in Andhra, with Ayyadevara Kaleswara Rao as Chairman, and Nadimpalli Narasimha Rao, Duggirala Gopalakrishnaiah as the Secretaries. The party gained strength in 1926 and won eleven seats in the elections. Justice party secured only 22 seats and 36 went to independents. Swarajya Party
was against the formation of cabinet. Even Panagal Raja was indifferent. So, P. Subbarayan became the Chief Minister. C.R. Reddy gave a call saying that by joining Congress, people could fight against Brahmin dominance. He was desperate as he could not find a position in the Government and hence defected from the Justice Party. K.V. Reddy Naidu founded the South Indian Liberal Federation. Panagal Raja, who resigned from the Justice Party, died on 16th December, 1928. Again there arose differences about the leadership of the party. B. Munuswamy Naidu and Bobbili Raja fought bitterly. Munuswamy Naidu who came closer to N.G. Ranga was against the Zamindars. On the contrary, Bobbili Raja was supporting the British rulers. The leadership issue was raised in Nellore in 1929. It turned out to be a fight between the Velamas and the Kammas. Munuswamy Naidu became the Chief Minister of Madras in 1930. The economy was fast deteriorating as the international economic crisis had its effect even on Madras State. The villagers were getting into too many debts and prices of goods shot up rapidly. Many sold their lands and started small scale business. Many ginning machines started functioning. The Anti-Zamindar movement intensified under the leadership of Ranga. Bobbili and Mirjapuram Rajas manoeuvred to bring down Munuswamy Naidu as he was supporting Ranga. Munuswamy Naidu helped the tenants by reforming the Estate Land Act. The Zamindars decided to levy further land taxes after the Revenue Resettlement Survey. The farmers opposed it and the Congress party took up the movement. The village officers, who joined the agitation, were removed from service under one pretext or the other. K.A.R. Swamy and Dr. P. Gurumurthy led the movement against Pithapuram Raja. In addition to this, the Salt Satyagraha started by the Congress on 21st March, 1930 spread to Andhra also. Congress people met secretly. Local business communities helped them. There was displeasure mounting up about the local bodies. Munuswamy Naidu, who had put off the Justice Party meetings over three years, arranged the conference in Tanjavur in 1932. Bobbili Raja played an important role in that meeting. Andhras, who went there as Munuswamy’s followers, did not even
get admission. Later, the Governor of Madras advised Munuswamy to resign as the Chief Minister, which he did. Bobbili Raja became the Chief Minister. He put a stop to democratic procedures. He decided to take Brahmins into the Justice Party and also opposed the Zamindar Tenant’s Bill, passed by Munuswamy. Taluka Boards were abolished by the Raja in 1934. Direct elections to the Zilla Boards were introduced. The Zilla Board Chairman could be removed by a ‘no confidence’ motion. Local bodies were within the reach of the people but this led to more problems. With an increase of violence, Vijayawada Municipality was abolished in 1933. East Godavari Zilla Board Chairman, Mullapudi Pallama Raju, acted as a director in making appointments, giving contracts, transferring teachers. Political murders increased in Ananthapuram, Cuddapah and Guntur districts. People began to move away from the Justice Party. Pithapuram Raja wasted no efforts in removing Bobbili Raja. C.R. Reddy came close to the Congress. Bobbili Raja started party journals for his own propaganda. Neti Chalapathi was appointed to probe into the complaints made against Brahmananda Reddy who was the Chairman of the Ongole Zilla Board. Till today, no one knows what happened to the report of Neti Chalapathi. 1936 was the year of elections. Pithapuram Raja started a new party called the People’s Party which opposed the Justice Party. All those, who could not stay in the Justice Party for various reasons naturally found asylum in the Peoples’ Party. The Justice Party contested for 90 seats and the People’s Party put up 40 candidates. Justice Party could secure only 21 seats with much effort as the Congress had established its strength and influence. Only Pithapuram Raja won the election. Bobbili Raja and Venkatagiri Raja were defeated. Bobbili constituency had been the scene of many feuds and fights. The elections delivered a death-blow to the Justice Party while some retired from the party, far-sighted people joined the Congress.

The Congress party very rapidly gained momentum as the popularity of the Justice party waned. Congress principles took their roots among the upper as well as the middle classes. The non-cooperation movement gained recognition within the Congress party.
in Andhra. People like Ranga and C.R. Reddy entered Congress but even the Congress party sailed in the same boat as the Justice Party, as far as the disagreement among leaders was concerned. Konda Venkatappayya, Prakasam and Pattabhi were at loggerheads.

Prakasam and Rajaji were opposed to each other. Kumara Swamy Raja, and Kasinathuni Nageswara Rao were on one side while Ranga and V.V. Giri on the other, during the elections. Duggirala Gopalakrishnaiah accused Bulusu Sambamurthi of having spent all the party money as its State President in 1923. Konda Venkatappayya, Dandu Narayana Raju and Bikkina Venkata Ratnam continued as one group. These group politics affected the districts too, leading to local disputes. The Government declared elections to the Central Assembly in 1937. All the groups were active in selecting their candidates. They not only abused each other in the meetings regarding selection of candidates but also exchanged bitter criticism through newspapers. Nadimpalli Narasimha Rao stood as an independent candidate against Ranga who contested from the Guntur and Nellore constituencies. Bezawada Gopala Reddy withdrew from the contest. Munuswamy Naidu tried to join the Congress along with his followers from Justice Party. As Congress gained stability, it started attracting the youth. Kasinadhuni Nageswara Rao addressed meetings at several temples and could influence the Vysyas to a large extent. All the Congress candidates won in the elections. Mirjapuram Raja was forced out of power. Congress promised party tickets to those who paid Rs.100/- to the party, but they decided to give seats to those who paid a thousand. Those who paid the hundred and could not get tickets, joined the Justice Party. Congress received several applications seeking membership in the party. Bulusu Samba Murthy sent a complaint to Rajendra Prasad against the state party for ignoring true Congressmen and issuing party tickets to affluent Marwari merchants, Ramanath Goenka and K. Venkataswamy Naidu of the Justice Party. Similarly, A.V.Punnaiah, who sought the favour of the Government by giving costly presents to them at Christmas and Upputuri Ramaiah were given party tickets despite being opposed by C.H. Suryanarayana. Veteran congressmen from Cuddapah
resigned from the Congress protesting against its attitude. Sharabha Reddy, a councillor from Kurnool who won the election on the Justice Party ticket joined the Congress and became the Vice-Chairman of the Zilla Board. A. Raghunatha Reddy and T.N. Krishna Reddy left the Justice Party and joined Congress to fill the vacancy in the Zilla Board chairmanship of Chittoor in the place of C.R. Reddy. Though Congress did not have a majority in the Ongole Zilla Board, they managed to win through promises. The practice of holding the Zilla Board members and taking the help of pehelwans (body-builders) to conduct the elections started with the election of the President of West Godavari Zilla Board. Bobbili Raja remained powerful at a time when Congress triumphed in the elections. He managed whatever he could in the local bodies. He abolished the municipalities of Guntur, Vijayawada and Rajahmundry along with many local bodies and taluk boards. He brought his own men into power by changing the Zilla Boards. He divided Nellore, Krishna and East Godavari districts inspite of the Governor’s advice not to do so. Krishna Zilla Board was changed for the sake of Mirjapuram Raja. Inspite of all this, the Justice party met with a disgraceful defeat and Congress won 159 out of the 215 seats. Before this, Congress only had 98 seats. The system of nominations was made keeping up reservations for only Harijans and Muslims. 68 seats were set aside for Christians, Muslims, landlords, business people, women graduates and the factory workers-13% of the people who were tax payers were only entitled to vote.

In 1931, a leftist organization called the Vujjeevan Bharath Sammelan came up in Godavari district. This association was founded with Bhagath Singh as an inspiration. Pratiwadi Bhayankarachari and Kameswara Shastri played the key roles but politically there was nothing remarkable done by these people. The Government managed to nip them in the bud.

Another organization called the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army also had its branch in Andhra. This too did not achieve anything. K. Ramanath Choudary, M. Sabhapathy were in this organization. Gadicherla Hari Sarvothama Rao formed a new party called the

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Andhra Congress Swarajya Party as a result of his disappointment in Congress giving up the civil-disobedience movement. This party met in Vijayawada on 12th February 1934, but it could not survive for long. A manifesto was also released by this party which had people like Gummadidala Venkata Subba Rao, V. Ramadasu Panthulu, Kolli Satyanarayana Choudary.

In response to a call given by the All India Congress Socialist Party a branch was opened in Andhra on 23rd June 1934. Puchalapalli Sundaraiah, Chandra Rajeswara Rao and Alluri Satyanarayana Raju joined this party. Ranga was its Chairman, and Annapurnaiah was the Secretary. Krovvidi Linga Raju, Rangasayi, and K. Satyanarayana joined it. A large number of youth were attracted towards it. Those were the days when Marxist and Socialist ideas influenced people through Marxist literature. The Congress Socialist party in Andhra was in the hands of communists. They functioned not as a separate party but in an affiliation to Congress Party. The Leftists and Rightists could not continue for long in the same party. One group worked under the leadership of Lingaraju. Ranga was training people through his political schools. Many Communists participated in these schools. Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah and Sundaraiah worked hard to gather the peasants in the circar districts. The Congress Socialist Party was gradually dominated by the Communists. When they disassociated with Congress, the Andhra wing fell to the Communists.

The Congress held its elections in 1936 when it had 50,865 members. Complaints against each other jockeying for positions and internal fights continued. The State association used to send mediators to look into its affairs. Guntur and West Godavari were notorious for such disputes. Guntur district was eliminated from the Provincial Congress elections. There were two groups in the Guntur district. Though there were a few supporters of the Prakasam-Samba Murthy group, majority supported Kaleswara Rao and Ranga’s group. But Ranga sensed that politically there was no place for him in Guntur district. Pattabhi also faced a similar situation in the Krishna district. Both tried their best to gain political influence in Rayalaseema but
failed. Ranga turned his attention to Vizag and Srikakulam districts.

Prakasam and Samba Murthy prepared a joint list of candidates for the State Assembly elections of February 1937. Rajendra Prasad, Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhai Patel came to Andhra for canvassing. Socialist slogans worked well on the minds of the people. The people were asked to choose between the peasants and the Rajas. Justice Party was no match to the Congress in canvassing. Congress bagged all but three seats that went to the Justice Party. Among the Harijan seats, 26 went to Congress and the Justice Party got only 2. Four of the Muslims seats were taken by Congress, 8 went to the Justice party. Four women candidates won the elections from the Congress. Both the Congress and Justice Party took to ignoble practices even in the Zilla Board elections. Teachers who opposed them were transferred. In Guntur district alone, 172 teachers were transferred to other places. Similar practices took place in the Ongole district. To please the members, 200 teachers were transferred. Justice Party collected lakhs of rupees as tax to meet the expenses against Congress. The Rajas of Challapalli, Mirjapuram and Pithapuram were temporarily united among themselves forgetting their past differences. Even then it could not beat the influence of the Congress party.

After a thumping victory, Congress formed its first ministry in Madras in 1937. Both Rajagopalachari and Prakasam aspired for Chief Ministership. The Telugu people met in Kasinadhuni’s house but Prakasam was opposed by some of the Andhras themselves. Gandhiji’s reluctance towards Prakasam was also a reason for that. Having sensed the situation, Prakasam and Samba Murthy proposed Rajaji’s name and he was elected. Prakasam became the Revenue minister in Rajaji’s ministry. V.V.Giri was also one of the ministers. Bezawada Gopala Reddy was the minister for the local bodies. Bulusu was the speaker. Disagreement, however, continued between Rajaji and Prakasam. Pattabhi held the post of the President of Andhra Pradesh Congress.

Though Andhras held meetings every year the people of Rayalaseema were still to be convinced about the need for a separate
state. Kasinathuni Nageswara Rao and others tried to patch up the differences between the people of Rayalaseema and the people from other areas. The All India Congress too, in principle, accepted the formation of separate Andhra. To bring about a better understanding by driving away doubts of Rayalaseema people against circars, the leaders met in Kashinathuni’s house on 14th November 1937. Pattabhi played a prominent role. The representatives from Rayalaseema were Kadapa Koti Reddy, Kalluri Subba Rao, Pappuri Ramachari, H. Seetha Ram Reddy and Konda. Mullapudi Pallam Raju and Kashinathuni represented the Circars. Certain promises were made to Rayalaseema to make them agree to the idea of a separate State. Rayalaseema people’s demands prevailed in deciding the capital city and High Court. They also said that Ananthapuram should have an university. After this the resolution for a separate Andhra was proposed and passed both in the Assembly as well as in the Council. The problem of a separate State appeared to have been solved. Though it was only on paper yet. Prakasam went on insisting that only Madras should be the Capital for Andhra. With this, a separate State was delayed by another sixteen years. Andhra continued to take inspiration from the all India politics. Many students from Andhra brought back new ideas as they happened to study in Banaras and other universities. The Communists elected Sundaraiah as their Secretary in a secret meeting at Kakinada in 1935. They conducted political schools for the youth at Kottapatnam and Manthenavarpalem. M.V. Sastry, Koganti Radha Krishna Murthy, Subrahmanyam and Avula Gopalakrishna Murthy who were highly influenced by M.N. Roy took up the task of bringing Roy’s ideas to the people.

In connection with Quit India Movement, certain congress leaders met in Machilipatnam and decided to employ certain violent tactics in the country. Both the groups - Pattabhi, Kala Venkata Rao on one side and Prakasam on the other joined hands to chalk out a common programme. The British came to know about it. Gandhiji pressed the leaders to tell him as to who intended to be among the destructive forces. Every one denied the knowledge of it. Things like obstruction
of rail-services, disconnecting telephone connections were some of the items listed in the circular prepared in that meetings. The British took this opportunity to take rigorous action against the congressmen. Amancharla Gopal Rao and his friends resorted to violent action based on the Andhra circular. The congressmen were put in prison as a result of the Salt Sathyagraha and the Anti-British activity of the people. They could not do away with bickerings even in prisons, groupism being the speciality of the Congressmen.

Rajaji’s and Prakasam’s groups were in the Vellore jail. They did not even talk to each other. Later Prakasam’s group was shifted to the Thiruchirapally jail. Rajaji too came to the same place as a result of individual sathyagraha. The Brahmin, non-Brahmin feeling prevailed there also. Arrests in the Quit India Movement drove Prakasam, Tenneti Viswanatham, V.V.Giri, Ananthasayanam Ayyangar, Mullaipudi Pallamraju, and Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy to the Vellore jail once again. Kala Venkata Rao, Sanjeeva Reddy, Mullaipudi Pallamraju, and M. Bapineedu acted as one group. In the Tanjavur jail, Ranga and Goutu Lachanna happened to be one group, and Gottipati Bramhaiah, Kasu Bramhananda Reddy, Kalluri Chandramouli, Gollapudi Seetha Ramaiah and Mantena Venkata Raju joined together as the opposite group, they were just short of coming to blows. The leaders were set free on parole on some pretext or other. They were all released before the assembly elections of 1946. When these leaders were in jails, the Communists, and radicals took charge of students and farmers’ organizations.

The Congress Committee elections did not take place after the Quit India Movement. When Prakasam went on a tour of Andhra after his release from prison, he collected a lot of money in the form of funds. Gandhiji was travelling by train to Madras to attend the silver Jubilee celebrations of the Hindi Prachar-Sabha, and he was accorded a rousing reception through-out Andhra. Kala Venkata Rao who was travelling with Gandhiji was suspected by Tenneti and others of having complained against Prakasam. A sum of rupees eighty thousand, not accounted for by Prakasam was the evidence against him. Prakasam became a victim of Gandhiji’s displeasure when he
joined hands with Kamaraj Nadar in the Madras political affairs. Gandhiji desired Rajaji to be the leader in Madras. When Prakasam became the President of Andhra Congress, his opponent Kala Venkat Rao happened to be the Secretary. Kala appointed an election committee without the knowledge of Prakasam. There was no representative of Ranga or Prakasam in it. It was decided to elect a new Committee in an emergency meeting attended by Krovvidi Linga Raju, Gouthu Lachanna, Kandula Obula Reddy etc. They all had to convince Ranga to that effect and a requisition notice with the signature of the Pradesh Congress members was submitted according to which a meeting was summoned in Rajahmundry. The Committee selected by Prakasam was unopposedly accepted but Ranga’s men did not find a place again. This attitude of Prakasam enraged Kala Venkat Rao, and he lodged a complaint against Prakasam to the Centre. Pattabhi, an opponent of Prakasam, later revised the list of the Committee members. But Prakasam and his group behaved like dictators in selecting the candidates for the elections. The Congress was all the more strengthened in the 1946 elections. The communists, who for the first time, entered elections could secure only one seat, whereas the deposits of all the radical democrats were forfeited. The Socialists too could win some seats from within the Congress. The stage was set for the leadership struggle. Gandhiji sent his message, almost an order from “Mahatma” at Delhi to prefer Rajaji’s candidature to that of Prakasam’s. Patel and Azad sided with Rajaji’s and Prakasam was supported by Kamaraj Nadar. Though Prakasam had the majority support among the MLAs, the Congress High Command put off the decision. Gandhiji accused Prakasam of being corrupt as he had misused public funds. Prakasam challenged Gandhiji but he managed to lure Kamaraj Nadar away from Prakasam. Kala and Gopala Reddy did not spare any effort to sabotage Prakasam’s chances. Despite all this, Prakasam was elected as the leader in April 1946. Justifying his attitude in handling money, Prakasam accused Pattabhi of collecting funds in the name of the paper, “Subhodaya”. Pattabhi’s followers did not find a place in Prakasam’s ministry. V.V.Giri, Kadapa Koti Reddy and Vemula Kurmayya were taken as
ministers and Tenneti, Vennelakanti Raghavaiah and Krovvidi Linga Raju became the Parliamentary Secretaries. But the opponents created such a situation that Prakasam’s Ministry could not continue peacefully. They were able to defeat Prakasam’s candidate, Tenneti, in the Speaker’s election. Hardly a year had passed when Kala Venkat Rao, Kamaraj Nadar, and Rajagopalachari deposed Prakasam with a “no-confidence” motion. Omanduri Ramaswamy Reddias became the next Chief Minister in March 1947. His ministry consisted of H. Seetha Rama Reddy, Kala Venkat Rao, Bezwada Gopala Reddy and Kalluri Chandramouli. They had to meet humiliation in Andhra, wherever they went. Kala Venkata Rao introduced a new scheme through which each political sufferer would be given cultivable land on producing a certificate to that effect from the State Congress. Many Political sufferers as well as pseudo-political sufferers managed to get the certificates from the State Congress. Kala’s plan gave rise to several immoral and corrupt deeds. Gopala Reddy as Finance Minister and Industries Minister H. Seetharama Reddy could amass lakhs of rupees in the name of private business enterprises. Vemula Kurmaiah, still continuing in Prakasam’s ministry, joined hands with the opposition and resorted to corrupt practices in fertilizer deals. Prakasam exposed many immoral and corrupt practices of the ministers. Pattabhi’s group came out with a vengeance and brought several charges against Prakasam.

Ranga surprised these squabbling leaders by winning many seats in the Pradesh Congress elections of 1946. Ranga, who was abroad, won the Presidency in a straight contest against Pallam Raju. He also came out with a proposal that the Congress workers should be given financial help. Both Kandula Obul Reddy and Lachanna as Secretary and Joint Secretary to Congress helped the workers. On the basis of Pattabhi’s complaints against Ranga, within a month of his Chairmanship, Smt. Kamala Devi was appointed to institute a probe. Prakasam and Ranga on one side and Pattabhi on the other continued their groupism. Elections for the Guntur District Congress were made invalid. Ranga as Chairman of Pradesh Congress, went abroad four times within five years. In his absence, his followers, led
hectic group politics in his name. Ranga easily defeated Sanjeeva Reddy in the Presidential election of the Pradesh Congress in 1948.

The Communist Party attracted many workers to the party when most of the Congress leaders were in jails. During the 1946 elections only Pillalamarri Venkateswarlu was elected to the Legislative Assembly as the workers’ representative. The Communists took up tasks like uniting the workers and labourers and fighting for their rights. At times they rebelled against Congress. The Chief Minister was then the dead opponent of the Communists. Ranga was on similar terms with them. An ordinance was issued in 1947 against the Communists alleging that they were creating chaos and that they could be punished without trial. But after the Independence on 15th August, all the Communists were released.

They continued to be a menace to the land lords through their anti-zamindari struggle. They created troubles to the officers in collecting food grains. The Government renewed the arrests of Communists. The Malabar Police were summoned to curb the Communists and on 26th September, 1948 the Communist Party was banned. By then, many had withdrawn from the Communist Party. Vavilala Gopala Krishnaiah, Mukkamala Nagabhushana Rao, Komararaju Achmamba, Alluri Satyanarayana Raju and Venkata Rama Shastri left the party as a protest against the party’s policy of armed-struggle. The naked truth about Communist Leaders was written by Chadalawada Pitchaiah implying Makineni Basava Punnaiah and others. The party dismissed the former. There were different groups within the party. Korrapati Patabhi Ramaiah and C.V.K. Rao who formed a group in East Godavari accused the party of being partial to the Kamma Community.

The Central Communist Party too was divided into groups. The Andhra Party stood separate in its support to the China Communist party. They gave it full cooperation to the armed struggle of the communists in Telangana.

The Socialists left Congress in 1948. At the Party’s call, Socialist MLAs resigned from the Assembly. Gouthu Lachanna was elected
for the first time from a seat that fell vacant due to the resignation of Mallikharjun, a Socialist from Andhra.

In the name of suppression of the Communists in Andhra, the Congress Government, with the help of the Malabar Police, acted very brutally. It resulted in increasing resentment among the people towards the Congress Government. The Congress behaved in a nauseating way with their internal fights, and the way they exposed each other. The first General elections after Independence, were announced in 1952. The Andhras were already dissatisfied with the inefficiency of the Congress in forming separate Andhra. The Communist Party gave a clear slogan for ‘Visalandhra’ including Telangana. The Communists, who came out from the prisons apologised to the people openly in their meetings for their violent actions in the past. They even promised to the people that they would give 5 acres and a cow and a calf to each family if the communist Party came to power. They could gain the sympathy of the public in their meetings by giving a clear picture of the brutality of the Malabar Police against the Communists. Just before the General elections, the Congress in Andhra had its elections. Ranga, who had earlier been the Chairman of the Pradesh Congress, decided to contest again opposing Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy. Kala Venkat Rao tactfully brought the Pradesh Congress members together in the West Godavari district. The State Ministers, Kala Venkata Rao, Kalluri Chandramouli and H. Seetharama Reddy made tall promises to the people. Kala Venkat Rao saying that he had recruited one lakh members to Congress, remitted to the party account, a membership fee of four annas each from the amount he collected from the business organizations. Kakani Venkata Ratnam, along with three other members from the Krishna district, who were with Ranga till then, suddenly turned against him. 25 elected members from Guntur had to abstain from voting due to a stay order issued against them by the court. Ranga, who was hopeful of winning with a majority of 7 votes lost by 4 votes. The winner, Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy, had already resigned from the cabinet. Kandula Obula Reddy was no match to the machinations of Kala Venkat Rao. Ranga and Prakasam did not
accept Sanjeeva Reddy’s offer to allot 9 out of nineteen seats in the Working Committee. They convened a meeting at Kaleswara Rao’s residence in Vijayawada where it was decided to form a new party inspite of Kaleswara Rao’s advice to them not to leave Congress. All Ranga’s men left Congress and a new party “Andhra Praja Party” came into existence.

Meanwhile, some of the leaders at the Centre disassociated themselves form Congress and called a meeting in Patna, to which Ranga and Prakasam were invited by J.B. Kripalani. Ajit Prasad Jain, Rafi Ahmed Kindwai, Ranga and Prakasam attended the meeting and there the All India Kisan Mazadoor Party was inaugurated. Prakasam, with three others was on the subcommittee to chalk out a programme for the party. Here again Ranga not able to find a prominent place in the new party came out from the party. He started a new party and named it as the Krishiker Lok Party on the pretext that he differed from Kisan Mazdoor party on certain principles. All these parties went to polls in 1952. Leaders and ministers like Kala Venkata Rao, Bezwada Gopala Reddy, Kalluri Chandramouli and Vemula Kurmaiah were defeated. At that time a system of announcing results without waiting for all elections to be completed in other constituencies was in vogue. The defeat of one minister had its impact on the other elections. Sanjeeva Reddy, though the President of the Pradesh Congress, met a similar fate at the hands of his brother-in-law, Tarimela Nagi Reddy, a prominent leader of the Communist Party. Sanjeeva Reddy had never again contested from his native place Ananthapur. Prakasam too was defeated from Madras. Ranga’s party could win only in Sriakulam, Vizag, Chittoor and East Godavari Districts. The majority of seats were won by the Communists in Circars and the Congress in Rayalaseema. Congress did not have the majority in the combined Madras State. Rajagopalachari was thought to be the best person to guard the State against Communist domination. With a minimum majority, he formed the Government. The Muslims lent their support to him. Prakasam made an abortive attempt to form the ministry with the help of the Communists but the Governor Sri Prakasa did not invite him to do
Kotha Raghuramaiah was elected to Lok Sabha for the first time from Guntur in 1952. He had just entered politics then. Harindranath Chatopadhyaya with Communist backing won against Smt. Bharathi Devi Ranga in Vijayawada. Ranga also lost in Tenali.

No sooner did Rajagopalachari become the Chief Minister, he lured some of the members of Krishikar Lok Party to the Congress. D. Sanjeevaiah, S. Ranga Reddy, S.B.P. Pattabhi Rama Rao, M.V. Krishna Rao (Vizag), N. Shankar Reddy were the Ministers in Rajagopalachari’s cabinet. In a way, Rajagopalachari first patronized party defections. In the internal disputes of Krishikar Lok Party, Thimma Reddy, a former associate of Ranga, sought an alliance with Sanjeeva Reddy. This was an act prompted by caste loyalty. Sanjeeva Reddy, having been defeated from Ananthapur constituency in the general elections by T. Nagireddy was elected in a by-election from Kalahasti (Chittoor District) in place of Balarama Reddy, who had resigned in his favour. That was the end of the Andhra Politics in Madras. Group politics were in full swing by the time a separate Andhra was formed.

The dream of a separate Andhra did not materialize inspite of innumerable resolutions from 1913 onwards. The people of Rayalaseema were, by and large, disinclined towards a separate Andhra. The Andhra leaders tried to convince them by allowing concessions in their favour. During the 2nd World War nobody thought of a separate State. The report of the Thar Commission against the Andhra State created a sensation among the Congressmen. A sub-committee was formed to look into the matter with Jawaharlal Nehru, Patel and Pattabhi in it. The report of the sub-committee favoured the formation of the State provided the Andhras gave up their claim over Madras. The Congress consented to this report. It tried to appease the Rayalaseema people by saying that the State capital should be in Rayalaseema only. An all party meet was called in Madras for the 27th of July 1952, to discuss the formation of the Andhra State. But Sanjeeva Reddy ordered his partymen not to attend the
meeting. The Rayalaseema MLAs in a statement, demanded the postponement of the formation of the State. Swami Seetharam (Gollapudi Seetha Ram) started his ‘fast unto death’ on 15th August 1952. He ended his fast after 36 days as the leaders convinced him. His integrity was doubted by several persons. The Andhra students were really concerned over his fasting and feared his death. The delay in the formation of the State, and with the receding hopes of getting Madras to Andhra led Potti Sree Ramulu to start his ‘fast unto death’ in Madras. His fasting was for a separate State including Madras. Though he started the fast on 19th October 1952, it did not attract the attention of many in the beginning. Prakasam and Bulusu Sambamurthy encouraged Potti Sree Ramulu’s idea. The agitation gradually gathered momentum in Andhra. The leaders failed to dissuade Potti Sree Ramulu. Pandit Nehru announced in the Parliament on 9th December that the question of a separate State would be considered if the demand was not made for Madras. Sree Ramulu did not relent and died on 15th December after 55 days of fasting. Andhra fell under the spell of a violent agitation. The Prime Minister had to declare the formation of a separate Andhra, saying that undisputed areas were to come under the State boundaries and the date for the formation of the separate State was fixed for 1st October, 1953.

National politics then reflected in the Andhra Politics. Prakasam’s Party and the Socialists merged into the Praja Socialist Party. The Socialists wanted Madras to go to Tamilnadu only. The Centre appointed the Wanchoo Committee. Communists wanted either Guntur or Vijayawada to be the Capital city. Krishikar Lok Party headed by Ranga, proposed Tirupathi as the capital keeping an eye on the buildings of Chandragiri Raja. Congress people as well as Prakasam appealed that Madras should be the temporary capital. Sanjeeva Reddy, Gopal Reddy, Kala Venkata Rao, Kaleswar Rao, Kotha Raghu Ramaiah and T.N. Venkata Subba Reddy formed a Congress Sub-Committee and prepared a list of the places to be included in Andhra and the money it should acquire. Nehru, in his statement on 25th March, said that the Andhras should leave Madras
and the Andhra MLAs should decide about the capital city. When the Wanchoo Committee report was published, provincialism, groupism and party oppositions were rampant. Prakasam was asked to suggest a solution to the problem in a meeting of the Andhra Legislators on 5th June, 1953. He decided that Kurnool should be the capital of Andhra. The rest of Andhra had to reconcile to this decision. The political arena changed place. Sanjeeva Reddy, Lachanna, Tenneti together made a settlement regarding the money that had to be Andhra’s share. Sanjeeva Reddy exhibited a political far-sightedness in his moves. He began to come closer to Prakasam, though it was not appreciated either by Prakasam’s followers or Kala Venkata Rao’s. Prakasam aspiring for Chief Ministership, bade goodbye to the Praja Socialist Party and joined Congress. He was 80 by then- could neither hear nor see properly. Sanjeeva Reddy played a timely game of politics in Prakasam’s name. Praja Socialist Party was not inclined to join the Cabinet. Prakasam left the Party and became the Chief Minister co-operating with the Congress. Though Sanjeeva Reddy was only the Deputy Chief minister, he had full control of the Ministry. Tenneti, Damodaram Sanjivaiah, Peddireddy Timma Reddy, Kadapa Koti Reddy and Pattabhi Rama Rao were in the Cabinet. A little later, Lachanna, from the Krishikar Lok Party, joined the Ministry. Gopala Reddy was elected as the President of the State Congress. Alluri Satyanarayana Raju, Kasu Brahmananda Reddy, Manthena Venkata Raju, and Alapati Venkata Ramaiah, helped Sanjeeva Reddy in strengthening the Party. Within 54 days of the formation of the Cabinet the Capital issue was raised. The Krishikar Lok Party did not support Kurnool as the capital. Lachanna had to resign from the cabinet and sit in the opposition.

Some of the Congress members could not stand the influence of Sanjeeva Reddy in Prakasam’s Ministry and waited for a chance to show their displeasure. The Socialists started Satyagraha in Karivena (Kurnool district) for the cause of ‘Eenam Tenants’. The Sonti Ramamurthy Committee recommended the abolition of the Prohibition Act. The Krishikar Lok Party led the tappers on a Satyagraha under Lachanna, demanding the implementation of the

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Committee’s recommendations. The Party Chairman, Obul Reddy, did not favour it. Even the Communists joined the movement. The prisons were filled with Satyagrahees. Lachanna and Obul Reddy then had secret meetings in Kurnool with the Congress legislators. Legislators like Madduri Subba Reddy, Venkata Setty, Batten Venkata Krishna Reddy, Chidanandam, B.V. Subba Reddy, Nandimpalli Narasimha Rao were ready to support a ‘No Confidence Motion’ against the ministry. A ‘No Confidence Motion’ was put to vote on 6th November 1954. Meanwhile, Prakasam had come to terms with Lachanna, ready to pass any orders suggested by him. But it was a delayed attempt. Two items of the ‘No Confidence Motion’ were put to vote that day. One could not be passed due to a difference of five votes, Prakasam’s Ministry was overthrown as the ‘No Confidence Motion’ was passed with the two deciding votes of Nayakanti Shankar Reddy and Adusumilli Subramaniveswar Rao, who though in Congress, voted for the Resolution. Prakasam tried in vain to keep up his Government. The Legislative Assembly was abolished. The State came under President’s rule. C.M. Trivedi was the Governor at that time. All the taper Satyagrahees were released from jail.

All the parties once again got ready for elections. Katragadda Rajagopala Rao and Visweswara Rao, (the - Communists), tried for an alliance with the Krishkar Lok Party but failed. The Communist Party was the first to release the list of its candidates. They believed that they were surely coming to power. They used the propaganda machinery very efficiently. Makineni Basavapunnaiah, with his speeches, lost the support of the middle class people, but gained that of the workers. The Communists went even to the extent of considering their candidate for Chief Ministership. The Congress leaders met in Eluru and decided to contest without an alliance with any party. The Centre, realizing the means of the Communists, instituted an unified action against them. Ranga was called to Delhi for talks. Balavanth Rai Mehta, Lal Bahadur, Mallayya, Kotha Raghuramaiah, held discussions with Ranga. Even without consulting his partymen Ranga declared from Delhi that his party would join
the Congress. Meanwhile, Socialist leader, Mr. P.V.G. Raju and Krishikar Lok Party leader Lachanna came to an election alliance in Srikakulam and Vizag districts. Tenneti, after consulting Nehru in Cuttack, gave his consent to the alliance. Ranga made vain attempts to bring in Nayakanti Shankar Reddy and Adusumilli Subramanyeswara Rao who helped for the fall of Prakasam. The Congress, the Praja Party and The Krishikar Lok Party decided to fight the elections as the United Congress Front. Gopala Reddy, Tenneti and Kandula Obul Reddy, formed a Committee which decided the list of candidates. Sanjeeva Reddy and Kala Venkata Rao gave one list. Lachanna gave another. Raghu Ramaiah, and Challapalli Raja played prominent roles behind the scene. Prakasam was not at all taken into the picture. Unable to draft the election manifesto, they rushed to Delhi for help. It had become a part of Congress culture to seek help from Delhi on each and every occasion. The leaders at the Centre made some changes in the manifesto. Both the Congress and the Communists arranged speeches of top leaders of the country in canvassing. There was a keen contest in all 196 seats. The newspapers supported the United Congress Front. S.K. Patil and D.K. Barua played a prominent role in the elections. The Communists predicted their victory in 100 seats. But the United Congress bagged 147 seats, Congress got 119, Krishikar Lok Party 10, Praja Socialists 13, Praja Party 5, only 15 seats were taken by the Communists, They had 40 seats in the previous Legislative Assembly.

The absolute majority of Congress gave rise to groupism once again. Dhebar, Lal Bahadur Sastry, Devkant Barua came down to Andhra to settle the matters among various groups. Praja Party once again tried to bring Prakasam to power but with no success. Gopala Reddy’s name was suggested by the Krishikar Lok Party. Alluri Satyanarayana Raju, Brahmananda Reddy and some others tried hard for Sanjeeva Reddy. Sanjeeva Reddy said that he had the majority support. Sreemannarayana was deputed from the Centre to come to the State’s rescue. He conducted secret voting in Kurnool and announced that Gopala Reddy got more votes but he did not
give the particulars of the voting. Manthena Venkata Raju and Alluri Satyanarayana Raju gave a statement that Sanjeeva Reddy had secured more votes and that the matter was unjustly decided against him. However, Gopala Reddy was made the Chief Minister and Sanjeeva Reddy, the Deputy Chief Minister in the United Congress Front. Sanjeeva Reddy’s group had to abstain from putting up Brahmananda Reddy to contest for the Speaker’s place as they were not sure of their strength. Rokkam Lakshmi Narasimham Dora had become the Speaker. M.R. Appa Rao too aspired for the post. As it was orally agreed earlier to have three ministers from Krishikar Lok Party, Lachanna and his men insisted on Obula Reddy being a minister. Sanjeeva Reddy put off the matter. Shortly after the death of Neerukonda Rama Rao, Obul Reddy became the Minister for Agriculture. The very first day Obula Reddy felt that it was not possible for both Sanjeeva Reddy and himself to continue in the Cabinet. Obul Reddy remained in the Ministry for six months only.

After the mid term poll the Krishikar Lok Party merged itself with Congress. Ranga and his followers did not comment upon this merger. Lachanna fell a prey to the reprobation of Sanjeeva Reddy’s group. When Lachanna was the Minister, one Kamma landlord donated some land in Krishna district to Mrs. Latchanna. Such complaints were carried to the High Command by Alluri Satyanarayana Raju and Manthena Venkata Raju. It was then that misunderstandings rose between Ranga and Lachanna. The Praja Socialist Party crumbled as a result of the division in the All India Party as Tenneti and P.V.G. Raju rarely agreed with each other. The latter, joined Lohia’s group.

Soon after Gopala Reddy became the Chief Minister, the President of Andhra Congress was the candidate from Sanjeeva Reddy’s group and Ranga was the opponent. Ranga was away, touring abroad. Inspite of Lachanna’s and Obul Reddy’s best efforts, Ranga lost the election as Gopala Reddy could not help him. Kala Venkata Rao, Kasu and Kalluri achieved Ranga’s defeat with their manoeuvres. Sanjeeva Reddy and Gopala Reddy abstained from
voting. The whole strategy was planned by Kala Venkata Rao. Kasu became the Chief Secretary of congress. This contributed to the political stability of Sanjeeva Reddy’s group. Pidathala Ranga Reddy and Pemma Raju Venkata Rao acted as Joint Secretaries. It was the end of Andhra Politics and the stage then shifted to Hyderabad.

The Congress Government in Andhra did achieve certain remarkable things- the Venkateswara University at Tirupathi, the Krishna Barrage near Vijayawada, the High Court in Guntur and nearly 12 small scale projects stand as the landmarks of the Government.
Politics in Telangana started very late when compared to Andhra. The simple reason for this was the fact that the Nizam never permitted any political parties or national movements. Liberal education and Leftist movements were unknown in the Nizam’s rule. The Telugu people in nine districts of Telangana did not command any respect. Urdu was the medium for everything including administration. Muslim students used to go to the Aligarh University and Hindus to Madras and such other places. The villages were in dire poverty. Bonded labour was prevalent everywhere. Jagirdars bossed over the people. Osmania University which was founded in 1918 had Urdu as the medium of Instruction. The Nizam ruled with the support of the British by paying them taxes. The National movements all around the State, could not penetrate the native State of Hyderabad. Maharastrians were treated with respect of course, next to Muslims. The Kanarese and Telugu speaking people were regarded as third rank citizens. Krishna Deva Raya Bhasha Nilayam was founded by Kommaraju Lakshman Rao and Ravichettu Ranga Rao in 1902. Later, they started the Vignana Chandrika Grandha Mandala.

Hyderabad Zilla Congress had its origin in 1918 under the presidency of Vaman Nayak. It existed only in name. Madapati Hanumantha Rao, Burgula Ramakrishna Rao and Konda Venkata Ranga Reddy used to attend Congress Sessions though they did not influence the people in any way in the early days. Even the Arya Samaj failed to have its effect on the Telugu people of Telangana in the beginning.

The Telugu people were humiliated in Telangana. Telugu did not carry the same value as Marathi or Kannada. Madapati Hanumantha Rao and Alampalli Venkata Rama Rao made their speeches in Telugu on the occasion of Hindu Social Reform meeting held in Vivek Vardhini.
School of Hyderabad on 12th November 1921. Both of them were insulted very badly which prompted them to meet in Tekumukkala Ranga Rao’s residence and start the Andhra Association, with Shyamala Venkata Reddy, as the President and Madapati as the Secretary. That was the beginning of the Andhra Movement in Telangana. This association turned its attention to the problems of the Telugu people not through politics but in the name of a Library Movement. Hence, the Nizam did not raise any objection to it.

In 1924, the Library Conference (Maha Sabha) was organized in Madhira, Khammam district with Pingali Venkata Rami Reddy in the Chair. The second Library Mahasabha was arranged in Suryapet under the leadership of Lokadindi Narayana Rao. The Brahma Samaj influence in Suryapet enabled a Social Reform meet with Gadepalli Suryaprakasa Rao in the Chair. These efforts moved the upper and middle class Telugu people. They arranged the Andhra Maha Sabha in 1930. Even the women’s meet was clubbed with this. In those days they not only needed prior permission of the rulers but the proceedings were also censored. Therefore, they could discuss only the problems like social reforms, educational opportunities and women’s problems. Golkonda Patrika was started by Suravaram Pratap Reddy in 1925 and it gave an immense boost to the Andhra Movement in Telangana.

The Brahmins, the Vysyas and then the Reddys in Telangana made their entry into politics in respective order. The first conference of the Telugu people was held at Jogipet, Medak district in 1930. Suravaram Pratap Reddy presided over the meetings. The Women’s Conference took place simultaneously with Mrs. Nadimpalli Shreedevamma as President. In the conference, a resolution was proposed in support of Government Acts banning child marriages and permitting widow remarriages. The opponents to these resolutions were Sesha Charyulu, Anantha Venkata Rao, Venkateswara Gupta, Ravikoti Vittala Sastry and Venkata Bhujanga Sastry. There was bitter resentment to another resolution proposed by a Harijan, Bhagya Reddy Verma, for the abolition of untouchability. Many of the upper class people even detested a Harijan sitting with them in the
Conference. With the intervention of Vaman Naik the situation was brought under control.

The second Andhra Mahasabha was organized in Devarakonda with Burgula Ramakrishna Rao as the Chairman. The Government suspecting the motive behind the Conference, tarried long to permit it. It was resolved in the meeting that there should be no ban order on meetings where they were only making resolutions. Panditha Keshava Rao spoke in favour of a ban on child marriages. He was opposed by Vaman Naik. These meetings increased Government suspicion about their validity. It took two years to organize the third Andhra Conference as the Government withheld permission to all such meetings. Even after two years the organizers had to assure the Government about their non-political activities, to get approval for the meetings. This conference was chaired by Pulijala Ranga Rao in 1934. The women’s section met with Mrs. Yellapragada Seethakumari in the Chair. These meetings were strongly opposed by the orthodox men. The Government prohibited them from making any resolutions.

The fourth Andhra Conference was held with Madapati as the Chairman at Sircilla, Karimnagar district in 1935. The Government partially restricted this meeting. The main features of this meeting were the presence of Ravi Narayana Reddy who later became a Communist, and the speech made by Arige Rama Swamy regarding Harijan problems. The women also met and Mrs. Joginepalli Radha Bai presided. Baddam Yella Reddy, a budding Communist attended the conference. The new-comers evinced their love for Telugu by making their speeches in that language. The Government started realizing the implications of these conferences. Mandumala Narasing Rao, through his paper ‘Raithu’ gave encouragement to the Andhra Mahasabha.

Konda Venkata Ranga Reddy was the President of the fifth Andhra Conference held at Shadnagar, Mahaboob Nagar district. The meeting debated the need for deciding the boundaries of Telangana.
The Government of Hyderabad Native State too introduced certain reforms in view of the changing times. A committee of reforms was appointed. The Praja Parishath was founded with Madapati as Chairman in order to represent the feelings of Telugu people to the Reforms Committee. But Praja Parishath could not function with the same intensity as the Ithehadul Muslimeen - a Muslim organization. This time the Telangana Andhra Conference was held in Nizamabad and the Government imposed many restrictions on it. Mandumala Chaired the meeting. The language problem was discussed, V.B. Raju and Mandagiri Venkat Rao on one side and Ravi Narayana Reddy on the other put forth sound ideas in these discussions. V.B. Raju insisted on speaking only in Telugu but Konda Ranga Reddy and his men did not approve of any such restrictions.

In 1937, an effort was made to establish a Hyderabad branch of the Congress but the Government prohibited it as an illegal organisation. A Satyagraha was staged by Ravi Narayana Reddy, Mandumala Narasing Rao against the attitude of the Government. Burgula Rama Krishna Rao and others retraced after seeing the unrelenting dictatorial attitude of the rulers. During the Satyagraha of 1938, many courted arrests and Communists like Arutla Rama Chandra Reddy and Baddam Yella Reddy were jailed.

Meanwhile, the Arya Samaj and the Hindu Mahasabha too started expanding in Telangana. For the first time, the students of Osmania University defied the Nizam’s law by singing ‘Vandemataram’. The Nizam proposed that he would lift the ban order on State Congress if they changed its name but the Satyagraha prisoners were released only after a year. The Communist Party was just shooting up in Nizam’s domain. Puchalapalli Sundaraiah and Chandra Rajeshwara Rao promoted the party through their parleys with Ravi Narayana Reddy, Baddam Yella Reddy, Devulapalli Venkateswara Rao, Sarvadevabatla Ramanadham. Mandumala Narasing Rao was the Chairman of the Andhra Conference at Malkapuram, in 1940. Ravi Narayana Reddy, Kalojee Narayana Rao, N.K. Rao and Pollampalli Venkata Rao were insisting upon the opposition of reforms introduced by the Government. The Rightists

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like K.V. Ranga Reddy, Madapati Hanumantha Rao and Pulijala Venkata Ranga Rao welcomed the reforms. In this conference, the differences between the Rightists and Leftists came up openly. In 1941, Andhra Mahasabha met under Ravi Narayana Reddy’s Chairmanship. The Andhra Conference was held in Dharmavaram in 1942. Madiraju Rama Koteswara Rao presided over it. He was a Rightist. The Communists and Rightists had heated discussions regarding the Second World War. But the Communists did not reveal themselves as yet.

The 11th Andhra Mahasabha met in Bhuvanagiri, Nalgonda district with Ravi Narayana Reddy as the Chairman. There was a clear cut demarcation between the Rightists and the Leftists. The 11th Andhra Mahasabha was almost completely dominated by the Communists. The Rightists banned it but many Communists from the Krishna district attended the conference as invitees. The women’s conference took place with Nimmagadda Satyavathy in the Chair. Even the working committee was full of Communists and their sympathizers. The Rightists like Mandumala Narasinga Rao, Konda Venkata Ranga Reddy, Burgula Rama Krishna Rao, Madiraju Rama Koteswara Rao and P. Sreenivasa Rao tried to organize the Rightists. Andhra Conference had succeeded in having it in 1945 at Mudigonda near Warangal. The 13th Andhra Conference was held in Kandi, Medak district in 1946 and Jamalapuram Keshava Rao was the Chairman. After the Conference at Bhuvanagiri, Nalgonda district in 1942, the Communists tried to strengthen their party ranks. Nizam Nawab banned the Communist party in November 1946 as he sensed danger from it.

The Nizam’s Government had to lift the ban on Hyderabad State Congress keeping in view the changed circumstances in the country. Qasim Razvi, with the intention of continuing Hyderabad State as a Muslim State, employed very cruel measures and so the Communists started fighting against the landlords for the liberation of the peasants and labourers. The people became the victims of violence both by the Razakars, muslim militia under Nizam in the day and the Communists at night. The question of Hyderabad State joining the
Indian Union came up and Qasim Razvi was against it. The Congress insisted upon joining the Union. On 4th May 1948, Nizam Nawab lifted the ban on the Communist Party. Their role had become dubious. The people thought that the Communists sided Nizam so that Hyderabad need not seek unity with the country, hence the ban on them was lifted. The Indian Government annexed the Hyderabad State to the Indian Union through the Police Action. Many of the communists who stood against the military forces had to sacrifice their lives. Temporarily, the military ruled Hyderabad State under General Chowdary. A year late, on 12th June 1950 the State Ministry was formed with M.K. Vellodi as the Chief Minister. Burgula Rama Krishna Rao and V.B. Raju were among the Ministers. K. V. Ranga Reddy, Dr. Channa Reddy and Arige Ramaswamy were nominated to the Parliament. There arose a big rift among the Communists of Telangana over the armed-struggle. They were not willing to be led by the Andhra leaders. Makineni Basavapunnaiah and Chandra Rajeswar Rao went secretly to Russia to seek Stalin’s advice. Stalin told them to decide the matter according to local convenience. He looked at the Indian map and is reported to have wondered how they were going to liberate Telangana which was in the middle of the country. They had no answer to that and returned home without a solution.

The banned Communists took part in the General Elections in 1952 under the People’s Democratic Front. The State Congress was divided into two groups by then, due to the differences. Ramananda Thirtha, leading the Progressive Group, removed Burgula Ramakrishna Rao and K. V. Ranga Reddy from the congress with the pretext that they had connived with the Nizam. Somehow the centre patched up the differences. Burgula who was with the Reddys till then, joined hands with Ramananda Thirtha. Ramananda Thirtha led the election committee. The Reddys were displeased and the Centre had to come to their rescue once again. The Congress took 96 seats in the elections and 39 seats went to the Communists (PDF).

Burgula Ramakrishna Rao was selected by the Centre to be the Chief Minister, as there were factions in the Hyderabad Congress.
Ramananda Thirtha and K.V. Ranga Reddy were the two group leaders. The Telugu speaking Cabinet members were Konda Venkata Reddy (Revenue), Dr. Channa Reddy (Agriculture), V.B. Raju, P. Hanumantha Rao, M.S. Rajalingam, Aridge Rama Swamy and Sangam Lakshmi Bai. In the 1952 elections, Jalagam Vengala Rao, Bommakanti Satyanarayana and Sidda Reddy contested, with no success, as independents because they could not get Congress seats. They were dismissed from the Congress Party for six years as they went against the party rules. Burgula’s Ministry did not run smoothly. D.G. Bindu canvassed that Burgula did not have the majority support and would not last long. V.B. Raju and K.V. Ranga Reddy tried unsuccessfully to topple Burgula as the Chief Minister. As a consequence, V.B. Raju was dropped from the cabinet, inspite of his efforts to have himself retained.

In the elections to the President of the Congress, Nimmagadda Satyanarayana stood against Venkata Ranga Reddy and the latter won as the President. J.V. Narsinga Rao who had just then entered politics was on good terms with Ranga Reddy’s group. Burgula ruled till 1956. He saw to it that protection to the Tenants Act and the Agricultural Reforms Act were passed in his time but they failed in implementation. The Bhoodan Movement was first started here by Vinoba Bhave when Vedire Ramachandra Reddy donated 100 acres land to the Movement.

By the time Andhra Pradesh was formed, the political parties, groupism and casteism were already established in Telangana. When compared to Andhra, there were no elections in Telangana for the local bodies, so disputes and disagreements had not cropped up at that level. Their experience in the Legislature too was only six years old. With this background, both Andhra and Telangana were to be merged into one, Andhra Pradesh.

Burgula later worked as Governor of Kerala and died in the year 1967.
In 1956, Andhra Pradesh celebrated its formation with the ugliest abusive retorts between Sanjeeva Reddy as its first Chief Minister and his followers on one side and M. Channa Reddy, who was described as a dangerous person when out of power, and some others who were not accommodated in the new ministry on the other side. Sanjeeva Reddy, by that time, was wellversed in the gimmicks of power politics having learned them under the stewardship of Andhra Chanakya, late Mr. Kala Venkata Rao. He was not for compromises in the political game but, at the same time, became the ‘Kulapathi of the Reddys’. He admired and loved loyalties and total surrender but not dissent or arguments. It is unfortunate that the first Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh was caste-minded, conscious of religion, practised caste politics, encouraged defections and above all received strictures from the Supreme Court. He went out of the way to receive an honorary doctorate degree from Sri Venkateswara University which he could use only when a suit against him was cleared in the court of law. He created artificial terror among his Cabinet colleagues and Legislators and behaved in a very undemocratic way throughout, but being a shrewd politician Sanjeeva Reddy resigned when the court passed strictures against him, and got appreciation because normally people tend to sympathize with the leader when he voluntarily relinquishes power, whatever the reason might be. The way in which Sanjeeva Reddy behaved in retaining his grip over Andhra Pradesh
politics while remaining in New Delhi shows his prowess. He wanted to be a Rama so that Brahmananda Reddy as Bharatha would keep his padukas (Chappals) on the throne of the Chief Minister and worship them until he (Sanjeeva Reddy) returned from Indraprastha (Delhi). In the beginning Sanjeeva Reddy failed to adjust to the Delhi politics and was at loggerheads with Indira Gandhi. When the Chief Minister has no integrity and cannot set the right example naturally, the State goes astray. Andhra Pradesh could achieve very little during his regime inspite of his socialistic postures, through nationalisation of bus routes and text books. Actually he was a feudal to the core, and several Zamindars and Rajas found berths in his Cabinet.

The Centre appointed a Committee to form the States on a linguistic basis. The Committee received representations from all the parties who were in favour of Visalandhra. In Telangana the communists, Madapati Hanumantha Rao and Ramananda Thirtha favoured Visalandhra. During the Nizam’s time and later in Burgula’s time many Andhras and Tamilians came and settled down in the Hyderabad State. K.V. Ranga Reddy and Dr. Channa Reddy started the Mulki Movement in 1952 itself. When the State Re-organisation Committee visited Hyderabad, Burgula, K.V. Ranga Reddy. Dr. Channa Reddy and the Praja Socialist Party asked for Telangana. The Central leaders, Govinda Vallabh Pant and Dhebar insisted on Visalandhra. The State Re-organisation Committee said that Telangana should be formed. If, within five years, the people wanted it, and if two thirds of the Legislators agreed to the proposal, then Visalandhra should be formed. Burgula was compelled by the Centre to agree for Visalandhra. Inspite of the opposition from K.V. Ranga Reddy and Dr. Channa Reddy, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru announced the formation of ‘Visalandhra’ on 6th March 1956. K.V. Ranga Reddy and Dr. Channa Reddy had temporarily withdrawn the agitation for ‘Telangana’. B.V. Gurumurthy, Konda Laxman, Kothuri Seethaiah Gupta, Devulapalli Ramanuja Rao, Paga Pulla Reddy, and Burgula Stood for Visalandhra. To put off any doubt in the minds of the Telangana people about Visalandhra, the leaders from Andhra and Telangana made a ‘Gentlemen’s Agreement’ at the residence of

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Govinda Vallabh Panth. The gentlemen who signed this agreement were Burgula, K.V. Ranga Reddy, Dr. Channa Reddy, J.V. Narsing Rao, Gouthu Lachanna, Bezawada Gopala Reddy, Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy and Alluri Satyanarayana Raju. As usual the question of the leadership came up. Sanjeeva Reddy, who had already learnt a lesson with his defeat once, was cautious in his dealings with his followers and strengthened his position. Kasu Brahmananda Reddy and Alluri Satyanarayana Raju left no avenues unexplored in supporting and working for Sanjeeva Reddy. Inspite of Sanjeeva Reddy’s personal request Dr. Channa Reddy remained relentless. Burgula while lending support to Sanjeeva Reddy offered himself in case if Sanjeeva Reddy was refused. K.V. Ranga Reddy remained indifferent. J.V. Narsing Rao supported Channa Reddy. The Krishikar Lok Party made fruitless efforts for Ranga’s leadership. To conduct the leader’s election. Sreemannarayana from the Centre came to Kurnool. In the contest between Sanjeeva Reddy and Gopala Reddy, the former won.

Sanjeeva Reddy kept the legislators, formerly elected in Andhra from the Krishikar Lok Party, at a distance. As the first Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Sanjeeva Reddy had a tough time dealing with dissidents within the party. While giving second place to Konda Venkata Ranga Reddy, Sanjeeva Reddy put an end to the Deputy Chief Minister’s post. Thus he was the first ‘Gentleman’ to violate the Gentlemen’s Agreement. He justified his action saying that his experience as Deputy Chief Minister made him feel that the post was like a sixth finger in the Cabinet. He lured Anagani Bhagavantha Rao away from the Krishikar Lok Party by giving him a berth in his Cabinet. He invited his opponent Gopala Reddy to be a minister describing him as an ‘Elder Brother’. The post was so irresistible to Gopala Reddy that he joined the Cabinet, forgetting all his earlier differences with Sanjeeva Reddy. Burgula was sent away to Kerala as its Governor. Within a year of the formation of Andhra Pradesh came the general elections. Andhra had elections earlier, so only Telangana was to have elections this time. Sanjeeva Reddy was again elected as the leader. Dr. Channa Reddy and Lachanna were not
Sanjeeva Reddy tried his best to strengthen his position as the Chief Minister. He merged both the Andhra and Telangana Congress Committees and made his close associate, Alluri Satyanarayana Raju, the President. To give a death blow to Ranga’s influence on Peasant Organizations, he called Ranga’s former followers, Thimma Reddy and Lukalapu Lakshmana Das from Srikakulam to form the Peasant Organization. Sanjeeva Reddy wanted to reduce Lachanna’s influence even from among the backward classes. He made Pragada Kotayya the Secretary of the Backward Class Association. T. Lakshmaiah was made the president. As this new Association did not function properly, Lachanna once again dominated it. Sanjeeva Reddy’s followers started a rival Association with the help of Dr. Lakshmi Narasaiah. Bojjam Narasaiah was made the Chairman of the new Association with the help of Dr. Lakshmi Narasaiah and K.V. Keshavulu was the Secretary. Pandit Nehru invited Gopala Reddy to the Central Cabinet in 1958. Sanjeeva Reddy took his very close associate, Brahmananda Reddy, as the Finance Minister in the place of Gopala Reddy. The Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council also came into existence in 1958. People who lost in the elections were all conveniently accommodated in the Council by Sanjeeva Reddy.

In the year 1958, Zilla Parishads, Samithis and Panchayats came into existence under the Panchayat Raj System. In the same year the Telangana Regional Development Committee was legally formed. There arose grave differences between the Telangana Separatists and Integrationists. In the party contest between K. Achyutha Reddy and B.V. Guru Murthy, the former proved to be stronger. In the official election, even Ravi Narayana Reddy

included in the Ministry. They made bitter remarks against Sanjeeva Reddy. Manthena Venkata Raju and Brahmananda Reddy countered them. The information about the quarrels among the party men used to reach the Centre very promptly. The High Command called Lachanna to give an explanation about his conduct. Hukum Singh, the Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha, was asked to conduct a probe into the matter. But the High Command never brought out the report of Hukum Singh against Lachanna.

In the meantime, Sanjeeva Reddy and Alluri Satyanarayana Raju differed seriously with each other. Sanjeeva Reddy recommended and sent Satyanarayana Raju, the State Congress President, as the Secretary to the Congress at the Centre. This made them bitter enemies. The All India Congress Session was held at Calcutta. Lachanna and Dr. Channa Reddy too lodged complaints against Sanjeeva Reddy. Dr. Channa Reddy was served an explanation notice by the Andhra Congress, which prompted Dr. Channa Reddy to leave Congress. Humayun Kabir warned Sanjeeva Reddy not to aggravate the situation but the latter paid no heed to it. Even Bommakanti and Hayagreevachari went out of Congress. Kakani Venkata Ratnam and Obula Reddy in Andhra walked out of Congress. Sanjeeva Reddy brought Gottipati Brahmaiah in the place of Kakani Venkata Ratnam as the President of the Krishna District Congress. Due to some allegations made against B.V. Subba Reddy in the Legislative Assembly, he too reacted against Sanjeeva Reddy. In the Assembly, all those who went against Congress functioned in the name of National Democrats.

After sending Alluri Satyanarayana Raju to the Centre, Sanjeeva Reddy filled the vacancy with Pidathala Ranga Reddy. As soon as he came into position he charge-sheeted Lachanna. Thus Congress became the abode of a fighting group.
When D.S. Reddy was made the Vice-Chancellor of Osmania University by Sanjeeva Reddy, Dr. Channa Reddy led an agitation protesting that they did not want an Andhra man as Vice-Chancellor. That was the year in which Kala Venkata Rao, ‘Chanakya’ of Andhra died. Sanjeeva Reddy invited a few Socialists to fill the vacant places in the Congress. Kodati Rajamallu and some others joined Congress in this way. Tenneti once again renewed the Praja Party.

Sanjeeva Reddy made unrestrained use of the new Panchayat Raj Administration to promote his group politics. Challapalli Raja became the Chairman of the Krishna Zilla Parishad as Sanjeeva Reddy’s candidate against Kakani Venkata Ratnam. Vengala Rao’s success as the Khammam Parishad Chairman gave added strength to Sanjeeva Reddy. The Panchayat Raj administration helped to strengthen the Congress leadership. Groupism and casteism started playing havoc in politics.

Sanjeeva Reddy as Chief Minister nationalized buses and text books. Buses in Telangana had been nationalized long ago. The same was done in Andhra gradually starting with Krishna and Guntur. The bus owners went to High court to stop nationalization but met with little success. But they were satisfied with the strictures passed by the High Court against the Transport Minister, Pattabhi Rama Rao. The internal quarrel among the publishers led to the nationalization of text books.

Dr. Channa Reddy and Lachanna, after prolonged consultations, started a new party, as they were unsuccessful in countering Sanjeeva Reddy. P.V.G. Raju, A. Chakradhar, G.C.Kondaiah and S.B. Giri had taken a similar decision to form a party. Kakani, Nannapaneni Venkata Rao, Jagarlamudi Chandra Mouli and Kandula Obul Reddy joined them. Mrs. Indira Gandhi was the Congress President when these people quit the Congress. Ranga was sore about his followers Lachanna and Obul Reddy as they left the party without informing him. The Democratic party formed at Warangal, became the Socialist Democratic Party in Tenali. The Party Conference was held at Tenali in May 1959. While still maintaining their respective groups, they
united in the Socialist Democratic Party.

Dr. Channa Reddy spoke of Sanjeeva Reddy as a dictator in the Congress. It would be better for him, he said, to drown himself in the river Krishna, than to remain in the Congress. Kakani Venkata Ratnam tried his utmost to induct all the Kamma members into the new party. Though Ranga, Raghuramaiah, Challapalli Raja and Mullapudi Harischandra Prasad said that they would join hands with them later on, they never came forward to do so.

Sanjeeva Reddy was bent upon defeating Kakani from the Zilla Parishad Chairmanship. He personally contacted some voters and contacted others on telephone. He sent Pattabhi Rama Rao to Krishna district to manage the votes. Challapalli Raja opposed Kakani as he feared that the Government might take away his lands. Except for the chairmanship, the whole zilla Parishad came under Kakani’s control.

Sanjeeva Reddy invited P.V.G. Raju to his Cabinet as a strategic move to break-up the Socialist Democratic Party. P.V.G. Raju bade goodbye to Socialism and joined Sanjeeva Reddy. The Socialist Democratic Party was buried even before it could setup a party office.

The Swatanthra Party came into existence in 1959 as a result of lack of unity within the All India Congress Party. Ranga became the Chairman of the party. The members of the Socialist Democratic Party were requested to join the Swathanthra Party. The Socialists had already left the party. Except Kakani, the others Dr. Channa Reddy, Lachanna and their followers joined the Swathanthra Party. But this party showed signs of death even in its birth. Ranga made his close follower-Gottepati Venkata Subbaiah, the Chairman of the State Swatanthara Party. Thella Krishnamma a retired District Judge, was made the Secretary. Lachanna became indifferent as he was sore about Ranga’s attitude. Dr. Channa Reddy was waiting in the wings for an opportunity. Sanjeeva Reddy was appointed the President of the All India Congress after Mrs. Indira Gandhi.
During 1951 when there was a contest between Purushottam Das Tandon and Pandit Nehru, Sanjeeva Reddy extended his support to Nehru. From then on he was in the good books of Nehru. Naturally Nehru selected Sanjeeva Reddy for the Presidentship of the Congress. With him in the Centre, there came about a change in the State politics. Those who left Congress due to Sanjeeva Reddy rejoined the party. Sanjeeva Reddy resigned due to strictures passed against him in bus nationisation in Kurnool District. Sanjeeva Reddy wanted Brahmananda Reddy in his place as the Chief Minister. Alluri announced that he too would contest for that position though he could not gather enough backing for his candidature. Brahmananda Reddy was also not preferred. So Damodaram Sanjeevaiah was decided upon as a compromise candidate. Sanjeeva Reddy intended to come back to the State at the earliest and always had an eye on the State’s political affairs. On 10th January 1960 Sanjeevaiah became the Chief Minister.

Sanjeeva Reddy published his life history. He died in Bangalore in 1996.
Dalit Chief Minister -
Damodaram Sanjeevaiah

D. Sanjeevaiah was a Harijan from Kurnool District and a law graduate from Madras. He was acquainted with literature and belonged to a family of artists who used to sing folk-lore and other songs. He served in Rajaji’s Cabinet but later could not adjust himself to the power games and thus was a failure in politics. Though respected very much both at the State and Central levels, Mr. Sanjeevaiah could become Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh only as a compromise candidate and certainly not with any inherent strength. That was his weakness. He was the victim of caste politics and though he wanted to uplift his community it was too big a task for him.

All the former opponents of Sanjeeva Reddy extended their support to Sanjeevaiah. Dr. Channa Reddy came back to Congress from Swathantra Party. This time all the groups found their representation in the State Cabinet. As per the ‘Gentlemen’s Agreement’, K.V. Ranga Reddy was made the Deputy Chief Minister, and he very soon realised he was a non-entity in the ministry. Alluri who stood for Sanjeevaiah was given ministership. He started grouping Congressmen in the name of United Front. A.C. Subba Reddy, leader of a group and an opponent of Sanjeeva Reddy, joined the cabinet and very soon he recognised that there was nothing he could do in the cabinet to dominate politics. There were occasions when Sanjeevaiah and A.C. Subba Reddy went to the extent of abusing each other in the name of their
castes. Sanjeevaiah stripped A.C. Subba Reddy of all his portfolios and he had no other way of escaping humiliation except by resigning from the cabinet and turning antagonistic towards Sanjeevaiah. Brahmananda Reddy continued in the Cabinet as Finance Minister. As a representative of Sanjeeva Reddy, he dabbled in group politics. Nukala Narothama Reddy became the Sate Congress President. Sanjeeva Reddy removed him and Mullapudi Pallam Raju became the President.

It is interesting to study the Government orders regarding caste and job reservations during this time. The Government order said that till proper persons were found for those reserved seats they should be kept vacant. The upper classes criticized the Government. In the list of backward classes, Setti Balijas from Circars and Kapu from Telangana were included. Sanjeevaiah was blamed for this fresh inclusion in the lists as it was supposedly done just to give an I.A.S. promotion to Mullapudi Pallam Raju’s son. The High court declared that the whole list was invalid and the backward classes started an agitation.

Sanjeevaiah and the Alluri group appointed a Committee in order to select candidates for the 1962 General Elections. A.C. Subba Reddy complained to the Centre that there was a great deal of partiality in the way the Committee was appointed. Just to give the impression that he was quite impartial in his dealings, Sanjeeva Reddy forwarded the complaint to Pandit G.V. Panth, who in turn dissolved the Committee. Another committee was appointed where in Brahmananda Reddy became the key person. In the course of the elections itself, Sanjeevaiah announced that he was going to contest for Chief Ministership. Sanjeeva Reddy resigned as President of the All India Congress, and came back to the State. The Congress won 177 seats in the election, the communists 51, and Swatanthra 19. Sanjeeva Reddy stood for the leadership contest. Sanjeevaiah, as announced earlier contested with Alluri’s backing. But the Congress High Command advised Sanjeevaiah to withdraw from the contest. Sanjeeva Reddy was unanimously elected. He invited Sanjeevaiah to join the Cabinet but he said that he would accept only if Alluri was also made minister. Sanjeeva Reddy not accepted such conditions.
Those who did not get seats in the Congress in the 1962 elections, contested as independents and nearly 27 candidates won. The different groups in Congress encouraged these independents. K.V. Narayana Reddy led National Democrats and went on bargaining for seats. K.V. Ranga Reddy lost in this election. Jagarlamudi Chandra Mouli contested against Brahmananda Reddy in Phirangipuram Constituency. It turned into a Kamma, Reddy fight and attracted the attention of the whole State. Lakhs of rupees were spent in that constituency. Brahmananda Reddy won with only a few hundred votes. An election petition against him took five years to be decided in his favour.

Sanjeeva Reddy narrating his experiences in Delhi said that the Congress President’s post did not carry much weight. He was treated by Mrs. Indira Gandhi as a man of no importance. The leaders at the Centre were shocked at this statement of Sanjeeva Reddy. Even the Peking Radio broadcast Sanjeeva Reddy’s statement. There was much criticism against Sanjeeva Reddy for favouring the Zamindars. Sanjeevaiah was made the President of the All India Congress. Brahmananda Reddy was the right hand man of Sanjeeva Reddy. Pidathala Ranga Reddy was removed as the President of the State Congress to accommodate Gottipati Brahmaiah into that position. Sanjeeva Reddy did not continue for long as the Chief Minister. Pidathala Ranga Reddy owned many bus routes in Kurnool District. Sanjeeva Reddy started his scheme of nationalization of buses, with Kurnool as the first district so that he could further strip off Pidathala’s power. As per expert advice, the nationalization should have been started from Nellore, Chittoor and Cuddapah, with Kurnool being the last. As Sanjeeva Reddy did not act according to this Committee’s suggestion, the Supreme Court passed strictures against the State Government over which Sanjeeva Reddy relinquished his Chief Ministership. He having stepped down from this position, could easily make Brahmananda Reddy the next Chief Minister, as he still continued to be the leader of the Legislative Assembly, Sanjeevaiah was absorbed in to the Central Cabinet. Sanjeevaiah passed away in May, 1972.
Kasu Brahmananda Reddy’s Long Innings

Brahmananda Reddy was a cool and calculating politician who had immense patience and was well versed in factional politics since the forties. In Andhra Pradesh politics, he started as a lieutenant of Sanjeeva Reddy, but asserted himself as the Chief Minister after 1964. Even at the height of agitation for separate Telangana, Mr. Brahmananda Reddy could manoeuvre a majority of the party legislators on to his side, but he had to resign because majority was never a criterion for Mrs. Indira Gandhi. Since the syndicate within the Congress party wanted to control the central politics, Mrs. Gandhi counteracted by splitting the party and won the majority. Brahmananda Reddy being a shrewd person, opted for Mrs. Gandhi’s side and was rewarded with the Chairmanship of the Finance Commission. Later he was inducted into the Central Cabinet. Even Brahmananda Reddy committed a mistake in voicing his protest against Mrs. Gandhi and became the President of Congress in 1977, but he had to surrender once again to Mrs. Gandhi, and was waiting patiently to seek his luck. During Brahmananda Reddy’s six years of Chief Ministership (1964-1970), Andhra Pradesh witnessed three violent agitations, one for a steel plant at Vizag, another for a separate Telangana State and the third, the Naxalite Movement in Srikakulam Vizag tribal areas. Mr. Reddy could not tackle any of these problems rationally.
But he had a network of political links through the Panchayat Raj bodies and Co-operatives. That was his real strength in the political field. Since the exit of Brahmananda Reddy as Chief Minister, elections had not been held for local bodies and co-operatives. Mr. Reddy perpetuated the caste system by filling the key posts with men of his caste and his loyal followers.

1964 has seen many major events and changes. The Communist Party in India, for reasons, national and international, split into two parties. They occupied whichever offices they could lay their hands on. Lachanna led an agitation in the State over the problems of the peasants and he also demanded a fresh list of backward classes.

On 27th May, 1964, Jawaharlal Nehru died. Kamaraj Nadar, S.K. Patil, Sanjeeva Reddy, Nijalingappa and Atulya Ghosh decided to take the political reigns into their hands. This group known as the Syndicate, was responsible for making Lal Bahadur Sastry the Prime Minister. Then Sanjeeva Reddy was made the Minister for Steel. As the Congress President, he had always interfered with the State Congress affairs. Differences shot up between Sanjeeva Reddy and Brahmananda Reddy due to the latter’s efforts to dominate the Cabinet. Brahmananda Reddy’s Ministry could not run smoothly with Sanjeeva Reddy’s group opposing him at every step. A.C. Subba Reddy, Pidathala Ranga Reddy, P.V.G. Raju, Jalagam Vengala Rao and Nukala Ramachandra Reddy were in the groups opposing Brahmananda Reddy. Dr. Channa Reddy gradually came closer to Brahmananda Reddy. Chenchu Rama Naidu, an opponent of A.C. Subba Reddy in Nellore, Thota Ramaswamy of West Godavari district and T.V. Raghavulu found place in the Cabinet. Brahmananda Reddy removed Jalagam Vengala Rao as the President of the Chamber of Panchayat Raj. The later retained his position through a Court order. Both of them openly abused each other and were bitter enemies.

With the death of Alapati Venkata Ramaiah, a vacancy was created in the Election Committee of the State Congress. The winning candidate would decide the strength of Brahmananda Reddy and Sanjeeva Reddy. The contestants were Kakani from Brahmananda

Narisetti Innaiah  *  69
Reddy’s group and Murthy Raju on Sanjeeva Reddy’s side. In the election that took place on 29th September, 1964, Kakani won with 27 votes, proving the strength of Brahmananda Reddy who then started appointing his men in all key posts. Kandula Obul reddy was made the Chairman of the Agricultural University. Peddireddy Thimma Reddy was made the congress President. V.B. Raju, and Seelam sidda Reddy were the respective Chairmen of A.P. Road Transport Corporation and Land Mortgage Bank. A.C. Subba Reddy and T.N. Sada Laxmi issued open statements censuring Brahmanand Reddy who tried to remove them, but the All India Congress president, Kamaraj, did not allow him to do so. So he satisfied himself by dumping them in insignificant departments.

During Brahmananda Reddy’s time, an agitation started in Vizag, demanding a Steel Factory there. The rumours spread that Vizag was not going to get a Steel Factory as promised. Though started by the opposition parties, the Congress men had to join it for their survival in politics. Thamanampalli Amrutha Rao went on a ‘Fast unto death’ at Vizag. The agitation spread like wild fire throughout the State. The news spread all round that Brahmananda Reddy himself initiated this satyagraha against Sanjeeva Reddy, the then Steel Minister, at the Centre. Brahmananda Reddy had to go personally to Vizag to persuade Amrutha Rao to end his fast. During this agitation, Sanjeeva Reddy’s bronze statue at Vijayawada was smashed to pieces and thrown into the canal by the angry mob. That was the statue put up by Tenneti Chalapathi Rao and such other devotees of Sanjeeva Reddy. It was a mystery why Amrutha Rao withdrew suddenly. He had to flee to save his life from the wrath of students who were also agitating.

Another agitation started in 1966 when, the Government’s Act stripping the Universities of most of their autonomous powers was prepared. On the basis of the Act, the Vice-Chancellor of Osmania University D.S. Reddy was removed from the post before his term had ended. Dr. Pinnamaneni Narasimha Rao was appointed as the Vice-Chancellor. He was not allowed by the agitators to step into the University. His oath-talking ceremony was conducted in Raj Bhavan and he had to go back to Guntur from the Guest House.
Supreme Court decided the matter in favour of D.S. Reddy. The students and the staff stood by him. Brahmananda Reddy and D.S. Reddy passed bitter remarks against each other in a manner which was unbecoming to their positions.

Sanjeeva Reddy was elected to the All India Congress Election Committee, with a clear majority whereas Sanjeevaiah ended up with the lowest number of votes. Kotta Raghu Ramaiah, was able to patch up differences between them in Delhi. They did not try to get seats in the State Congress by coming to terms with Brahmananda Reddy. Raghu Ramaiah and Sanjeevaiah joined hands with Sanjeeva Reddy. Both Sanjeeva Reddy and Sanjeevaiah made a statement that the differences between them were resolved. The State Congress invited applications from the District Congress in view of the ensuing elections in 1967. In the midst of disputes and disagreements every district Congress submitted its list of candidates. The State Election Committee, was represented by 6 of Brahmananda Reddy’s men and 5 from the dissidents. The final list was sent to the Centre by Brahmananda Reddy’s group by the end of November 1966. The dissidents sent another list. The centre took three months to settle the dispute between the two groups. The same names were found in both the lists consisted of 30 candidates to Assembly and 5 for Lok Sabha. The official list consisted of 24 people who had won the elections earlier against congressmen. Names of eleven others who won as Independents were included in the list. The Congressmen then made Delhi the arena for political activity. It had become a habit with the Congressmen to run to Delhi after the lists were sent there. The aspirants and their supporters together invaded Delhi in large numbers. Inspite of Kamaraj Nadar’s efforts, the two contending parties could not be convinced to come together. Brahmananda Reddy and Sanjeevaiah had talks but to no avail. As no other avenue was open for peace, a High level Committee was appointed with Morarjee Desai, S.K. Patil and Y.B. Chavan as members, and they found a solution to the problem. Sanjeeva Reddy’s decision to contest for Lok Sabha made things easy. In December 1966, the final list was brought out wherein 169 seats went to Brahmananda Reddy’s group, and 100 to A.C. Subba Reddy’s. Those who were left out of the list...
contested as independents. A.C. Subba Reddy announced his candidature as the Chief Minister. Both the groups tried their best to annihilate each other. As many as fifty Congress men contested as Independents. Some, on being refused seats by Congress, found refuge in Swathantra Party. Almost all the members of Panchayat Raj supported Brahmananda Reddy.

The Communist Parties faced the electorate as rivals for the first time. The election results were the following:

Congress 165, Communists 9, Marxists 10, Independents 68.

Ranga lost his election for Lok Sabha. With Sanjeeva Reddy and Sanjeevaiah at the Centre and with Alluri’s death, Brahmananda Reddy found peace and stability for himself. He called back some of his followers who had won the elections as Independents and added to his strength. Brahmananda Reddy was once again elected the leader and he formed the Ministry.

A.C. Subba Reddy, unable to enter the Ministry, formed a Front, along with other MLAs like Jalagam Vengala Rao, Nukala Ramachandra Reddy, Ratna Sabhapathy, Bobbili Raja and Kaja Ramanatham. They could not come to an agreement as to who should be the leader of this Front. They feared that this Front might die even before it could be named. So, Kaja Ramanatham was made the leader and, Ratna Sabhapathy, the deputy leader. They named the Front as Jana Congress. Hardly two months passed before A.C. Subba Reddy was made the Minister. K.V. Narayana Reddy, who formed the Democratic Front joined the Ministry along with A.C. Subba Reddy. Jana Congress could not survive for long. Its leader, Kaja Ramanatham, was suspected by the group as an approver of Brahmananda Reddy. They dissolved the Jana Congress and joined Swathantra party naming themselves as the United Democratic Front. When Lachanna became its leader, Kaja Ramanatham along with some others deserted the Front. In no time the Front itself was dissolved in favour of Swathantra Party. Ratna Sabhapathy, who started his political career as a Socialist, ended up with the Swathantra Party via Congress.

A.C. Subba Reddy died in 1967. In the same year, the Telangana
leader Burgula Ramakrishna Rao also passed away. When Mrs. Indira Gandhi became the Prime Minister, Sanjeeva Reddy was elected as the Speaker to Lok Sabha. This shattered his group in the State. Even Sanjeevaiah’s group had a nominal role. Dr. Channa Reddy was inducted into the Central Cabinet. Brahmananda Reddy started enjoying unopposed power in the State. The All India Congress session was held in Hyderabad in the same year. Nijalingappa was the Congress President. Brahmananda Reddy was elected as a Congress Working Committee Member.

There was another rift among the Marxists. Some of them resorted to armed struggle as a movement. Men like Tarimela Nagi Reddy, Chandra Pulla Reddy, Kolla Venkaiah, Kondapalli Seeta Ramaiah, Satyanarayana, Nagabhushanam Patnayak had been the leaders in these movements. Many youngsters were drawn to this movement and went underground for guerilla warfare. But there was no unanimity among these revolutionaries, they had many factions among themselves which only led to further disputes.

The Newspapers reported that Thimma Reddy had commented that Harijans deserved kicks whenever they attacked peasants. The news spread like wild fire and there were many protests against Thimma Reddy in the Parliament and some demanded his dismissal from the Ministry. But Brahmananda Reddy shielded him from all eventualities. He black-listed a leading Telugu daily ‘Andhra Jyothi’ as it was writing incriminating matters about him and stopped all Government advertisements to it. He even contemplated passing a ‘Press Bill’ to control the newspapers. The elite criticized Brahmananda Reddy very bitterly and so he had to delete Andhra Jyothi from the black list and refer the Press Bill to a Select Committee.

In 1968, The Regional Committee got an extension for another five years. The Government recommended the prolongation of Mulki Rules for another five years. The ruling party maintained an official front among the students of Osmania University. They had a delayed realization that fostering a particular group among the students was a perilous venture. There was only one Association of NGOs. The Chief Minister formed the Telangana NGOs Association and gave it recognition. The Andhra - Telangana differences became deep.
rooted among service personnel.

The peaceful administration of Brahmananda Reddy was rocked by the separate Telangana agitation. His cool deliberations and indecisive attitude in many affairs had given rise to discontentment among the public. All the political parties were ready to take advantage of the discontentment among the Telangana people particularly service-men and students. The men in service approached political leaders to put forth their grievances. When they approached the Chief Minister, he said that he could not do anything when they themselves were silent about their problems. He hinted that if they started agitating, only then could he negotiate the matter with the Centre. In a conference held at Warangal on 30th November, 1968, the slogan for a separate Telangana was raised. A Committee which was formed in this conference went round the Telangana districts and conducted a propaganda for separate Telangana. Ravindra a student started a ‘fast unto death’ Satyagraha in Khammam, on 8th March 1969, his demand being the protection of Telangana rights. Jalagam Vengala Rao and others who could not find a place in Brahmananda Reddy’s Ministry, encouraged this agitation in Khammam which spread to Hyderabad. A section of the Osmania University students, who were favourable towards Brahmananda Reddy, led by Venkata Rami Reddy, raised a slogan for the Protection of Telangana Rights. They led a procession on 14th January 1969 to that effect. The opposite group of students held a meeting and led a procession to counter act Rami Reddy’s group on 16th January, demanding separate Telangana. It led to lathi charge. Swami Ramananda Thirtha opposed the idea of a separate Telangana. Brahmananda Reddy very soon realized that the matter could not easily be appeased. The movement had already spread upto Nizamabad. It was difficult to control the students. Brahmananda Reddy called an All Party meeting on 18th and 19th January 1968 for discussions. They came to an agreement and issued a statement. Brahmananda Reddy confessed that to certain extent there had been injustices done to the Telangana people. As per the Gentlemen’s Agreement, better educational facilities were to be given to Telangana. A list of servicemen, based on seniority was to be prepared. Surplus
funds were to be spent for their welfare. All the leaders gave credit to their own efficiency in reaching the agreement. The leaders who signed the Gentlemen’s Agreement, represented the Congress, Communist, Swathantra, Jana Sangh, Socialist and the Majlis parties.

Most of these ‘gentlemen’ who signed the Agreement had second thoughts before they came out of the Secretariat. The students from Telangana as well as Andhra started agitations against the Agreement. The students turned violent when it was announced that before 28th February 1969, all the Andhra Personnel would be transferred to the Andhra area and the Auditor General would be called from the Centre to look into the matter of surplus funds. The students who launched the movement for the Protection of Telangana became strong and violent. Konda Venkata Ranga Reddy supported Brahmananda Reddy in a statement. When G. Lachanna and others reached Vijayawada, the students attacked them, questioning the validity of their signing the agreement. Lachanna agreed that he had committed a mistake. He escaped by a timely speech approving the leadership of the students. Jalagam Vengala Rao went to Khammam and persuaded Ravindra to end his ‘fast unto death’ Satyagraha. From then on Vengala Rao stood firmly for integration. J. Chokka Rao was then the Telangana Region Development Board Chairman. He could not be clear-cut in his attitude when the students approached him. Moreover, his dialogue with them did not give them a clear picture as to whether he was for separation or integration. But indirectly he favoured the students’ views. T. Purushotham Rao from Warangal was for outright separation. Dr. Channa Reddy was the Central Minister then. His close disciple Venkata Rami Reddy frequently visited him in Delhi for consultations. The Andhras in Telangana were victims of several atrocities. This ill-will between Andhra and Telangana was more in the villages than in the cities.

The Andhras could not tolerate the attitude of the Telangana people. The students went on strike and hartals, but the police curbed the movement in Andhra in no time.

Brahmananda Reddy, in his statement declared that he suspected some people who were behind the whole movement in Telangana.
All the ministers took a decision to tour the State, but could conduct the tours with police escort only. At the end of February, it was decided to convene a meeting of the Telangana Praja Samithi. A Madan Mohan, T. Purshothama Rao, and Venkata Rami Reddy played prominent roles in this matter. The agitators made it difficult for the ministers and legislators to come out unless they supported separate Telangana. This leaderless people’s movement continued for a while. Firing was ordered in many places of disturbance. Atrocities in Warangal, Nalgonda and Karimnagar compelled some Andhras to migrate to Andhra leaving all their assets behind. Some of the Andhras planned to come up to Kodad and attack the Telangana people as a retort. The Telangana people’s convention was held on 8th and 9th March, 1969. Sada Lakshmi and T. Purshothama Rao took an active part in the convention. Ravada Satyanarayana, Vice-Chancellor, Osmania University, inaugurated the convention. T.Anjaiah, G. Rajaram, G.V. Sudhakar, M.M. Hashim, S.B. Giri, Mahadev Singh and Manikya Rao came out openly expressing their support to a separate Telangana. The students from Osmania University took a firm stand for a separate Telangana. The entire Telangana area echoed the slogan for a separate State. A call was given for Telangana Bundh in March. Meanwhile, in Bellampalli and other places the Andhra - Telangana factory workers fought with each other. Even some of the teachers came forth to support the movement. Brahmananda Reddy used all his strategic devices to attract some of the Telangana leaders away from the movement and thereby weaken the movement. The first Bundh call achieved total success. Under the leadership of Madan Mohan, a committee was formed in the Telangana convention. Funds were collected and money flowed in for the movement from the local business community. Konda Laxman, the then Information Minister in Brahmananda Reddy’s Cabinet, resigned on 27th March. Availing this opportunity, Thimma Reddy arranged a convention demanding special rights for the people of Rayalaseema. But the Telangana movement was too intense to attract attention to any other problem. Madan Mohan, S.B. Giri and Mallikarjun courted imprisonment during the movement. The educational institutions were deserted by the students. Throughout Telangana, civil disobedience tents and camps were put up. Even
the Communist integrationists could not hold meetings. During the first week of April, an Integration meeting was held in Burgula Mahadev Hall, Secunderabad which ended with police firing. Some of the Andhra service men appealed to the court questioning the efficacy of their transfers. The High Court invalidated the Mulki rules. This added fuel to the fire. G. Venkataswamy arranged integration meetings on behalf of Brahmananda Reddy. K. Rajamallu, T. Anjaiah, K. Ramachandra Reddy, K.S. Narayana and Ireni Lingaiah who were neutral became separatists. As the Telangana movement went from bad to worse, the Prime Minister called a meeting in Delhi on 11 April, 1969. Dr. Channa Reddy, Konda Laxman, Nukala Ramachandra Reddy, J. Chokka Rao, Brahmananda Reddy, V.B. Raju and Kakani Venkata Ratnam were the participants. None of them put forth the desire for a separate Telangana. Dr. Channa Reddy solicited a sub-committee of Ministers to assess the situation in Telangana. The Prime Minister announced an Eight Point Formula for Telangana, but it failed to bring the desired effect. Konda Laxman Bapuji suggested an autonomus Telangana and V.B. Raju suggested that Telangana should be treated on par with Kashmir. Jana Sangh passed a resolution that a State’s Reorganization Committee be appointed once again. Badri Vishal Pitti asked for a separate Telangana. In the midst of chaos in Telangana, D. Sanjeevaiah, the Central Minister gave a statement accusing the Chief Minister of being unjustly partial towards Telangana. Nukala Narothama Reddy who was passive till then came out in favour of a separate Telangana, when Ravada Satyanarayana was made the Vice-Chancellor of Osmania University. Venkata Rama Reddy, was elected to the Council from Local bodies, as a separatist against the Congress candidate Prabhakara Reddy.

The Prime Minister summoned many Telangana leaders to Delhi for talks but all her efforts proved futile. Achyutha Reddy, leader in the Mahaboobnagar district, took up the separate Telangana slogan. In the midst of tumultuous agitation, the Pradesh Congress dismissed Venkata Rama Reddy from the party on disciplinary grounds. K.V. Ranga Reddy announced that Telangana should have a separate Pradesh Congress. In the absence of a leader, the Telangana
movement, though violent, was rudderless.

A sudden event then changed the whole course of the Telangana movement. The Supreme Court gave its verdict against Dr. Channa Reddy’s election. Vandematharam Ramachander Rao was defeated by Dr. Channa Reddy and made an election petition against the latter. This judgement came as a bolt from the blue at a time when the Telangana movement badly needed a leader and a demagogue. Till then Dr. Reddy was indirectly assisting the movement with his suggestions. He abstained from mentioning the need of a separate Telangana, surprisingly did not even participate in the mammoth procession taken out on 1st May. Soon after the Court Judgement, Venkata Rama Reddy, Sudhakara Rao and Janardhana Reddy insisted upon inviting Dr. Channa Reddy to the movement. Madan Mohan, S.B. Giri, Vandematharam Ramachandra Rao, Sreedhar Reddy and such others were against Dr. Channa Reddy’s entry. On 22nd May, Dr. Channa Reddy became the Chairman of the Telangana Praja Samithi after being assured that his word would be final in the decision-making. The new action committee formed by him displeased some. Sreedhar Reddy organized a rival Praja Samithi as he severed himself from the original Telangana Praja Samithi. But he could not swim against the current. Brahmananda Reddy did not give up his integration efforts. An integration meeting was arranged at Nagarkurnool in Mahaboobnagar district on 25th May. It was conducted under police protection. The Telangana Congress Committee was formed with Konda Laxman as the Chairman. The people gained fresh vigour and enthusiasm in the movement and with Dr. Channa Reddy’s entry, the movement took a violent turn. The Chief Minister’s efforts to pacify the agitators were of no consequence. The Chief Minister wanted to please the service personnel and announced on 12th June 1969, an enhancement in their salaries. With the violent mobs still in the thick of the movement, the Government took an untimely decision to conduct examinations from 3rd June 1969. Praja Samithi challenged the Government’s decision. The Government’s could not even conduct the examinations with police help. The situation was so grave that they had to impose curfew even during the day. V.B. Raju led a group of ministers who were
doubtful as whether to continue in Brahmananda Reddy’s ministry or not. They decided to resign on 27th June. Brahmananda Reddy who suspected in this a strategic move, made the integrationist B.V. Guru Murthy resign first. On 28th V.B. Raju and others while submitting their resignations, Brahmananda Reddy schemed things in such a way that their resignations did not have any effect. He himself announced his resignation as the Chief Minister. He submitted his resignation letter to the Congress President Nijalingappa instead of the Governor. When this news spread like wildfire in the twin cities violence erupted. The people who were ignorant of the implications of such political strategies felt jubilant as though they already achieved a separate Telangana. Curfew had to be imposed to curb the violent and excited mob. On receiving information about the violence, Mrs. Gandhi made a lightning trip to Hyderabad at the midnight on 5th June and met many leaders including Dr. Channa Reddy. The very next day, Y.B. Chavan, the then Home Minister came to Hyderabad and tried to pacify the leaders in his own way. The Congress President Nijalingappa had talks with Konda Laxman and Dr. Channa Reddy but to no avail. The Telangana leaders were arrested and sent to the Rajahmundry jail. Ramanand Thirtha started a fast as a protest against the violence in Telangana. V.B. Raju stated that there should be a change of leadership. K.V. Narayana Reddy gave a statement stressing the need for President’s Rule in the State. The mayor of the city Kumud Naik and some other former integrationists, became separatists. The Congress meeting was arranged for 6th July 1969, to discuss Brahmananda Reddy’s resignation. Before that, V.B. Raju had already raised the slogan ‘Save Congress’. 30 Telangana MLAs formed a front in the Assembly. Sanjeevaiah, K. Raghu Ramaiah and Pendekanti Venkata Subbaiah started efforts to remove Brahmananda Reddy. Thimma Reddy, Kakani Vankata Ratnam and P.V. Narasimha Rao stood by Brahmananda Reddy. The meeting of the State Congress MLAs was arranged in Hyderabad on 6th July 1969. Kamaraj Nadar and Nijalingappa were the observers and V.B. Raju, Nukala Ramachandra Reddy and Chokka Rao also participated in the discussions. In that meeting, it was resolved that Brahmananda Reddy should continue as he still carried the confidence of the MLAs. The

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meeting was attended by 43 MLAs and 14 MLCs from Telangana and the rest were from Andhra. The resolution was proposed by P.V. Narasimha Rao and seconded by Akkineni Bhaskar Rao. Brahmananda Reddy went to Bangalore for the Congress Sessions. But on 7th July itself, violence flared up in the twin cities and curfew was reimposed. In the Congress session there was bitter disagreement between Mrs. Gandhi’s group and the other group known as the ‘Syndicate’ with Morarjee and Sanjeeva Reddy declining to join the Ministry. Nukala Ramachandra Reddy could not muster enough courage to join the new Ministry, which was sworn in on 19th July. The NGOs had called off their month long strike.

Venigalla Satyanarayana, the loyal associate of Brahmananda Reddy, the Harijan representative, Arige Ramaswamy and T.V. Raghavulu were dropped from the earlier Cabinet. On behalf of the rival Praja Samithi, Sreedhara Reddy went to the Andhra colonies in the city and tried to convince the Andhras, as an eyewash, that the movement was not against them. He gave a non-stop Bundh call from 11th August onwards and he asked people not to participate in the Independence Day celebrations. All the leaders who were arrested under the Preventive Detention Act, were released. Dr. Channa Reddy and Konda Laxman had one more round of talks with Mrs. Gandhi in Delhi but it proved futile.

The President’s election had to take place on 30th August 1969 due to the sudden demise of President Zakir Hussain. Mrs. Gandhi proposed Sanjeeva Reddy, the then Speaker of Lok Sabha. That very year at the Bangalore Session, Mrs. Gandhi had differed openly with the Syndicate over the Nationalization of Banks and other economic issues. Sanjeeva Reddy’s candidature was supported by the Syndicate. With this, Mrs. Gandhi supported V.V. Giri, though she was the one who had proposed Sanjeeva Reddy. Nijalingappa issued a whip that all Congress men should vote for Sanjeeva Reddy. V.V. Giri resigned as the Vice-President and went round the Country and canvassed for himself. Sanjeeva Reddy did not do any such canvassing. The Andhra Congress members, having sensed Mrs. Gandhi’s views, supported V.V. Giri as did their leader, Brahmananda Reddy. That apart, just before the elections an anonymous pamphlet
exposing Sanjeeva Reddy’s past was sent to all the MPs and MLAs. Indira Gandhi appealed to the voters to exercise their franchise according to their conscience. On the whole and specially in Andhra, the votes went to V.V. Giri inspite of Nijalingappa’s whip. Nijalingappa tried to take disciplinary action against Kakani Venkata Ratnam who openly canvassed for V.V. Giri. V.V. Giri was elected President. When Nijalingappa tried to take disciplinary action against Mrs. Gandhi, the situation reached the climax. Indira was supported in Andhra by Brahmananda Reddy, Sanjeevaiah, Raghu Ramaiah and others. Pendekanti Venkatasubbaiah, Gottipati Brahmaiah and Vengal Rao stood for Nijalingappa.

The Telangana Praja Samithi under Dr. Channa Reddy continued its movement with one activity or the other. It gave a call for collective Satyagraha. Dr. Channa Reddy warned the working Committee members that they would lose their position in the Samithi unless they participated in the said Satyagraha. This started serious differences between Dr. Channa Reddy and Konda Laxman Bapuji. The latter submitted his resignation to the Samithi. The Samithi resolved to hold Sammelans (meetings) throughout Telangana and finally hold a State level Sammelan.

The students’ Unions with Mallikarjun as their leader decided to come back to their studies. Some of the student leaders reprobated the decision as unilateral, as none of them were consulted before it was made. Mallikarjun started a ‘Fast unto death’ on 10th October 1969, which was not appreciated by the Praja Samithi. Activity in the Praja Samithi gradually gave way to sluggishness. No one took the initiative to resign from the Lok Sabha and the Legislative Assembly. Madan Mohan was blamed for going to Delhi to discuss matters with the Central leaders without prior consultations with Dr. Channa Reddy.

Throughout 1970, the Praja Samithi was politicized instead of continuing agitations. The old Congress resolved to form a separate Congress for Telangana. But Dr. Channa Reddy declared that both the Congress groups would not be approved by the Praja Samithi. The Praja Samithi failed to gain anything inspite of Dr. Channa
Reddy’s support to Mrs. Gandhi. V.B. Raju created confusion in the Legislative Assembly in the name of the Telangana United Front. It consisted of separatists, neutrals and both the Congress groups, numbering 44. Even in the Lok Sabha 12 members distinguished themselves as the Praja Samithi group. Meanwhile, V.B. Raju was elected to Rajya Sabha and shifted his scene of political activity to Delhi. He undertook a signature campaign and submitted a report signed by 250 members of Parliament on 3rd September 1970. He philosophized about the whole matter saying the Telangana problem should be dealt with ‘self respect’.

Dr. Channa Reddy gave a statement that there was no question of mincing matters and there was no alternative to separate Telangana. It was proposed to convert the Praja Samithi into a political party. A sub-committee appointed by the Praja Samithi suggested on 17th November 1970 that the Praja Samithi must change into a political party. If this was agreed upon in practice, the Socialist, Republican and Congress parties were not willing to continue in the Praja Samithi. Still, they decided to make it a political party. Badri Vishal Pitti, J. Eswari Bai and B. Satyanarayana Reddy quit the Praja Samithi after this decision.

In the Siddipet and Khairatabad (Hyderabad) by-elections to the Legislative Assembly of 1970, the Praja Samithi candidates won. Madan Mohan was elected from Siddipet. These elections were understood to reflect the people’s opinion. In the Lok Sabha elections of 1971, 14 candidates contested in the name of Praja Samithi. Ten members were elected and party bagged 47% of the polled votes.

In Andhra, the Indira Congress bagged all the seats. Sanjeeva Reddy (Syndicate), Ranga (Swathantra) were defeated. Mrs. Indira Gandhi got a majority of the seats all over the Nation. Hence the Praja Samithi could not play any significant role in the Lok Sabha. They did not know what to do.

The Swathantra party was split in the State as well as at the national level. Masani was made the Chairman instead of Ranga. Ranga gradually drifted away from the Swathantra Party. Lachanna was the Chairman of the party in the State. The Party weakened as
many left it and joined the Congress.

Jalagam Vengal Rao who was in Brahmananda Reddy’s Cabinet in 1969 very firmly resolved to crush the Naxalites (CPML). He was bent upon putting an end to their “annihilation (Khatham) movement”. Many Naxalites were gunned down in the name of encounters with the police. The Congress, Swathantra and Jana Sangh parties not only appreciated the policy of the authority but suggested more repressive measures against the Naxalite Movement. They praised Vengal Rao’s efficiency as the Home Minister. The Communists protested openly that the police encounters were made up. As the Communists were divided into many groups, they could not give a strong fight to the Government. Even among the extremists differences and mutual suspicion mounted day by day. One can imagine the intensity of the situation when these groups confronted each other even as prisoners in jails.

Pendekanti Venkata Subbaiah and Gottipati Brahmaiah joined the old Congress but were within no time drawn towards the Indira Congress. Sanjeeva Reddy temporarily kept himself aloof from politics.

After the 1971 elections, Dr. Channa Reddy’s discussions with Mrs. Gandhi resulted in the Six Point formula. This Formula recommended a separate budget for Telangana and separate accounts, continuation of Mulki Rules, legal authority to the Telangana Regional Development Board and a separate Congress Committee for Telangana. It was decided to undertake review of the situation after every three years, and Brahmananda Reddy should resign in favour of a Chief Minister from Telangana. After the agreement between the Prime Minister and Dr. Channa Reddy over the Six Point Formula, Praja Samithi merged with Congress on 18th September, 1971. 220 of the 287 legislators expressed their confidence in Brahmananda Reddy’s leadership. Yet he resigned on Mrs. Gandhi’s suggestion. The ‘Reddy’ domination in politics which had been continuing since 1956 received a set back. The leadership in the State changed not because of the legislators or the people but because of the decision of the Central Government, or rather one
leader. After his removal from the Chief Ministership, Brahmananda Reddy went into temporary political oblivion. Mrs. Gandhi made him the Chairman of the Fifth Finance Commission and later the Home Minister at the Centre. It was then that the emergency was imposed and all decisions were taken without any knowledge of the Minister. In 1977, the Congress split and Brahmananda Reddy deserted Mrs. Gandhi to become the All India President of the Congress-R. He appointed Vengal Rao as the party’s State Chief. Brahmananda Reddy then joined the short lived Cabinet of Charan Singh at the Centre. A very shrewd political maverick, he joined the Congress-I on the eve of the 1980 Lok Sabha elections and was elected to the parliament from Narasaraopet. But Mrs. Gandhi never forgave him for deserting her during the tumultous days of the Janata regime and kept him at a distance. The Telugu Desam threat made her seek the help of Brahmananda Reddy and she appointed him the Chairman of the Congress Co-ordination Committee for the elections. The Congress clout once again effectively whipped Brahmananda Reddy’s political links with the Centre. The Congress party recommended Brahmananda Reddy to contest from Narasaraopet in the 1984 Lok Sabha polls. The Telugu Desam’s candidate Mr. Katuri Narayanaswamy trounced Mr. Brahmananda Reddy in the polls and his influence went into a steep decline even in his native district, leave alone at the State or Central level. Since then, Brahmananda Reddy has become a political recluse, awaiting revival and not realising that his influence and clout were only things of the past.

Brahmananda Reddy later became Governor of Maharastra and died in 1994.
Political Indecision of P.V. Narasimha Rao

Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao was a thorough failure as Chief Minister. He had to face violent agitations for a separate Andhra State which he could not tackle and bungled through in the worst possible way. He was very indecisive, and more often than not had to run to Delhi for consultations and instructions. It was said that Mr. Rao as Chief Minister visited Hyderabad now and then and stayed at Delhi most of the time as a loyalist to Mrs. Gandhi. He tried to corrupt as many legislators as possible to maintain his strength and it is said that some of them received regular monthly payments. Inspite of his loyalty Mr. Rao was removed and President’s rule was imposed in the State. But Mr. Rao continued to be loyal and it was this that paid him rich dividends later. During his short tenure as Chief Minister he tried to pose as a radical but was a social reactionary to the core.

On Mrs. Gandhi’s suggestion, P.V. Narasimha Rao was made the Chief Minister. He hailed from Vangara, Karimnagar District. B.V. Subba Reddy was made the Deputy Chief Minister.

The Centre, with a view to set matters right in Andhra Pradesh Congress, discussed matters for over three months, as a result of which Mohammed Ismail from Kakinada was made the President of Andhra Pradesh Congress. T. Anjaiah of Telangana was nominated as Vice-President. A Committee of 97 members was appointed temporarily, 39 of them were in the action committee. Out of these 39 members, 16 were from Telangana, 14 from Coastal Andhra and 9 from
Rayalaseema. A 15 member Election Committee was formed. Both Brahmananda Reddy and his associate Vijaya Bhaskara Reddy were alienated from this Committee. A 16 Member special Election Committee was also formed for Telangana, though there was no separate Congress formed as per the 6 point Formula. Integrationists did not agree to a separate Congress. The stage was set for selecting Congress candidates for the 1972 Assembly Elections. The temporary State Committee decided to give more weight to the recommendation of District Congress Committees. P.V. Narasimha Rao, Dr. Channa Reddy, Mohammed Ismail and T. Anjaiah formed themselves into a sub-Committee. They called people from the districts for negotiations. Temporary District committees were formed in tune with temporary State Committees. A decision was taken to allot 60% of the seats to Harijans, Girijans, Backward classes and Minorities.

The recommendations of the District Congress Committee were of little value. Manubhai Shah, who had come down from Delhi, stayed in Hyderabad for eleven days to help finalize the list. They looked into the lists submitted by District Committees. They studied the validity of each candidate. The Youth Congress meanwhile was adamant that there should be no candidate from the Mill-owners, Bus-owners and industrialists, even if they applied for it. The Christians appointed Devananda Rao as Chairman and appealed for more representation of Christians to the Assembly. In a similar fashion, Lambadas, Viswa Brahmins, Harijans and workers made much ado, through their respective organizations for more representation. The list of candidates for 244 seats was finalized and sent to Delhi. The Reddys got 47 seats as against 69 in 1967 elections. The Kammas got 29, though they had 47 seats before. The other upper classes got 53 seats in the 1967 elections, whereas only 49 were allotted to them this time. No efforts were spared to bring down the Reddy and Kamma domination. The upper classes got 46% of the seats. Backward classes got 64 seats, Girijans 9, Harijans 39, Minorities 40, women 30. All these were considered as weaker sections. People like Konda Laxman Bapuji blamed the Election Committee that they
selected insignificant people. Men over sixty five were included in the Ministry. The problem was whether they should be given seats or not. B.V. Subba Reddy, Kakani Venkata Ratnam, P. Basi Reddy, Rudraraju Rama Linga Raju belonged to this age group. P.V. Narasimha Rao insisted that they be included in the list of candidates. The report of Manubhai Shah was sent to the Centre disapproving 11 corrupt Ministers getting tickets. The Pradesh Congress tried to keep its lists secret but failed. By 26th January 1972, the lists, aspirants, people with hopes and people who wanted to get things done at Delhi had reached Delhi. One, Kolluri Mallappa, a former member of the Legislature was directed to peruse the lists. On 31st January and 1st February 1972 the Centre announced the list with omissions and additions. Only 116 out of 230 sitting members could get the seats. Men marked as corrupt in Manubhai Shah’s report were included in the list. 15 Muslims and 5 Christians found place in the list. The recommendations of the backward classes did not contribute much in the making of the lists. 22 seats were offered to Channa Reddy’s group in the former Praja Samithi whereas his opponents got 15 seats. The directives the Centre gave were not implemented. The men who sent their applications to the congress for seats had to make a declaration that they would not contest against the party in the case of their not being selected by the party. All the Candidates signed the declarations. But 200 candidates including 14 MLAs fought in the election against the Congress.

P.V. Narasimha Rao and Mohammed Ismail repeatedly warned the Congressmen that if they worked against the party, disciplinary action would be taken against them. 97 such members were expelled from the Congress for 6 years. 300 more were removed from the party. Former Ministers, prominent members in the Pradesh Congress and elected MLAs were among those removed. The All India Congress Members protested against this action as a one-sided decision. Brahmananda Reddy’s group was the major victim of this disciplinary action. Many Zilla Parishad Presidents including Vengala Reddy, Brahmananda Reddy’s brother, were suspended for working against the interests of the congress. Mohammed Ismail had literally
followed the party dictates without any inhibition. But he could not understand the temperament of the Congress and its mercurial ideas. He consulted the Centre before removing the big-shots and was stopped from doing so by the Centre. On an appeal made by Brahmananda Reddy’s group the Centre accepted all of them back into the party. The men who openly went against the party principles knew very well that the matter would be settled in their favour later, as they cared two hoots for local warnings.

The elections resulted in what came to be known as the Indira wave. The weaker sections solidly voted for Congress. The Telangana people had a very short memory about the obscene slogans they wrote on the walls during the movement, the injustice done to them, their earlier opposition to Congress and they co-operated to vote out Praja Samithi completely. The Congress party won 219 seats, eleven seats less than they got in the previous elections. Swathantra party could make no impression and won only two seats. Independents from among the Congress took 53 seats. The Marxist party would have vanished in the Assembly if they had not got that one seat. CPI won 7 seats. The Syndicate Congress contested the election in eleven places but secured no seat. The Jana Sangh met with a similar fate. The victory of 26 women was regarded as an achievement, and ten Muslims won the election.

The Congress party raised certain objections to P.V. Narasimha Rao’s continuing as the Chief Minister after 5 months of his being in power as they complained that for each little issue he ran to Delhi and half the time he stayed in Delhi and would not be useful to the State. It was said that he, as Chief Minister, was not within the reach of party men. His vacillation in making decisions and delay in the disposal of files were shown as his administrative lapses which caused discontentment among the bureaucracy. It was also remarked that he was influenced by the recommendations of his close friends. The Pradesh Congress Vice President, T. Anjaiah, Nukala Ramachandra Reddy, S. Venkatarama Reddy, V. Purushotham Reddy and J. Chokka Rao went to Delhi to inform the P.M. about P.V. Narasimha Rao’s incompetent leadership. After knowing Mrs.
Gandhi’s desire that P.V. should continue as the Chief Minister, they expressed their support for P.V. Narasimha Rao. The centre sent Uma Shankar Dikshit to Hyderabad as the observer. P.V. Narasimha Rao announced his cabinet after consulting Mrs. Gandhi.

The speciality of this ministry was that, not only were there 14 from Telangana but also there were 13 ministers from all the backward classes. But P.V. Narasimha Rao’s ministry did not run smoothly. He had to face the criticism that he accepted recommendations, brought corrupt people close to himself and was partial to his relations. His son Ranga Rao, availed himself of this opportunity and acted as he pleased and the father never warned him against it. Dr. Channa Reddy’s men were in the Ministry but remained almost passive to political issues. Seelam Sidda Reddy in Khammam District, and Vijaya Bhaskara Reddy in Kurnool, were active as the opponents within the party.

Though P.V. Narasimha Rao was eloquent in favour of an economic revolution, he turned out to be a reactionary as far as social reforms were concerned. He encouraged orthodox mysticism and religious beliefs. This was understood by some as Brahmanism. He launched upon abolishing Panchayat Raj administration and Zilla Parishads. This enraged the Congress leaders in the districts as they lost power. The Land Reforms Bill was introduced and passed on 5th September 1972. Earlier, on 5th July an ordinance was issued for Urban Land Ceiling. The Congressmen who appeared to support P.V. Narasimha Rao, however, nourished displeasure and antagonism towards these reforms brought about by him. On 9th April, Mohammed Ismail announced the removal of 14 leading Congressmen from the party. The relations between P.V. Narasimha Rao and Mohammed Ismail were strained and the affairs of the party too were no better. Mrs. Gandhi came to Hyderabad on 28th April and patched up the differences. With the demise of D. Sanjeevaiah in Delhi on 7th May, the Harijans were left without a prominent leader.

The separate Andhra agitation started for many reasons. The
Telangana agitation of 1969-70 was still fresh in the minds of the Andhras. The obscene writings against them in Telangana were not erased from their memory. They resented the idea of the Andhras living in the capital city as second-rate citizens. The Reddys who ruled politically for 16 years had lost their influence. The rich Kammas and Rajus felt that land ceiling was going to hit them hard. With these grievances in their minds, the Andhras started the movement. The students led the agitation as they had done in Telangana, on 24th October 1972. P.V. Narasimha Rao was humiliated in Eluru and returned to Hyderabad. The NGOs went on strike from 26th October, 1972. B.V. Subba Reddy as spokesman led the Andhras. At a meeting on 12th November in Guntur, the demand was not for a separate Andhra. They wanted Andhra Pradesh to continue without any conditions. The meeting was attended by Nissankara Rao Venkata Ratnam, C.V.K. Rao, A. Sreeramulu, Srinivasulu Reddy etc. An all party meeting was held on 18th and 19th November 1972. They resolved that if unconditional Andhra Pradesh was not possible, Andhra should be separate. An organization called Andhra Praja Parishath was started. Gouthu Lachanna was its President; Nadimpalli Narasimha Rao its Vice-President, Jagarlamudi Chandra Mouli the Treasurer and Thummala Choudary the Secretary. Three days after its formation, a ‘Bundh’ call was given in Andhra. Police resorted to firing all over Andhra on 21st November and as Reserve Police forces were brought in, Mrs. Gandhi, overruling the formation of a separate Andhra brought out the Five Point formula. The first eight points and the 6-point formula given to the Telangana earlier, were not to be ignored. The leaders declined to accept the Prime Minister’s 5-point formula. Student leaders met in Guntur on 28th November 1972 and gave a call for ‘Bundh’. The Lawyers Association, at a meeting on 30th November in Rajahmundry, decided not to boycott Courts.

The Congress MLAs met at Hyderabad to discuss the Five Point Formula of the Prime Minister. P.V.Narasimha Rao announced that the Five Point formula had received the approval of the MLAs but some Congress MLAs disagreed. Vasantha Nageswara Rao, Kudipidi Prabhakara Rao and Peter Paul Chukka contradicted
P.V’s announcement. B.V. Subba Reddy, though desiring certain clarifications, accepted the Prime Minister’s formula. During the last week of December, the Praja Parishat organized meetings and conferences all over Andhra and the Government ordered the people to be arrested. A mammoth meeting was held on 10th December at Vijayawada. Another organization was formed with Tenneti Viswanatham as Honorary President and Lachanna as President. When Lachanna read out the names of Working Committee Members, Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah protested against it. It was decided to stop buses and trains as a protest. Battena Subba Rao, one of the Ministers, sent his resignation to the Chief Minister as well as to the Prime Minister. This was followed by the collective resignations of eight other ministers - B.V. Subba Reddy, Vasireddy Krishna Murthy Naidu, Kakani Venkata Ratnam, Sagi Suryanarayana Raju, Basi Reddy, Challa Subba Rayudu, D. Muniswamy and Murthy Raju. Again, on 17th December, there was a huge meeting at Vijayawada. It was attended by all the Ministers who resigned, the Zilla Parishad Chairmans, MLAs, Samithi Presidents and other prominent people. When they were in the thick of discussions, an agitating mob gathered outside and shouted warnings to them that they would not come out alive unless they made resolutions for a separate Andhra. The Ministers who resigned were forced by threats to agree to a separate Andhra.

P.V. Narasimha Rao planned a big procession on 24th December in Vijayawada with the support of the Communists so that it could be a counter blow to the separatist movement. Kakani Venkataratnam took it as a challenge and thought it an insult to allow such a procession in the midst of the populistic movement, and insisted upon stopping it. Consequently, in the police firing, eight people were killed. A little later that night, Kakani passed away. The Andhra Central Working Committee resolved on 26th December, to give a ‘bundh’ call on 2nd January 1973. Since the inception of the Working Committee, there were mutual suspicions and differences among them regarding fund collection.

But the police firing had not stopped. On 31st December, the

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Congressmen arranged a meeting which was attended by 131 MLAs, 11 Parliament Members and thousands from the public. The Government arrested all the leaders. On the ‘Bundh’ day on 2nd January, as many as 60 people died in police firing. 15 members of the Parliament threatened to leave Congress if a separate Andhra was not announced by 26th January. Meanwhile, P.V. appointed 8 ministers from Andhra in place of the eight who had resigned earlier. Madduri Subba Reddy, P.V. Choudary, K. Amarnath Reddy, G. Somasekhar, C. Das, Vadde Nageswara Rao, R. Rajagopal Reddy and Anam Venkata Reddy were the new substitute ministers. They were sworn in and before they could taste power, within eight days of their swearing in, P.V.’s Ministry was dismissed and President’s Rule was imposed in the State. H.C. Sarin was appointed as the Special Advisor to the Governor. In Andhra, the movement still continued. In a meeting at Kakinada, on 21st January, it was decided to intensify the movement. B.V. Subba Reddy said that he would bring revolution, if before 5th February the matter pertaining to a separate Andhra and their resignations from the Congress party was not decided. It was resolved that all the MLAs should submit their resignations. The Leaders like Ranga, Lachanna and Kommareddy Suryanarayana made emotional speeches in a meeting on 26th January on the banks of the river Krishna. The students in a meeting at Nellore on 27th January resolved that the MLAs should resign from the Legislative Assembly. The working committee which met at Narasaraopet requested the MLAs to resign but nobody was willing to resign. The Congressmen and also Tenneti opposed the idea of resignation. They were not prepared to forego the comforts and facilities they enjoyed as MLAs. They were not sure of being elected again, once they resigned. B.V. Subba Reddy was made Chairman of the Working Committee. Some of the Ex-Ministers who wanted to go to Delhi were warned against it by B.V. Subba Reddy. None of his resolutions could bring the promised revolution. They could only stop the trains as a part of their revolution. When Mrs. Gandhi condemned the movement decisively, the opposition leaders in the Lok Sabha supported the Andhra Movement. On 7th February,
B.V. Subba Reddy received an invitation from Mrs. Gandhi to visit Delhi for talks. Basi Reddy and V. Krishna Murthy Naidu went on their own accord. On 15th February, in a resolution, at the meeting in Karamchedu, the ex-ministers’ trip to Delhi was condemned. Subba Reddy, Tenneti Viswanadham, Ranga and Gotti Brahmaiah were absent from the meeting, for reasons best known to themselves. At the Karamchedu meeting the Congressmen and the opposite groups quarrelled among themselves. Lachanna and Challa Subba Rayudu exchanged harsh words. A tense situation prevailed in the meeting. But the people continued the movement. Though B.V. Subba Reddy, Tenneti and Lachanna sat for consultations on 17th February they could not give a statement together. Parliament met on 19th February. The MPs who favoured a separate Andhra and the Andhra MPs who announced in Andhra that they would leave the party, sat together in the Parliament. B.V. Subba Reddy was once again invited to Delhi by the Prime Minister, Tenneti resigned as the Convener of the United Working Committee. Only Lachanna submitted his resignation from membership in the Legislative Council. B.V. Subba Reddy took an oath that he would not step into Hyderabad till a separate Andhra was achieved. Jupudi Yagna Narayana, though announced his resignation from the Council, did not actually resign. Bandaru Ratna Sabhapathy resigned to the Legislative Assembly. B.V. Subba Reddy’s discussions with Mrs. Gandhi did not achieve anything. But gradually the movement started weakening. The separatists and integrationists grappled with each other periodically. The Congress Working Committee meeting to be held originally at Tirupathi on 18th March, was shifted to Chittoor. This meeting was held with B.V. Subba Reddy in the Chair. It was resolved to start a new party. With D. Muniswamy as the Chairman, a sub-committee was formed to that effect. There was no voting in the meeting to find out whether the 132 MLAs and 5 MPs were in favour of a separate party. But the people soon realized that the Congress men were fooling themselves. The NGOs and teachers called off their strikes. The police fired at a meeting of NGOs in Cuddapah where B.V. Subba Reddy was speaking. B.V. Subba Reddy was somehow rescued.
Justice Madhava Reddy of Andhra Pradesh High Court, was appointed to probe into the matter. M.V. Rama Murthy who was, till then, the secretary of the Steering Committee of the Andhra Central Working Committee, resigned due to differences of opinion. The lawyers decided to go to court and the students to call off the strike. The Jai Andhra Front came into existence in Rajahmundry on 6th April 1973. Ratna Sabhapati, Nadimpally Narasimha Rao, Tenneti Viswanatham, Lachanna, Thummala Choudhary, A.B. Nageswara Rao and G.C. Kondaiah were associated with it. T. Purushottam Reddy and B. Satyanarayana Reddy from Telangana participated in it on sympathetic grounds. The adhoc Congress Committee of Andhra Pradesh with Mohd. Ismail as the Chairman was abolished on 10th January 1973. Instead, an official committee was appointed with many other members. Dr. Channa Reddy, Pidathala Ranga Reddy and Vijaya Bhaskara Reddy were among them, but Vijaya Bhaskara Reddy refused to join the Committee.

When the movement continued in Andhra, a separate Telangana Congress Forum was formed in Telangana. Dr. Channa Reddy was the Chairman, Jaipal Reddy, Roda Mistry, Sarojini Pulla Reddy, Ibrahim Ali Ansari, Baga Reddy, Purushotham Reddy, Seelam Sidda Reddy, Sudhakar Reddy, Venkata Rama Reddy, K.V. Kesavulu, J. Chokka Rao and some others were members. They organized a meeting of Congress workers on 1st March. The separatists in Telangana and Andhra wanted to work together.


Kotha Raghulu Ramaiah and G. Venkata Swamy were taken in to the Central Cabinet on 3rd February 1973. Though Raghuramaiah was elected to Lok Sabha in 1971, Mrs. Gandhi did not offer him the Ministry keeping in view the complaints she had received against
him. Soon after Raghuramaiah became the Minister some of the prominent Kammams in Krishna and Guntur districts turned indifferent to the demand for a separate Andhra.

N.G. Ranga, who was defeated in the elections to Lok Sabha in 1971 and later to Rajya Sabha, was very critical of Mrs. Gandhi till then. But he suddenly started supporting her. His group which had participated in the separate Andhra Movement behaved differently. Basi Reddy, who did not like B.V. Subba Reddy’s leadership, started consultations with the Centre. Brahmananda Reddy as usual did not reveal his attitude to the others. The members of the Andhra Congress, who wanted to start a new party did not submit their report though they said they would do it on 16th August 1973.

Kodati Rajamallu and Akkiraju Vasudeva Rao in Telangana gave a statement saying that Mulki Rules should go. Nobody took B.V. Subba Reddy’s words seriously when he said that he would go on strike if a separate Andhra was not formed by 2nd October, the birthday of Gandhiji. The intensive Andhra movement led by emotional people, went astray in course of time. The extremists played a prominent role in this movement. The Marxists and the CPI stood for integration. 30 different groups in favour of separate Andhra slowly disintegrated and disappeared. Forcible collection of funds, violence and atrocities found place in the movement. Destruction and loss of property became part of the movement and it was the people who had to bear with it all. As always, the politicians gained favours at the cost of the innocent people.

Mrs. Gandhi implemented the six-point formula on 1st September 1973. Nobody, either in Telangana, or in Andhra, was willing to discuss the Pros and Cons of the formula. The people were the ultimate victims of both of these movements.

Lachanna left Swathantra Party to join the Bharatiya Lok Dal Party started by Choudary Charan Singh. By then, he had only a few followers left in Andhra. As all the other Congress men displeased Mrs. Gandhi, P.V. Narasimha Rao was left in temporary political
wilderness. But he gradually came closer to Mrs. Gandhi and was soon inducted into the Union Cabinet and became a permanent feature there-holding all the major portfolios at one time or the other. His performance was especially credit-worthy in the External Affairs portfolio. His proximity to Mrs. Gandhi increased his influence in the State Politics and he played a key role in groupism and politicking. Mr. Narasimha Rao was the Home Minister when Mrs. Gandhi was assassinated and despite demands from several quarters for his resignation, he kept a stoic silence. Then came the 1984 Lok Sabha Polls and Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao got a drubbing from the Telugu Desam backed BJP candidate and lost by over 55,000 votes. P.V., being what he is, had already anticipated this and was the only Congress candidate to fight the elections from two places. His choice of Ram Tek in the Congress bastion of Vidarbha in Maharashtra was a credit to his keen political skill and he won there handsomely. Unlike his counterparts, Shivasankar, Vijaya Bhaskara Reddy, Sanjiva Rao and P. Venkatasubbaiah, he was inducted into the new Rajiv Cabinet as the Defence Minister. Thus P.V. Narasimha Rao’s rather uninterrupted proximity to power continued despite his marked reluctance to make quick decisions or his total lack of a political base in his home State.

During the President’s rule, H.C. Sarin, who was the adviser to the Governor, ruled the State unopposed. The politicians despaired as they could do nothing. The politicians, who lived on politics alone, were restless. They made many trips to Delhi. They did not lose time in accepting the six-point formula, and once again asked for people’s rule. Their problem was not who should be made the leader, but who should not be allowed to be their leader. They forgot their demands either for a separate Telangana or a separate Andhra. They did not even mention it. Sarin’s administration ended uneventfully as the politicians were sold out in a bid to restore elections and popular rule, not for the benefit of the State or the people, but for their own politicking.

P.V. Narasimha Rao after retiring from politics, faced charges in many fields. He was not active in politics.
Mr. Jalagam Vengal Rao emerged as a compromise candidate acceptable to all the regions in the State. After the President’s rule for a short period, Mr. Vengal Rao’s tenure gave relief to the political activity as well as the bureaucracy. By and large, his rule was peaceful and ran smoothly. No doubt the dissidents were there but at that time it was of no consequence. Quick in decision making and equally fast in implementation, Mr. Vengal Rao maintained the balance between the demanding politicians and the assertive bureaucracy. He had to face an Enquiry Commission which he did boldly and in the end, came out victorious. He had fallen from grace with Mrs. Gandhi when he rebelled against her and joined the rival Congress party but unlike several politicians in the State, Vengal Rao continued to stay in Congress-U for a long time though he was aware that he was fighting a losing battle. When the Vimalal Commission passed some strictures in the Interim Report Mr. Vengal Rao resigned from the Legislative Assembly and enhanced his prestige in the political arena. No doubt, he committed certain mistakes like encouraging his son in the political field during his Chief Ministership and also exhibited strong likes and dislikes towards certain persons which resulted in enmity with some of his close associates.

Mrs. Gandhi’s wish prevailed as to who should lead the Andhra Pradesh Legislature. And as per her wish,
Vengal Rao was unanimously elected as the Chief Minister on 7th December, 1973. He announced his Cabinet on 10th December 1973.

B.V. Subba Reddy who said that he was ready to offer any sacrifice for the cause of a separate Andhra, quietly accepted the Deputy Chief Minister's post in the integration cabinet. Vengal Rao, who was an Andhra settler in Telangana, offered the Deputy Chief Minister’s position to Rayalaseema as per the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1955. Basi Reddy, Battena Subba Rao, Sagi Suryanarayana Raju, and V. Krishna Murthy Naidu who had to pose earlier as separatists under compulsion, became ministers in Vengal Rao’s Cabinet. Nukala Ramachandra Reddy, J.Chokka Rao, K. Rajamallu, Mohammed Ibrahim Ali Ansari and G.Rajaram from Telangana were made Ministers. Lukalapu Lakshman Das, Ch. Devananda Rao, M. Laxmi Devi were also there in the Ministry. In a month’s time, the integrationists M.V. Krishna Rao and Bhattam Srirama Murthy and Chanumolu Venkata Rao, who also worked for a separate Andhra, were sworn in as Ministers. Within a period of six months, (7th June, 1974) B.V. Subba Reddy passed away. No one was appointed as the Deputy Chief Minister after B.V. Subba Reddy’s death. With the expansion of the ministry on 25th September, 1974 P. Ranga Reddy, T. Anjaiah, P. Narasa Reddy, Asif Pasha, K.V. Keshavulu and Anam Venkata Reddy found a place in the Cabinet.

Vengal Rao, known as an integrationist, while bringing certain changes in the State Congress made Veeramachineni Venkata Narayana its President. Veeramachineni was a candidate from the Old Congress in 1971 Lok Sabha elections when he was defeated by Kommareddy Suryanarayana. It was said that the latter wanted to become the State Congress President.

While implementing the six-point formula, the three Development Boards for Andhra Pradesh were created. K.B. Narasappa, who was an opponent of B.V. Subba Reddy became the Chairman of the Rayalaseema Development Board, Rebala Dasaratha Rami Reddy became the Chairman of the Andhra Development Board and the Deputy Speaker, Jagannatha
Rao was made Chairman of the Telangana Development Board.

Dr. Channa Reddy was sent as the Governor of Uttar Pradesh on 18th October 1974. Brahmananda Reddy became the Home Minister at the Centre. Vengal Rao was lucky to have a peaceful atmosphere in the State with the departure of these two trouble makers.

During the first year of his office, Vengal Rao abolished food zones all over the State. He brought about many changes in the Police Department by bringing his followers into most of the key-posts. He seldom consulted any of the ministers in the Cabinet. Seelam Sidda Reddy and Chekuri Kasaiah were his opponents in his own district. Anna Rao was appointed the Chairman of Tirupathi Devasthanams (Temples). It was said that this appointment was made without consulting the concerned minister, Sagi Suryanarayana Raju. Though the ministers did not openly protest against Vengal Rao’s attitude, the complaints went to the High Command. Slowly the grouping of MLAs against the Chief Minister started. P.V. Narsimha Rao’s hand was evident in all these activities. Efforts were made to bring down Vengal Rao. The World Telugu Conference was celebrated from 12th April 1975. M.V. Krishna Rao was the man behind these celebrations and many complaints were received against him for corruption. All the dissident groups tried to come together against him but when the Emergency was declared by Mrs. Gandhi on 25th June 1975 all over the country, all the dissidents in the State Congress were silenced.

At the time when the Emergency was declared, Vengal Rao happened to be in Delhi. It was through him that Mrs. Gandhi conveyed the secret message about the Emergency to the Karnataka Chief Minister, Dev Raj Urs. As per the instructions of the Centre, most of the opposition leaders from BLD, Socialist, CPM, Jana Sangh and CPM(L) were arrested in Andhra Pradesh. No cases were registered against them nor were they brought to trial. Many members of R.S.S. were imprisoned and harassed. The extremists were brutally tortured and shot dead in the name of Police encounters. Two extremists, Kista Goud and Bhumaiah were hanged in Musheerabad Jail on 1st December, 1975. A nation-wide agitation
took place in the pre-emergency period against the death sentence. The Court too gave the ‘stay’ order. The news about their hanging was censored. A Censor Board was created in the Information Department itself, many news items were censored over the telephone itself. Even when a breach occurred in the Godavari barrage, the Information Department censored the Press from giving further details. The Press itself felt the pressure and imposed self-restraint.

When Mrs. Gandhi came to Vizag on 3rd January 1976 to inaugurate the Science Congress, her son Sanjay accompanied her. It was her second visit to Andhra Pradesh during the Emergency. Earlier, she had come to Hyderabad to inaugurate the National Police Academy. All arrangements were made to accord a grand welcome to Sanjay Gandhi at public expense and the State Government used its official machinery to give a lavish reception to the Prime Minister and her heir apparent in a bid to woo and flatter the High Command. Such was the pitiable position of a Chief Minister in those Emergency days.

Though certain changes were brought about regarding Panchayat Samithis and Zilla Parishads, elections were not held. All the Cooperative Institutions were run by persons-in-charge of them. This was an effort by the party in power to strengthen itself politically without using democratic means. In the name of the 20-Point Formula, the Centre sanctioned a few crores of rupees and while spending it for the State, Vengal Rao conducted a very good propaganda for Mrs. Gandhi and her party. Along with that, even the 5-Point Formula of Sanjay Gandhi was prominently brought home to the people. Any small developmental activity taken up in the State, like giving land pattas to people, loans for houses, was promoted as a boon from Mrs. Gandhi.

In the absence of the regular Governor to the State, the Chief Justice Obul Reddy acted as the Governor. Later, R.D. Bhandare took charge as the Governor of Andhra Pradesh on 15th June 1976 and started the propaganda for the 20-Point Formula thus abusing the high office.

Though Vengal Rao was very close to Mrs. Gandhi, he could
not do away with groupism in the State Congress as well as in the Ministry. Basi Reddy, the Industries Minister, was against the Chief Minister on many issues. Even during the Emergency, he carried complaints to the High Command in Delhi. P.V. Narasimha Rao maintained a close relationship with Mrs. Gandhi in Delhi. Frequent consultations took place between the dissidents and P.V. in order to overthrow Vengal Rao. V. Jagannatha Rao and G. Raja Rao were the prominent people in such efforts. When the Chief Minister felt the seriousness of this campaign, he insisted upon Basi Reddy’s resignation from the Ministry. Basi Reddy submitted his resignation on 12th August 1976. Vengal Rao took up expansion of his Ministry with a view to strengthen his position. Chebrolu Hanumaiah, Parakala Seshavatharam, P. Dharama Reddy, V. Narayana Swamy, K. Narasappa, and Krishnaveni Sanjeevaiah were sworn in as new ministers on 14th August, 1976.

The Legislative Assembly met during the Emergency. The discussions held there were not allowed to be published in the newspapers. News was received that Neelam Ramachandra Rao, the extremist Communist member of Legislative Council died in a Police encounter. Some members attempted to express their sympathy in their speeches but were not permitted to do so. The Legislators who were in jails were not allowed to attend the Assembly sessions even with a police escort.

As a result of infighting in the Congress, Tadepalli Musalaiah was brought in as temporary substitute to Veeramachaneni Venkata Narayana as the Pradesh Congress President. Veeramachaneni Venkata Narayana who hoped to be a Minister, ended up without any position and became a strong opponent of Vengal Rao.

An important event took place in December 1976. Vengal Rao invited Sanjay Gandhi to Andhra. He arranged meetings in Kothagudem, Guntur and Tirupathi. The whole Government machinery strained its nerves to give a grand welcome to Sanjay. The Singareni Collieries personnel built a helipad for Sanjay’s helicopter to land. Huge amounts were spent on dinners and cultural programmes. The State Ministers and Congress leaders vied with
one another for Sanjay’s favours. The Girijans, who were to receive help from the Government were brought to the spot in lorries. The State Government filmed the whole function in the name of ‘Memorable Movements’. Sanjay Gandhi came in a special plane. It was said that he himself piloted the plane. Vengal Rao and Raghu Ramaiah were with him. That day all the groups in the Congress hailed Sanjay Gandhi. The masses gathered at a mammoth public meeting in Guntur. Raghu Ramaiah, the Central Minister, expressed his allegiance to Sanjay Gandhi saying that he had served his grandfather Jawaharlal and his mother Indira, and was now ready to serve him. He called Sanjay, ‘The Rising Sun’ and even requested him not to forget people like him who served his family. The people were disgusted at Raghu Ramaiah’s speech but Raghu Ramaiah later said privately that he expressed what he did whereas others did things and never expressed them in words. Vengal Rao encouraged some young men in the name of ‘Youth Congress’ and his son Jalagam Prasada Rao came into prominence in the politics of Khammam district. As Vengal Rao did not check his son’s advances, people thought that he had given his blessings to the political ambitions of his son.

Some of the persons in jails sought Vengal Rao’s favour and were released on bail. The Chief Minister was quite benevolent in the matter and did not order the arrest of his ‘Guru’ (Master) Sanjeeva Reddy. Even when Sanjeeva Reddy attempted to address one or two public meetings, he was not arrested but only prevented from speaking. But those who hosted Sanjeeva Reddy were arrested. When compared to the North, Andhra Pradesh felt only a few of the excesses of the Emergency. But many Government servants, Police officers and teachers were removed from service in the name of inefficiency and corruption. Only a few of them could later go to court for justice.

Mr. Jalagam Vengala Rao published his controversial autobiography in which he exposed the secrets of emergency rule of Indira Gandhi. But the High Court of U.P. indicted him posthumously for writing comments on Justice Sinha without evidence. The book was withdrawn from circulation. He died in June 1999.
Turning Point after Emergency

With the lifting of Emergency and the calling of Lok Sabha Elections in January 1977, the political parties started their activity. The Janata Party, first formed at the Centre, all of a sudden found a branch in Andhra Pradesh. Tenneti Viswanatham was made its President. For all 42 Lok Sabha seats candidates were selected in a hurry. Sanjeeva Reddy was the leader-in charge of the elections of the Janata Party in South India. Konda Laxman joined the Janatantra Party started by Jagjivan Ram. But a decision was taken without much ado. Sanjeeva Reddy contested from Nandyal. Pendekanti Venkata Subbaiah was his opponent on the Congress ticket. Rajagopala Naidu and Chengal Rao Naidu were mutual opponents in Chittoor. Almost all the Congress candidates had contested in the previous election. Raghu Ramaiah was opposed by the Janata Candidate, Dr. Sadashiv Rao. Both belonged to the same community. The Congress Candidate in Narasaraopet was Brahmananda Reddy and Gode Murahari contested from Vijayawada. Though an Andhra, he was returned to Lok Sabha earlier from the Socialist Party of North India. The Janata wave in the North against Mrs. Gandhi was expected in South India too. The Janata leaders toured Andhra Pradesh for election canvassing. People attended their meetings in large numbers. Even the Congressmen did their best in the canvassing. The Chief Minister, Vengal Rao, was confident from the beginning, of winning all 42 seats. His brother, Kondala Rao, contested from Khammam. Both Sanjeeva Reddy and Vengal Rao exchanged many pungent remarks against each other in the meetings. Raghu Ramaiah and Brahmananda Reddy opposed each other clandestinely. In certain constituencies the congress candidates lost hope of winning. But the results surprised everybody
when 41 out of 42 seats in Andhra Pradesh were bagged by the Congress. Sanjeeva Reddy was the only Janata candidate who won from Nandyal. 57% of the votes were polled for Congress and 32% for Janata. Both the Communist parties were driven into wilderness.

On the one hand, Vengal Rao was happy about his thumping victory in the State, on the other, he had to face his party’s defeat at the Centre. After the election, disciplinary action was taken against those who worked against the Congress interests in the elections. Vengal Rao removed Chekuri Kasaiah, from Congress, and created a critical situation for himself, as ill-feeling in the Ministry started showing up once again. The ensuing Assembly elections gave rise to new thoughts in the minds of the opponents. Framing many charges against Vengal Rao, the Janata members demanded an enquiry. They brought pressure in the Assembly as well as at the Centre. The Centre appointed two Commissions of Inquiry - the Vimadlal Commission and the Bhragava Commission. Both were appointed by the State itself as advised by the Centre. The Tarkunde Committee claimed that the Naxalites did not die in encounters but were brutally shot dead by the police. M.V. Rama Murthy, Dr. Balvanth Reddy, Kannabhi Ram and Kalojee Narayana Rao were in this Committee for the State. Based on the report of this Committee, the Bhargava commission was appointed. The Vimadlal Commission, was appointed to go into the charges of corruption against the Chief Minister and some of his cabinet colleagues. The Ministers who had charges against them were P. Ranga Reddy, J. Chokka Rao, M.V. Krishna Rao, Bhattam Sree Ramamurthy and K.V. Kesavulu. J. Vengal Rao was compelled to remove some service personnel and also to look into complaints to show that he was upright.

At the Centre too political changes came up. K. Brahmananda Reddy became the All India Congress President. As per Mrs. Gandhi’s wish G. Raja Ram proposed Brahmananda Reddy’s name. As a protest against this Kotha Raghu Ramaiah left the Congress and J. Vengal Rao submitted his resignation as Chief Minister. The Congress High Command did not approve of his resignation. Mrs. Gandhi called Vengal Rao to Delhi to patch up the
differences. At her request, Vengal Rao agreed to come to terms with Brahmananda Reddy. The High Command permitted Vengal Rao to withdraw his resignation. Certain changes were brought about in the State Congress too. Rahmathullah was made the Congress President removing Tadepalli Musalaiah. He was an affluent Muslim from Cuddapah and a member of the Rajya Sabha. Later, he was to join the Indira Congress and desert Vengal Rao. Even the State Cabinet had to be expanded to accommodate Brahmananda Reddy’s men. His right hand man, Konda Narapa Reddy was made the Minister for Panchayat Raj. Amarnath Reddy and Appadu Dora were taken into the ministry. K. Rajamallu, the Medical Minister had quarreled with Vengal Rao on many occasions. The Minister insisted upon the transfer of many doctors of the upper castes as they had over-stayed in the capital and also banned private practice by the Government doctors. But, Vengal Rao interfered in this issue and matters between the two of them reached a climax. Rajamallu resigned from the Cabinet. Vengal Rao declared that he himself had sacked Rajamallu.

On 19th November 1977, a tidal wave hit Krishna district killing over 10,000 and rendering thousands homeless. Vengal Rao and his Ministry had to face some criticism as they did not render timely help and offer rescue measures to the people. Finance Minister P. Ranga Reddy, Agricultural Minister J. Chokka Rao and Housing Minister P. Dharma Reddy submitted their resignations holding the Chief Minister responsible for the havoc caused to the people. During the elections, P. Ranga Reddy and J. Chokka Rao had joined the Janata Party. T. Anjaiah and G. Raja Ram too left the Ministry and joined the Indira Congress. When there was a rift in the Congress once again Vengal Rao did not side Mrs. Gandhi and remained with Brahmananda Reddy. V. Purushottam Reddy, the Excise Minister, resigned from the Cabinet and joined the Janata Party. Lukalapu Lakshmana Das too submitted his resignation as Minister. Bhattam, though at times he had criticized Vengal Rao, did not go to the extent of resignation from the party. Sagi Suryanarayana Raju, an opponent of Bhattam in Vizag had joined the Janata Party and it was thought
that this had prevented Bhattam from joining the Janata Party. Vengal Rao and Brahmananda Reddy remained in the field to fight the election against Mrs. Gandhi. Some of the MLAs joined Mrs. Gandhi’s party and some others defected to Janata. J. Vengal Rao, while giving evidence before the Vimalal Commission confessed that he had invited Sanjay Gandhi due to political circumstances prevailing at that time.

Dr. Channa Reddy came back to the State having submitted his resignation as Governor of Uttar Pradesh. He came over to Mrs. Gandhi’s side and played a prominent role in that party. On 18th January, 1978 at the Congress State Conference at Hyderabad Mrs. Gandhi declared Dr. Channa Reddy as the President of the Andhra Pradesh Indira Congress. G. Rajaram who aspired to be the President, had himself to propose Dr. Chennia Reddy’s name as per Mrs. Gandhi’s wish.

Janata Party in Andhra Pradesh having secured only one seat in 1977 Lok Sabha election had still to provide an able leader. Somehow, they blindly hoped that they were going to come to power in 1978. They decided to establish themselves as a strong party against the Congress in the State. Tenneti still continued as Janata President in the State. The party decided to replace Tenneti with someone more dynamic, but they could never agree about such a person. Like the Congressmen, they too ran to Delhi for help. They were equally bad about carrying complaints to the Central Janata Party against their opponents in the party. The Socialists, Jana Sangh, BLD and CFD men met their respective party leaders in Delhi and made complaints against each other. Lachanna, Lakshmi Kanthamma, Tenneti, Konda Laxman were the candidates for party Presidentship. George Fernandes and Veerendra Shah were directed to go to Hyderabad to settle the disputes. The whole issue became a big farce. The aspirants brought their men from their respective districts to recommend their case. The members of Jana Sangh were said to have avoided supporting their candidate Bangaru Laxman at the last moment because he was a Harijan. The Socialists and the Jana Sangh supported Lachanna. Fernandes and Veerendra Shah made their
decision after going back to Delhi. The party followed the via media by retaining Tenneti Viswanatham as the President and appointing Lachanna as the Vice President. Eight people were made Secretaries apart from a big committee. The Janata men could not behave in a dignified manner and Lachanna started his old politics of the Swathantra party. There was infighting among the party men and, keeping in view the approaching election, the Centre sent Surendra Mohan to Hyderabad, but even his word could not prevail. The Janata Party was however successful in appointing the Vimadlal Commission. Ayyapa Reddy, who supported Mrs. Gandhi’s Constitutional Amendments even during the Emergency had become the Janata leader in the Legislative Assembly. As there was not much difference between the Congress and the Janata in Andhra Pradesh and as even the new comers into the party happened to be Congress men, it was called the ‘Janata Congress’.

The Janata members were restless as there was no issue in the State and the tidal wave and the cyclone came in ready for the Janata leaders to come down and say that Vengal Rao’s Government failed to help the people. On the day of the cyclone on 19th November 1977 Vengal Rao was in Delhi. The Janata men criticized him for ignoring the people in favour of politics. The fact that M.V. Krishna Rao, a Minister in Vengal Rao’s Cabinet, was present in the cyclone affected area and served the people day and night, was enough to save Vengal Rao’s Ministry from Janata reprobation. When Mrs. Gandhi offered to tour Andhra earlier, Vengal Rao advised her against it on telephone. But Mrs. Gandhi took this opportunity to visit Andhra. T. Anjaiah and Bhavanam Venkat Ram accompanied her on her tour.

The whole of January 1978 was the month of elections in Andhra Pradesh. Nobody could predict which party was going to win. Some, to be on the safe side, applied to all the three parties (Janata, Congress-I and Congress) for a ticket. No party published the list of applicants. The terrible exodus from one party to the other before elections brought to light the fact that some had applied to all the three parties. The Janata Election Committee secretly decided the candidates. In addition to this rush, the Janata Party made an alliance
with CPM, CPML and the Republican Party. Hence till the last moment they could not announce the list. It agreed to give 22 seats to the Marxists. Their alliance with CPM(L) did not materialize. The ruling Congress gave most of the seats to sitting members. As they had an alliance with the CPI, their candidates contested for only 257 seats. The Indira Congress was the last to publish its list. With no alliance with any party, Congress-I contested in 284 constituencies. It had 202 new faces and the rest comprised of people who could not get the Janata and Congress tickets.

The election campaign was organized on a large scale as each party hoped that it would surely come into power. Vengal Rao, relying on the Lok Sabha elections, said that he would come back to power. Dr. Channa Reddy was sure of coming to power. The Janata Party believed that there was a Janata wave all over. All the Janata leaders came to the State for the election campaign and drew large crowds. The ruling congress did not attract many people to their meetings. Mrs. Gandhi toured Andhra Pradesh twice. Her visits attracted women and backward classes. Janata men commented that the crowds attended Mrs. Gandhi’s meetings to see what she looked like when out of power. The Congress-I announced in its manifesto that it would stand for the integration of the State. The separate Telangana issue did not come up because the once staunch separatist, Dr. Channa Reddy himself stood for integration. No body paid any attention to one or two leaders who talked about the separatist problem.

Kalojee Narayana Rao contested against Vengal Rao, as all the parties supported Kalojee, and Vengal Rao had to concentrate on his constituency most of the time.

Many were proved wrong in predicting the election results. The Harijan, Girijan and Backward Classes gave the utmost support to Mrs. Gandhi. The Congress-I stunned every one by bagging 175 seats and swept the polls. The ruling Congress was trounced and so were the Communist parties which ended with a paltry 14 seats. The Janata bagged 60, the Congress 30, and the Congress-I 175.
The special feature of this election was that 202 out of 294 seats went to fresh candidates. Many Ministers and sitting MLAs were defeated. But Vengal Rao, Bhattam and Chanumolu Venkata Rao were retuned to the Assembly. The Congress (R) was wiped out in the State and the Janata did well to end up as the major opposition party in the House. Thus ended Vengal Rao’s tenure as Chief Minister. Soon he resigned from the Assembly and choose business instead of politics. In 1983, a totally depleted Congress and a few of its leaders literally compelled Vengal Rao to join the Congress-I. The man who had denied the use of a Government guest house to Mrs. Gandhi when she was out of power, joined hands with her in a bid to counter N.T. Rama Rao’s charisma. Vengal Rao’s career had turned full circle and the fact, that power drives men to accept what they had once detested, is quite evident. The anticipated resignation of the State Congress party leader never took place and Vengal Rao remained totally ineffective within the party. A bitter political battle between the CPI and CPM saw to it that Vengal Rao scraped through to the Lok Sabha from Khammam in the 1984 Parliamentary polls. His hopes for a berth in the Union Cabinet belied, his support considerably eroded in Khammam, Vengal Rao lived in the hope that some day or the other, power, in any form, will come back to his hands.
Channa Reddy’s Defeated Telangana

Dr. Channa Reddy was a reactionary, a religious person, feudal in outlook and a bully. He preached non-violence but practised violence to his advantage. He was a careerist. Power was always the means and the end for him. Corrupt to the core, as was even confirmed by the Court of law, he was a demagogue and that was why he had managed to influence the ignorant and innocent people. He had a rich experience as administrator, agitator, and public leader both at the State and Central level. He could speak four languages fluently- Telugu, Urdu, Hindi and English. He had many ideas but there were limitations in the implementation of them. He was the worst fascist Chief Minister this State had ever witnessed. Like Hitler he used to come deliberately late to the meetings and enjoy making people wait for him. He verbally abused his colleagues, ministers and administrators, in an unprecedented manner. He proved himself a “Tughlaq” in spite of his so-called dynamism.

Dr. Marri Channa Reddy took the oath of office on the 6th March 1978 as the Chief Minister of the State. He has a great belief in numerology and six is considered lucky for him. On 10th March 1978, his other ministers also took the oath. Dr. Reddy inducted six members from outside the elected members. At that time, the strength of the Congress-I was 175 in the Assembly. Gradually Dr. Reddy
encouraged defections and liquidated the opposition in the Assembly and Council. Thus, within two and half years, the 30 Congress (U) strength became 3 whereas the 60 Janata members were reduced to 16. Even the lone CPML Member was admitted into the Congress-I by Dr. Reddy. In the Council he won over K. Rosaiah who attacked his Government regarding corrupt practices in the past. K. Rosaiah was inducted into the Ministry later. The Chief Minister lured Mr. P. Sundaraiah, CPM Leader with the Chairmanship of the Drainage Board. The Deputy Speakership of the Assembly was offered to Prabakar Reddy (Janata) who joined Dr. Channa Reddy. Similarly a bitter critic of Dr. Reddy in the Council, Keshav Rao, was elected as Deputy Chairman and in turn readily offered his support to the Chief Minister. M.R. Sham Rao, ex-minister, defected from the Congress-U and became the Secretary of the Cong-I party and also the Chairman of the Warehousing Corporation. M.V.S. Subba Raju, the President of the State Janata Party, joined Congress-I and became the Chairman of the Drainage Board in the place of Mr. Sundaraiah who resigned after much criticism within his party. Mr. Varadatarama Ramachandra Rao whose petition against Dr. Reddy’s election set aside his election due to corrupt practices, was made Chairman, Official Language Commission.

Though Dr. Reddy did not say it in so many words, he wanted officers to consider his word as Law. He abused his colleagues and officers in the presence of others and it became difficult even for legislators to see him.

In the beginning he gave full support and encouragement to Nandula Bhaskara Rao, elevated him from State Minister to Cabinet Minister and also gave him the Excise and Commercial Taxes portfolios. This became an eyesore to many other ministers but Dr. Reddy said “If I had two or three Bhaskar Raos that would be enough”. When Bhaskara Rao came closer to Sanjay Gandhi, Dr. Reddy was upset and tried to cut Bhaskara Rao to size by giving him the Ports, Weights and Measures portfolios. But Bhaskara Rao withstood the onslaught and fought back by rallying all the dissident legislators.
Gradually the dissidents increased. Six ministers who were removed by Dr. Reddy and the one who resigned, naturally joined the dissidents. Until the Parliament elections were held in 1980, Dr. Reddy was the only Chief Minister of the Congress-I party whom Mrs. Gandhi could rely upon to provide funds to the central party through indulging in corrupt practices in the State.

Dr. Reddy celebrated his 60th birthday in a pompous manner misusing public money, thus creating bitterness among the people at large. He changed the office timings and incurred the displeasure of employees and had to restore the original timings.

The cumulative effect of Dr. Reddy’s misdeeds, arrogance and fascist functioning led sixteen of his ministers to seek the permission of Mrs. Gandhi to resign. Similarly a large number of legislators openly came out against him. Dr. Reddy tried to retain his strength by filling up various posts which were kept vacant till then. He made pilgrimages to several holy places, offered special prayers and consulted astrologers to counter the dissidence!

Meanwhile the functioning of the government came to a standstill. There was no communication between the dissident ministers and the Chief Minister. Dr. Reddy could neither convene the Cabinet nor the Assembly, leave alone the Legislature Party. He went out of the way to get favours from Mrs. Gandhi and when her son Sanjay Gandhi died in an aircrash on 23rd June, Dr. Reddy cancelled the Assembly Session which was scheduled to be convened within hours. He brought the ashes of Sanjay Gandhi and immersed them in the Krishna river. Inspite of all this, and with the tacit approval of Mrs. Gandhi, the four Central Ministers from Andhra Pradesh encouraged dissidents against Dr. Reddy. The legislators made allegations against Dr. Reddy and demanded a C.B.I. enquiry into the whole affair.

At the same time Congress-I as a party had become a non-entity. There were only ad hoc appointments at the State level, made by the Central Party. No member was enrolled and party elections were not held although three years had elapsed since the birth of the party in the State. Legislators became nonfunctional and helpless.
They were not allowed to have a leader of their choice. The Legislators mortgaged their rights to one supreme leader, Mrs. Gandhi. Ministers and legislators went round Delhi with pleas and counter pleas.

The people had no role to play. Their sovereign power was delegated to representatives, who in turn delegated the same to the party leader. Democracy had become formal because it was not under the control of the people. The legislators could defect as and when they wished to. Election promises were never fulfilled.

The numerical strength of the Congress-I posed problems in the Selection of a leader. As political circles were not sure of Dr. Channa Reddy’s standing, Mr. Raja Ram announced that he would contest for leadership. Everyone expected that a contest was inevitable when he went to Delhi to consult Mrs. Gandhi. At the last moment, however, he announced that as per the advice of Mrs. Gandhi he had withdrawn from the contest. Sreenivasulu Reddy, MLA gave a statement supporting Dr. Channa Reddy’s leadership. Dr. Channa Reddy was unanimously elected the leader. He went for consultations with Mrs. Gandhi in Delhi, in the first week of March 1978. In Delhi as well as in Hyderabad there started a serious struggle for power. Every factor—recommendations, pressures, castes and groups played a role. Dr. Channa Reddy revived the tradition of the Madras Assembly before independence, by appointing six Parliamentary Secretaries in the Assembly. These posts existed just on paper and were created to appease people who could not be accommodated in the Cabinet as ministers.

As soon as Dr. Channa Reddy’s Ministry was formed there was much criticism against him. He was partial to Telangana and gave all the essential portfolios to those who worked in the Praja Samithi earlier and he did great injustice to the Andhras. Dr. Channa Reddy understood the point behind the criticism and at once transferred certain important portfolios to ministers from Andhra.

Dearness allowance to the Government servants was enhanced. As various Corporations and Co-operative institutions had Vengala

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Rao’s men in key posts, Congress-I wanted all of them to step down. The opposition leaders were allowed cabinet ranks. All the youngsters of 18 years were made eligible to vote in the Panchayat elections which were not held despite election promises.

Dr. Channa Reddy and his ministers, while touring Andhra Pradesh, made tall promises. It became a habit with Dr. Reddy to criticise the service personnel in his speeches. He was invariably late to all public functions. Andhra Pradesh became a State of political manoeuvres. Rumours spread that he was collecting huge funds in the name of the party. The Police at Nallakunta Police Station in Hyderabad behaved in a beastly manner and raped a Muslim woman, Rameeza Bee, and beat her husband to death. This news spread to the surrounding areas and led to violence and the whole city was brought under a weeklong curfew. All the political parties took it up as an issue and when it grew to be a State-wide agitation, Dr. Channa Reddy negotiated with the opposition parties and came to an agreement with them. Justice Muktadar of Andhra Pradesh High court was appointed as Oneman Commission to enquire into the incident. The People felt that Dr. Channa Reddy had very shrewdly won over the opposition parties. The commission submitted its report to the Government on 10th August and the Police were found guilty.

The Congress which won only 30 seats elected Vengala Rao as the leader for both the Houses. But he did not attend the sessions. Hence Bhattam and Rosaiah were elected as leaders in the Assembly and Council respectively. The Congress MLAs, M.V. Krishna Rao, Pinnamaneni Koteswara Rao, K.V. Kesavulu, Chanumolu Venkata Rao and some others joined Congress-I. Kesavulu again went back to Vengala Rao and became Secretary of the All India Congress Party. Then, number of Congress MLAs gradually decreased from 30 to 9. By February 1980 only three were left. In April 1978 the Congress Party Session was arranged where Vengala Rao accounted for the debacle of the Congress party. He said that whatever help was rendered to the poor in the State ‘be it giving a rickshaw, a sheep, a buffalo or a loan, was done in the name
of Mrs. Gandhi which naturally helped her party to win. Brahmananda Reddy came in the limelight and announced that a period of 6 months was given to Dr. Channa Reddy to find solutions to the many problems in the State, otherwise he would lead a serious agitation against him. But it remained a mere threat. Dr. Channa Reddy retorted that he was very well aware of the tactics of Brahmananda Reddy who was very notorious for using people to gain his own ends. Rahmatulla resigned his Chairmanship of the Congress and politely bade good-bye to the party. But he rejoined congress in October 1979. Vijaya Bhaskara Reddy was appointed in his place as the State Congress President. Vengala Rao resigned his membership in the Legislative Assembly when the Vimadlal Commission’s interim report passed strictures against him. He retired from politics for the time being. In the Congress meetings and outside too, many people warned against ad hoc appointments and bossism. But the party could not do away with its old practices. The final report of the Vimadlal Commission strongly said that Vengala Rao was not guilty. Once again Vengala Rao became active in politics and was welcomed with great warmth wherever he went.

Even after six months of the elections, the Congress-I, could not appoint a President to the State Party. At last Aziz was made the President. Dr. Channa Reddy attacked the Centre over many issues. The South Indian Chief Ministers started opposing the Centre and threatened the centre that the arrest of Mrs. Gandhi based on the Shah Commission Report, would lead to grave consequences. When Mrs. Gandhi was arrested, as per the decision of the Lok Sabha, there were protest agitations in Andhra Pradesh. By then Rajamallu, Keshava Rao, Jagannatha Rao and a few others turned against Dr. Channa Reddy. 11 members including Subba Raju freed themselves from the Janata Party. K. Prabhakara Reddy was angry with the party and joined the Congress-I. K.B. Siddayya, MLA, too followed him. Subba Raju and ten other members including Ayyapu Reddy, D. Indira, Rambhupal Reddy, close associates of Sanjeeva Reddy joined Congress-I before the Lok Sabha Elections of 1980. Subba Raju became the Chairman of the Drainage Board on Sundaraiah’s
After a year of Channa Reddy’s rule, opposition parties introducing a no-confidence motion in the Assembly, found an opportunity to criticise him and his ministry. Charges of corruption were made against him in the Legislative Assembly. The State Government was placed on the defensive on many issues like inability to control hotel rates, Chief Minister’s 60th birthday celebration and the incident of driving away a Harijan MLA - Masala Eeranna - from a temple at Mantralayam (Kurnool District).

Due to the Masala Eeranna incident, M. Baga Reddy, Panchayat Raj Minister submitted his resignation. The whole incident ended in a farce when he was readmitted soon afterwards.

Meanwhile, when another minister and a Harijan, Goka Ramaswamy was removed, there were protest agitations in Andhra Pradesh.

The Lok Sabha elections were held on 6th January 1980. Mrs. Gandhi once again became the Prime Minister. As it was customary in Andhra Pradesh, 41 out of 42 Lok Sabha seats went to the Congress-I. The reserved constituency of Parvathipuram went to the Congress-U candidate Kishore Chandra Deo, a Central Minister in Charan Singh’s cabinet. Though Vengala Rao, the State Congress President tried to bring both the Communist Parties, Lok Dal and Congress-U together as United Front for allotting seats, all these parties were routed by the Indira wave. Janata, which fought single handed, lost heavily. Mrs. Gandhi contested in Medak (Telangana) Constituency and defeated her nearest Janata rival, Jaipal Reddy. Panchayat Raj Minister, Baga Reddy temporarily resigned to act as an election agent to Mrs. Gandhi and rejoined the cabinet after the elections.

As the elections were fast approaching, Brahmananda Reddy, and Pamulapati Ankineedu Prasad Rao, who were the Congress Ministers in Charan Singh’s cabinet gave up their posts and joined Congress-I. They secured seats and got elected to Lok Sabha. 28 Congress-I members of the dissolved Lok Sabha were given party
tickets. The applications received for party tickets netted four lakhs of rupees for the Congress-I.

Purushotham Reddy from Congress-U joined Congress-I at the last minute. Avudaru Venkateswarlu (MLA) from Vinukonda Constituency who had defeated Bhavanam Jayaprada, a former minister, resigned from Lok Dal and joined Congress-I. Mahendranath, a former Harijan Minister, joined the Janata resigning from Congress-I. Nannapaneni Venkata Rao from Tenali defected to Lok Dal from Congress-I. He died soon after the election. Lakshmi Kanthamanna left Janata for Congress-I. Many former MLAs, former Samithi Presidents, Zilla Parishath members and some other prominent people joined Congress-I. Raghunath Reddy and Narapa Reddy who were prominent in Congress made some unsuccessful attempts in the name of the United Front. T. Panchajanyam, who had been the leader of the Opposition joined Congress-I. The former President of the State Congress, Tadepalli Musalaiah too left Congress-U for Congress-I.

After the Lok Sabha elections quite a number of MLAs from Congress-U and Lok Dal defected to Congress-I thus increasing the strength of Congress-I from 175 to 255.

Rajamallu, one of the Congress-I dissidents against Dr. Channa Reddy’s leadership got elected to Lok Sabha.

Just a day before the commencement of the Assembly Session (February 1980) Dr. Channa Reddy stripped the Minister Nadendla Bhaskara Rao of his portfolio of Excise and Commercial Taxes and gave him Archives, Archeology, Weights and Measures. It was the result of Bhaskara Rao’s efforts to be closer to Sanjay Gandhi. Nadendla Bhaskara Rao who started as the State Minister was not only promoted to Cabinet rank but also given the most important portfolio. He was incharge of the election campaign in the State during the 1980 elections. Soon after this he was demoted, as Dr. Reddy feared his growing prominence.

Dr. Channa Reddy started his Lok Sabha election campaign
with new schemes. He promised a bulb in every home, a bus to each village and a buffalo to each poor family. During 1952, the Communists had promised five acres of land and a cow and a calf to each family in case they came to power. Dr. Channa Reddy made similar promises.

Doctors Civil Assistant Surgeons and Junior Doctors in the State went on strike before the elections and created a world record by carrying on the strike for 79 days. Communal riots took place in the Old City of Hyderabad and curfew was imposed for 15 days. These disturbances could be brought under control only after the elections when the Janata and Majlis leaders were taken into custody. Earlier the Ittehadul-Muslimeen-Majlis joined hands with Congress-I and announced that their alliance was permanent. But they separated when they could not agree over the distribution of seats.

From among the elected candidates for Lok Sabha, P.V. Narsimha Rao became the Minister for External Affairs, Shiv Shankar was made the Law Minister whereas Pendekanti Venkata Subbaiah was made the State Minister for Home.

At the time of elections, Andhra Pradesh was the only State with a Congress-I Ministry. Dr. Channa Reddy was playing a key role as the Chief Minister of the only Congress-I state till the 1980 elections.

The Andhra Pradesh Government decided to hold Panchayat and Municipal elections in April and May 1980. These elections had been put off for the past 10 years. All youth of 18 years were allowed to vote in these elections and 14% of seats were reserved for Harijans in Panchayat Raj Institutions. These were two decisions made by Dr. Channa Reddy’s cabinet. Political reasons came in the way and elections were put off though Dr. Reddy claimed that a writ in the High Court had blocked the elections.

As the State was backward in technical education, the Government permitted some private managements to collect donations and start engineering colleges. The students launched an agitation

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against such a decision and the Govt withdrew it later.

Gradually the number of dissidents against Channa Reddy increased after Sanjay Gandhi’s death on 23rd June 1980 in Delhi. 15 ministers of his cabinet sought the Prime Minister’s permission to resign and very soon Dr. Reddy was asked to step down.

After stepping down as Chief Minister, Dr. Reddy kept a low profile and was soon rewarded with the Governorship of Punjab. The Akali agitation was slowly but steadily mounting at that time. Very soon, differences arose between Dr. Reddy and Darbara Singh, the Chief Minister who accused the Governor of interfering in the administration. As a result, Dr. Reddy resigned from the post and was back in the State. It was the second time that Dr. Reddy had resigned from the Governor’s post.

Dr. Reddy’s influence waned considerably, as he patiently waited two years for Mrs. Gandhi to reinstate him but to no avail. A frustrated Dr. Reddy launched a tirade against Mrs. Gandhi and formed his own party, the National Democratic Party in 1984. By then, the Congress-I was only the main opposition in the State, the Telugu Desam magic having routed it in the 1983 Assembly polls. Dr. Reddy maintained good terms with NTR and contested for Lok Sabha from Karimnagar as the combined opposition candidate. Despite considerable help from the Telugu Desam, Dr. Reddy was trounced by Mr. Chokka Rao, the Congress-I candidate. With this defeat, Dr. Reddy’s party died and not a single candidate was put up in the 1985 Assembly midterm poll. Mr. Rajiv Gandhi’s ascendancy to Prime Ministership and the consensus effort being made to project the Congress-I as a clean party simply sealed Dr. Reddy’s chances of re-entry into the Congress-I. He remained in political wilderness, once in a while issuing press statements about the affairs of the State.
Mr. T. Anjaiah, the Minister of State for Labour at the Centre, was selected to be the leader of the Andhra Pradesh Legislature by Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi. This came as no surprise as this kind of selection had been followed for a decade throughout the country. Centralisation was the order of the day. The Congress-I party existed only for name sake and it was Mrs. Gandhi that mattered. When the dissidents in Andhra Pradesh brought out corruption charges against the Chief Minister, Dr. Channa Reddy, they pledged that whomever Mrs. Gandhi selected as the successor would be accepted. The dissident legislators including fifteen Ministers made several pilgrimages to Delhi, begging Mrs. Gandhi to remove Dr. Channa Reddy as Chief Minister. Each Minister spent lots of money in Delhi. Some legislators also followed their example. When the last act of the drama was being enacted, some legislators and a few ministers fished in troubled waters. Dr. Channa Reddy made every effort to retain his position and started filling all the vacant posts and whoever asked for favours had them granted at the expense of the people and the state. Being a rank reactionary and corrupt opportunist, Dr. Reddy went round several places of worship and prayed to all sorts of gods and perhaps prayed for his Chief Ministership. He sanctioned several colleges and institutions. Inspite of a clear majority, the dissidents could not ask for the convening of the Congress-I
Legislature party, for a showdown as well as for the election of a new leader. All of them mortgaged their power to the so called High Command which in reality was just one person, Mrs. Indira Gandhi. They had no self-confidence and self-reliance to oppose the High Command for its anti-democratic procedures. The reason was simple. Almost all of them had no locus-standi in their constituencies; if they opposed Mrs. Gandhi they could never become members of Legislature again. In private, many of them resented the delay and became annoyed with the attitude of Mrs. Gandhi towards dissidents.

Mrs. Gandhi took her own time in removing Dr. Reddy. On 10th October, 1980 Dr. Reddy resigned as Chief Minister. Neither the High Command nor Dr. Reddy gave reasons for this. Except reports in the newspapers there was no authentic statement as to why Dr. Reddy resigned or was asked to resign. This irresponsible attitude of the leaders and the party is an indication of their callousness towards the voters, who are being taken for granted.

Mr. T. Anjaiah was formally elected in the Legislature Party meeting on 11th October, 1980 under the direct supervision of Mr. Bhishma Narain Singh, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs at the Centre. The election was unanimous and Mr. Anjaiah was sworn in as Chief Minister on the same day, at some auspicious time. He too is religious and if one may say so, a reactionary.

Mr. Anjaiah was not a member of the Assembly. He was defeated in the 1976 elections from Musheerabad Constituency (Hyderabad) and later became a dissident against Dr. Reddy. He was elected to Rajya Sabha and his unquestioned loyalty to Mrs. Gandhi, faithful service during 1980 general elections in Bihar as the observer of Congress-I paid him rich dividends. He was inducted into the Central Cabinet as Labour Minister.

Mr. Anjaiah wanted to become the Chief Minister of the State in 1972 when Mrs. Gandhi asked Mr. Brahmananda Reddy to relinquish the post.

Except when he was in the Telangana Praja Samithi along with
Dr. Channa Reddy, Mr. Anjaiah never opposed Mrs. Indira Gandhi. When there was a split in 1978, Mr. Anjaiah left J. Vengal Rao and remained loyal to Mrs. Gandhi.

As soon as he became the Chief Minister, Mr. Anjaiah rushed to Delhi for consultations and for approval of the list of ministers to be included in his cabinet. The remote control system which had been operating for the past ten years applied to Mr. Anjaiah too. He had to take all the fifteen dissident ministers, the dissident speaker and deputy speaker along with the son-in-law of the President into his cabinet. Thus, twenty two ministers were sworn in on 16th October, 1980. Curiously, four of Dr. Channa Reddy’s supporters also got in. There was a lot a pressure on Mr. Anjaiah from several quarters for ministership. He made at least three trips to Delhi for finalising the second batch of ministers. He announced many dates as auspicious for the swearing-in ceremony. He had promised a berth in the Ministry to many legislators and at last on 2nd December, 1980 he announced the names of the new ministers. The final list of ministers included a number of people from Dr. Reddy’s Ministry. Including the State Ministers, the total strength went up to 61, the biggest Ministry ever formed at the State or Centre. The Chief Minister announced that some more legislators would find a place in the Ministry including one or two from Khammam district. The new Ministry was ridiculed throughout India and the State became a laughing stock.

Mr. Anjaiah had a well-defined one point programme, undivided loyalty to Mrs. Gandhi. As Chief Minister he had promised to root out corruption and give a clean administration. But he refused to enquire into the allegations made by Congress-I legislators against Dr. Reddy and his Cabinet colleagues.

1980 was a bad year for Andhra Pradesh. It ended with the bickerings in the ruling party while people were suffering from drought, floods and cyclones. In spite of an absolute majority, the ruling party failed to come to the people’s relief as power became the means and end for them.
Mr. Anjaiah had to face dissidents within three months of his rule. The Finance Minister, Mr. G. Rajaram, addressing the Munnuru Kapu Conference at Bhongir (Nalgonda District) attacked the upper caste rule and named Anjaiah too. Union Law Minister, Shiva Shankar, State Ministers, A. Veerappa and Jagannadha Rao also participated in this Conference.

Mr. Srinivasa Rao, another Congress-I MLA also attacked Anjaiah’s Ministry and said that senior members like him were ignored by the party.

1981 did not start on a happy note for Anjaiah. After knowing the mind of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, all the Ministers in the State were asked to submit their resignations on 13th January, 1981. Once again Andhra Pradesh became the laughing stock of the country.

Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, General Secretary of the Congress-I at that time, publicly insulted and admonished Mr. Anjaiah at the Hyderabad Airport for the ostentatious welcome arranged for him. The media went out of its way to highlight the event all over the State through vivid photographs. Mr. Anjaiah decided to resign but was persuaded to continue by his cabinet members. In a bid to remain in power, Mr. Anjaiah soon reconciled himself to such insults but his attempts proved futile. Mr. Anjaiah was asked to quit and another “outsider”, Mr. Bhavanam Venkatram, was selected by Mrs. Gandhi to become the new Chief Minister. Mr. Anjaiah kept a low profile till the 1983 Assembly Elections when he withstood the Telugu Desam wave and won by a handsome majority from Ramayampet in Medak Dist. Except mounting vitriolic attacks on the Telugu Desam Government, Mr. Anjaiah could do nothing. In the 1984 Lok Sabha Polls, Anjaiah won the Secunderabad Lok Sabha seat and was made the Labour Minister in Rajiv’s Cabinet. It was a great comeback by this diminutive man who has survived many setbacks and yet came up triumphantly.

Anjaiah died in the year 1986.
Only Seven Months CM-
Bhavanam Venkatram

Mr. T. Anjaiah was removed unceremoniously from the Chief Ministership and in his place Mr. Bhavanam Venkatram Reddy was asked to head the Government. Mr. Bhavanam was never elected by the people and he never contested in any election. He was elected to the Legislative Council from the Assembly for the first time and became the Minister for Education in Dr. Channa Reddy’s Ministry. He earned a good name as the Minister for Education, with his immense patience in dealing with files and various delegations. Mr. Anjaiah also continued him in the same portfolio though for a brief period and then made him the Transport Minister.

Mr. Bhavanam Venkatram was married to Jayaprada a former Congress MLA and a Kamma and thus it was argued that he could satisfy the two dominant castes in the politics of the State. Accordingly, Mr. Bhavanam Venkatram was made the Chief Minister in February 1982. Curiously, Mr. N.T. Rama Rao, who happened to be Bhavanam’s room mate at college, attended the oath-taking ceremony in the Raj Bhavan at Hyderabad. It was rumoured that Mr. Rama Rao who had cultivated political ambitions by then would be made a Rajya Sabha Member by the new Chief Minister. But after one month, Mr. Rama Rao, announced the formation of the Telugu Desam Party.

Mr. Bhavanam Venkatram’s rule lasted only for seven months. His opponents within the Party never
allowed him to function properly. They carried a vile campaign against him from the day he entered the office and spread many rumours against him. It was this character assassination by the Congress-I leaders in the State and a few Parliament Members that swept Mr. Venkataram away from office. Since he could not rely upon any legislators, Bhavanam became indecisive. The procrastination cost him his career. During that short period, Venkatram started the “Open University” a stupendous achievement for his short-lived Ministry. Mr. N.T. Rama Rao was already touring the State and attracting large crowds which baffled the High Command. Everybody was convinced that in Bhavanam Venkatram’s rule the Congress-I could not face NTR in the elections. Thus he was asked to step down in September 1982. It was a clear case of a talented and well-meaning politician being tied down by various forces as a result of which the whole administration was faced with the problem “to be or not to be”. This short-lived glory effectively submerged all his chances to show his talents. As a politician he failed miserably and in 1985 he was rejected even for an Assembly ticket by the Congress bosses. “In absolute political wilderness” would be an understatement about Mr. Bhavanam Venkatram after that.

Mr. Bhavanam Venkatram spent most of the time in his farmhouse near Nagarjuna Sagar. He was the president of Lok Jana Satta State Unit, a party, founded by Mr. Paswan in Uttar Pradesh.
Mr. Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy was a Lok Sabha Member when he was picked up by Mrs. Indira Gandhi to lead the State. He was the Finance Minister in the State during Mr. Brahmananda Reddy’s regime and later opted to be in the Lok Sabha. He left the state politics for almost 12 years. There was a wide gap between him and the party cadre. After the emergency, he joined hands with Brahmananda Reddy and became the President of the Congress (R) in the State for a short period. Later, he rejoined the Congress-I and got elected from Kurnool.

Mr. Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy could not achieve anything during his four months period from September to December 1982 as the Chief Minister. He failed to face Mr. Rama Rao in the election campaign. He announced that rice would be sold at the rate of Rs.2 per kilo but that did not materialise. He vainly attempted to counter Mr. Rama Rao by introducing the mid-day meal scheme in schools.

In the Assembly elections, Mr. Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy got elected to the Legislature but later opted to go back to the Lok Sabha since his party was routed and could get only 60 seats. Out of sheer sympathy, Mrs. Gandhi inducted him into her Cabinet and offered him the important portfolio of Industries.
Mr. Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy was trounced in the Lok Sabha elections in 1984 at Kurnool. As a Minister in the Centre, he failed to convince the Rayalaseema people that the Congress-I would deliver the goods. And he joined the list of former Chief Ministers and defeated MPs who have little or no role to play in the State. Mrs. Gandhi’s death ended Mr. Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy’s contacts at the centre. The ascendency of Telugu Desam saw his family rivals like K.E. Krishnamurthy establish a healthy lead over him in the politics of Kurnool district and Mr. Reddy lived in the hope that a miracle might occur yet!
Twister in Politics - N.T. Rama Rao

The Telugu Desam party was born in the mind of Mr. N.T. Rama Rao. Circumstances favoured his coming to power within nine months of the birth of this Regional Party. While the Opposition Parties helped Rama Rao to come to power, the Congress-I too contributed a lot to Rama Rao’s victory. When Rama Rao completed 60 years, he was the hero of over 290 films. By this time, he had almost decided to retire from films and there was a lingering thought in him to enter politics to serve the people of Andhra Pradesh. But it was only an abstract idea and he had not yet decided in what form it should materialise. In the cine field, Rama Rao was very authoritative and considered a strict disciplinarian. He was very conservative and never dabbled in politics of any sort. He had no reading habit nor was he interested in the day to day affairs of the country. If there was any natural calamity in the State, Mr. Rama Rao reached spontaneously and collected large amounts of money for the benefit of the victims. He never accepted a secondary role in the film field and was known to be very intolerant towards anarchy or disorder of any sort. With this background, Rama Rao thrust himself into public affairs.

Andhra Pradesh was in turmoil ever since Dr. Chenna Reddy became the Chief Minister in 1978. Corruption was institutionalised and had become the order of the day at all levels of administration. Dr. Reddy cared little for public criticism, about nepotism and corruption in his government. Fortunately, for Dr. Reddy, Mrs. Indira Gandhi was in the political wilderness during those days, having been routed by the Janata Party at the centre. She had no alternative but to depend on Dr. Reddy and Mr. Devraj Urs in Karnataka for political support as well as funds. Dr. Reddy took the maximum advantage of this predicament of Mrs. Gandhi and at one stage, he even went
to the extent of dictating terms to her. But by 1980, the internal
dissidence to Dr. Reddy was mounting rapidly, and it soon burst out
openly. 15 Cabinet Ministers led by late Sri Rajaram and over 150
legislators demanded the removal of Dr. Reddy. They sustained their
agitation within the party for over one year.

Thanks to the bungling of the Janata Party. Mrs. Gandhi and her
party were swept to power in a landslide victory with a two-thirds
majority. With a massive people’s mandate behind her Mrs. Gandhi
lost no time in removing Dr. Reddy. The exit of Dr. Reddy from the
political arena coincided with Mr. N.T. Rama Rao’s decision to enter
politics. The later political events spread over two years strengthened
Mr. Rama Rao’s decision. Immediately after Dr. Reddy’s exit Mrs.
Gandhi imposed Mr. T. Anjaiah as Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh.
Mr. Anjaiah was defeated in 1978 Assembly elections and had been
made a Member of the Rajya Sabha. Later he was the Union State
Minister for Labour.

Mr. Rama Rao made consultations with his associates in the film
industry and members of his family about entering politics. He sounded
Mr. Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy, M.P. whom he had known for a long
time but it was actually Mr. Chandra Babu Naidu who persuaded
Mr. Rama Rao to jump into politics. Mr. Naidu was a Minister in
Anjaiah’s Cabinet, and became the son-in-law of Mr. Rama Rao
later. At that stage Mr. Naidu and others thought that a seat in Rajya
Sabha would satisfy Mr. Rama Rao’s political aspirations. Obviously
they were underestimating his plans. Mr. Rama Rao met Mr. Anjaiah
at Chandrababu Naidu’s place but from then on Mr. Anjaiah avoided
meeting Mr. Rao. News reached Delhi High Command about
Mr. Rao’s intentions to start a Regional Party. And by this time,
everyone was totally fed up with Anjaiah and his Government which
made a mockery of democracy. Mr. Bhavanam Venkatram was
selected to replace Mr. Anjaiah as the Chief Minister of Andhra
Pradesh. During this period, there was a pause for the still unborn
Regional Party. The High Command made frantic enquiries about
the Regional Party but Mr. Venkatram promised them that as long
as he was the Chief Minister Mr. Rama Rao would not form any
Regional Party. Mr. Rama Rao had sent a congratulatory message to Mr. Bhavanam Venkatram on his coming to power. He also attended the swearing-in ceremony and was seen hugging the new Chief Minister. This gave an impression to everyone that Mr. Rama Rao would not start a Regional Party in the State. However things did not go smoothly. Mr. Venkatram who inducted Mr. Chandrababu Naidu into his Ministry, gave him a State Minister’s rank with the Minor Irrigation portfolio while another Congress-I leader Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy was given a berth with Cabinet rank as Excise Minister. This disgusted Mr. Rama Rao and once again he became very active with regard to the Regional Party. Meanwhile, Mr. Nandella Bhaskar Rao, a senior Congress-I leader, anxiously waited for Venkatram to give him a berth in the Ministry or the Speaker’s post in the Legislative Assembly. As nothing materialised, Mr. Bhaskar Rao decided to join hands with Mr. Rama Rao. As Rama Rao was in Ooty, shooting for a film, Mr. Bhaskar Rao telephoned him and asked him to rush back to Hyderabad. Mr. Rama Rao flew back to Hyderabad and held consultations with Bhaskar Rao and Chakradhar (Ex M.P.) along with others and announced that he intended to start a Regional Party under the name “TELUGU DESAM”. This news was received enthusiastically all over the State by the numerous fans of Rama Rao. The first convention of the party was to be held on 10th April at the Nizam College grounds in Hyderabad. It was at this juncture that the Telugu Daily Eenadu came into the picture.

On the day Rama Rao announced his intention to start a Regional Party (21 March 1982), Eenadu, the Telugu Daily with the largest circulation took up the cause of Mr. Rama Rao and his party. Rama Rao came into contact with Mr. Ramoji Rao, the Chief Editor of Eenadu and discussed about the future plans and programmes of the party. From then onwards not a day passed when Eenadu did not give front page publicity to Mr. Rama Rao and his party. While all other newspapers maintained a low-key coverage for Mr. Rama Rao, Eenadu took it up as a personal challenge and decided to help Rama Rao in ousting Congress-I from the State. Since Dr. Reddy became the Chief Minister, Eenadu continuously
exposed the faults of the Congress-I Government. In continuation of this policy, the Daily used Mr. Rama Rao and the Telugu Desam Party for an anti-establishment stand.

Mr. Rama Rao formally declared the name of the Regional Party as Telugu Desam on 28th March 1982 at the public gathering in the New MLA Quarters of Hyderabad. The first State-wide convention ‘Mahanadu’, was held on 10th April 1982 in the Nizam College grounds in Hyderabad. Enthusiastic workers and supporters from all over the State attended the convention and expressed their support to Telugu Desam. The convention, the first of its kind, was a grand success. Mr. Rama Rao spoke out in an highly emotional tone exposing the slavery of the State Congress-I leaders to the Centre and he explained how the self-respect of the Telugu People was mortgaged to the Delhi High Command.

While political stalwarts failed to measure the pulse of the people Rama Rao managed to provide a viable political alternative in his Telugu Desam Party. The nine-month old Telugu Desam managed to overwhelm the ninety-year old Congress party. When the layers of complacency were lifted, the Congress-I citadel was no more. What was once considered to be the strongest Congress-I bastion proved to be a mere illusion in the face of such a spirited attack mounted by the fledgeling Telugu Desam led by N.T. Rama Rao.
Mr. Rama Rao, after having decided on the means of his political debut, set a few conditions for his partymen. Any member of legislative assembly or the council from any party was welcomed provided he resigned from the legislative body he was elected to. Accordingly, Mr. Nadendla Bhaskar Rao resigned for the Legislative Assembly and was admitted to the Telugu Desam. Along with him, Mr. Gadde Rataiah, Mr. Adaiah and Mr. C. Narayana joined the Telugu Desam but without resigning from the Assembly. They turned out to be a nuisance, issuing statements against Rama Rao regarding the management of the Telugu Desam finances. These three were removed from the party.

On 29th May, 1982, Rama Rao addressed a convention at Tirupati which electrified the Rayalaseema districts. And from 3rd June onwards, Mr. Rama Rao toured the State addressing mammoth public meetings in almost all the important towns of the State. He was riding a wave of popularity. Youth started enrolling as members of the party from the village level, at one rupee per head. Even children started wearing Telugu Desam badges and shouting slogans like NTR Zindabad. But all the time, Congress leaders ridiculed Mr. Rama Rao’s efforts and asked him to go back to his own field instead of poking his nose in politics where he was a novice. His immensely visible popularity was ridiculed as cine glamour. Mr. Rajiv Gandhi and the Congress-I High Command sent their own confidants to assess the situation in the State. Even the intelligence departments alerted the centre. Then the Centre came to the conclusion that the Chief Minister, Mr. Venkatram was not competent enough to face the Telugu Desam Party’s threat and that it needed someone who had the capacity to take on the challenge and lead the State Congress-
I to a victory. It was decided that the ‘outdated politician’ Mr. Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy would be the ideal person. As usual this decision was taken at Delhi and then ratified in the State Legislature Party meeting. It is indeed strange that four Chief Ministers had to run the show in a five-year term. But that is the Congress-I culture and Andhra Pradesh was no exception. This decision of the Centre to impose Mr. Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy as the Chief Minister came as a shot in the arm of Mr. Rama Rao. It was another weapon in his arsenal and Mr. Rama Rao made full use of it. He continued with added vigour, his tirades against the centre’s domination.

The State was in the grip of a severe drought and Mr. Rama Rao announced his second tour of the State with an intention to collect funds for the drought victims. Throughout October and November Rama Rao toured the coastal districts and some parts of Telangana asking for funds. Wherever he went, people came forward voluntarily with donations both in cash and kind. Even in the remote areas of Telangana, huge crowds came to hear Rama Rao’s speeches. In response to Rama Rao’s appeal to the intellectuals to join his party, Mr. P. Upendra who was working with the Railways at Delhi resigned his job and joined hands with Rama Rao. Mr. N. Srinivasulu Reddy resigned from the Legislative Assembly and joined Telugu Desam. Along with Mr. Bezwada Papi Reddy, he toured the Andhra and Rayalaseema areas canvassing for support to Telugu Desam. Mr. B. Ratna Sabhapati, MR. K. Rama Chandra Reddy, Ex-IGP and Mr. Veera Swamy, and Ex-APPSC Member, joined Telugu Desam. Mr. Rama Rao succeeded in rousing the consciousness of the people wherever he went. Eenadu kept giving maximum coverage to the party and predicted that Rama Rao would sweep the polls if elections were held then.

The Election Commission decided to hold the Assembly Elections on 5th January, 1983. The same day, Rama Rao reached Hyderabad to chalk out an election programme. The Opposition Parties were anxiously awaiting some sort of electoral understanding with the Telugu Desam. At that stage, Rama Rao was prepared to leave 100 seats to the Opposition Parties. But they were too ambitious and over
estimated their respective strengths. The talks went on for ten days and ultimately broke down. The Opposition Parties started selecting their respective candidates for the poll. Mrs. Menaka Gandhi who had formed the Sanjay Vichar Manch only a short while ago flew to Hyderabad and approached Mr. Rama Rao asking for ten seats in Telangana for her party. Mr. Rama Rao conceded five seats and this party was the only one to come to an electoral understanding with the Telugu Desam. This is a clear indication of the attitude and temperament of the Opposition in the country.

From the day the elections were announced, thousands of applications started pouring in to the Telugu Desam office at Hyderabad. Eenadu gathered all the background information about the applicants. The selection process continued till the last and the nominations were filed till the last minute. Some people had the cheek to apply for both Congress-I as well as Telugu Desam tickets. A few people who were denied tickets by the Congress were given tickets by the Telugu Desam party. The Congress-I party tickets too were much in demand and as usual the list was finalised at the Center.

Mr. N.T.Rama Rao commenced his third and final tour of the State on 16th December 1982 after offering prayers at the Lord Venkateswara Temple at Tirumala Hills. The state wide tour was to be undertaken in a phased manner covering almost all the constituencies. From that day onwards, a Chevrolet Car-turned into election vehicle, named “Chaitanya Ratham” was to be Rama Rao’s home. He lived in the car for nineteen days during his election campaign. The election atmosphere was similar to that of the 1955 elections in Andhra. Donning a khaki dress, Mr. Rama Rao addressed countless meetings and in a short-while his throat became sore and his voice turned gruff. Mr. Rama Rao was not used to such hardships but he withstood all this without flinching. Sleeping for hardly three hours a day, Rama Rao bathed and ate on the roadside. There were places where people anxiously waited for Rama Rao to listen to him even though he was delayed for over 48 hours. Such was the enthusiasm of the people that Rama Rao rarely managed to keep up his schedules, but this never deterred the crowd from waiting and
they only left after they had heard his speech. Eenadu provided material for Rama Rao’s speeches keeping in view the local problems of the voters. Such was the demand for Rama Rao’s speeches that cassettees were prepared and sold like hot cakes everywhere. Rama Rao managed to cover hundreds of villages in almost all the constituencies in the Rayalaseema, Krishna, Guntur and Godavari Districts. Wherever he went, he managed to bring about a radical change in the voters’ minds.

The Telugu Desam party made use of all possible material for the election campaign. The propaganda material was very attractive and caught the fancy of the voters. The cassettees were in great demand as most of them were satires on the scandal of the Congress-I Ministers.

The campaign of the Congress-I and other Opposition Parties was no match for that Telugudesam. The Congress-I arranged meetings for Mrs. Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi but it became increasingly difficult to rally crowds. The Party leaders used helicopters since they were involved in the Assembly elections in Karnataka and Tripura too. The High Command selected several constituencies which needed special treatment and large amounts were spent there. The candidates got the money through local politicians who were known to be reliable. The Congress-I sent election material to the tune of Rs. 2 lakhs to each candidate. They dumped much more into Tirupathi and Gudivada Constituencies where Mr. Rama Rao was contesting. They made an all out effort to counter the popularity of Telugu Desam. Mrs. Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi cut short of their Karnataka tour and spent more and more time in Andhra Pradesh. It was a race with time for Mr. Rama Rao while the Congress-I was in a better position in this regard as it could use helicopters. The Congress-I leaders including Mrs. Gandhi mounted attacks on Rama Rao in all their speeches, asking him to stick to his own field and labelled his party as a political farce. Even the Opposition Parties attacked Telugu Desam. Several other Opposition leaders also toured the state canvassing for their own candidates.
On 3rd January 1983, Mrs. Gandhi reached Tirupathi to address her last election meeting. On the same day Mr. Rama Rao also wound up his campaign and reached Tirupathi to address his last meeting. The meetings went off peacefully but judging by the response, one could see on which side the masses were. By nightfall, the curtain had come down on what were termed as the hottest Assembly elections that Mrs. Gandhi had to face.
People Rejected Congress

The much awaited election results started pouring in and within no time everyone realised that the Telugu Desam was going great guns as it had established a commanding lead over the Congress-I, its nearest rival in most of the constituencies. The first result from Shadnagar went to the Congress-I candidate. It did not create much gloom in the Telugu Desam ranks as the party was not expected to do very well in Telangana, a traditional Congress-I stronghold. By the second day, almost all the results were out. The Telugu Desam had gained an absolute majority with 199 seats out of 294. The total vote secured was 96,76,590 which was 45.92% of the total valid votes polled. In the 1981 census, over 30 lakhs voters had been added to the lists when compared with the 1978 polls, making it the biggest election that the State had ever witnessed. The Congress-I had contested all the seats with a total polled votes of 70,59,965. In the 1978 elections, the Congress-I had won 177 seats with 79,08,221 votes. Even though they had got only 9 lakhs votes less in 1983, they had lost over 117 seats to the Telugu Desam. That clearly indicated the strength of Telugu Desam which secured the major share of votes. CPI contested for 48 seats and managed to win only 4, losing deposit in 29 constituencies. The CPM fared a little better, winning four seats out of the 28 it contested. Its candidates also lost their deposits in 14 constituencies. The Bharatiya Janata Party which contested in 80 constituencies won only 3 seats, losing deposits in 62 constituencies. The Lok Dal contested for 32 seats and received a thorough drubbing, losing all seats. Its candidates lost their deposit in 26
constituencies. the Congress-S party contested for nine seats and
drew a blank losing deposits for as many as 7 seats. The Congress-
J contested in 80 constituencies, won one and lost deposits in 79
constituencies. The Janata Party which had won 60 seats in 1978
polls contested for 45 seats and won only one. Out of the 806
independents who were in the fray, only 17 won. The independents
who won, included the candidates of the Majlis party which won
five seats in the old city Hyderabad alone. The Sanjay Vichar Manch
making its electoral debut with an understanding with the Telugu Desam
won four of the five seats it contested in Telangana. The Congress-
I candidates lost deposits in only 15 constituencies while the Telugu
Desam candidates lost deposits in 28 constituencies.

Their candidates lost heavily in Telangana where as many as 25
lost their deposits.

The Telugu Desam contested for almost all the scheduled caste
reserved constituencies and won 27. The Congress-I won nine while
the Sanjay Vichar Manch won only one. In the constituencies reserved
for the Scheduled tribes, the Congress-I and Telugu Desam bagged
six seats each while the CPI, the CPM and Independents got one
seat each.

Telugu Desam candidates polled over 50% votes in almost 11
districts while the Congress-I candidates crossed this mark in a few
constituencies. the Telugu Desam candidates won over 80 seats
with a majority of over 20,000. In 60 seats they won by 10,000 and
in 26 by over a thousand votes majority.

Among the Telugu Desam candidates who won, were 46
Kammas, 39 Reddys, 33 from Backward communities, 28 Scheduled
castes (including Manch), 14 Kapus, 12 Kshatriyas, 7 Scheduled
Tribes, 2 Brahmans, 4 Minorities and others 2. There were eight women
candidates from this party. And for the first time in the history of Andhra
Pradesh, 8 candidates from the Kamma Community were elected from
Telangana. There were also record number of 39 Scheduled Caste
candidates. The average age of the contestants was 41 which was
much lower than ever before.

Out of the 294 legislators, 190 were elected for the first time,
some of them came to Hyderabad city for the first time.

The results in Andhra Pradesh along with the results of the Karnataka and Tripura polls created a sensation all over the country. The fact, that the Congress-I was routed in South India, which was considered as a strong base of the Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi attracted even the world media. Magazines like Time, Newsweek and even The Washington Post commented on the results, giving various reasons for the Congress debacle.

Over one third of the total electorate favoured Rama Rao and Telugu Desam candidates. All the other parties put together could not manage that many votes. This clearly indicates that the votes cast in favour of Telugu Desam transcend caste, community and region. there is no doubt of the fact that Rama Rao had managed to take away many votes from the ‘vote bank’ of the Congress-I in the State. When compared to the 1978 elections, the Congress-I party got nearly nine lakh votes less. This was despite the fact that nearly 30 lakh voters were added to the voting list. A survey of a cross section of voters in the State shows that women and backward classes solidly supported the new party while the scheduled castes had some reservations in supporting the Telugu Desam.

Since 1971, Mrs. Gandhi had supported the Harijans and succeeded in rousing their consciousness. During the emergency too, she announced special schemes for their upliftment. The Congress-I party under her leadership toed her line and all over the country several programmes were started for the Harijans with a view to catching their votes and creating a ‘vote bank’. The Harijans who were exploited over the decades by the upper caste people found a mentor in the ruling party which appeared to work for their cause. It went a long way in giving them moral courage. But unfortunately all the schemes did not prove to be vote catching devices. There came a feeling among the Harijans that Mrs. Gandhi was a sincere leader who was doing her best to help them but it was only these State Politicians who were not implementing the schemes. The Congress party exploited these schemes and the doles that were offered to the Harijans almost never reached them.
Meanwhile the Backward Classes began to react sharply against the Congress-I party since they felt that all the attention was being shown to Harijans only and that too at their cost. This paradoxical situation prevails in the villages even now. The upper caste people are not reconciled to Harijans coming up to their level in several spheres. At this juncture, Mr. Rama Rao entered the political arena. He had influenced the people for over thirty years with his historical, social and mythological roles in the films. This charisma helped him immensely in the election. The upper caste voters, especially, the Kamma community to which Rama Rao belongs identified itself with him. This was especially so in the Coastal and Rayalaseema districts. The peasant community welcomed his entry. The backward classes throughout voted against the Congress party which had neglected them in all spheres. Women who had earlier voted for Mrs. Gandhi in the 1978 elections were totally disappointed with her party’s performance in the State, and switched over to the Telugu Desam.

Apart from all this, the Congress-I party had created a fertile ground for Rama Rao with its deeds. The opposition parties were considered useless. They did not have the capacity to contest all the seats leave alone providing an alternative to the Congress-I party. The two years of the Janata rule at the centre and the debacle that followed erased the last traces of credibility.

The two communist parties were very active in the 1952-1956 elections. But they lost their support among the Harijans and weaker sections. The leadership of the party remained with the upper caste politicians and despite shedding crocodile tears for the Harijans and other Backward Communities, they could not succeed in the elections. After 1960 both the Communist Parties remained as negligible political forces with a handful of Assembly seats. The Naxalite groups opposed elections and for over a decade adopted violent means to achieve their objectives. Though many people sympathised with their objectives, they did not support the violent methods adopted to achieve social justice. A section of the Naxalites decided to participate in the elections and contested in 78 constituencies. One candidate was elected but he too defected to the Congress-I. This shameful defection completely destroyed the
sympathy of the voters. Some of the radicals contested in the 1983 elections too but with little success.

There was no walk of life which the Congress-I had not corrupted during its rule in the State. And Rama Rao with his promise of a clean and efficient administration had a cake walk.

All the elected Telugu Desam Legislators were asked to reach Hyderabad on 7th January. The first Legislature Party meeting of the TDP was held at the Jubilee Hall where Mr. Rama Rao was unanimously elected leader. His name was proposed by N. Srinivasulu Reddy and seconded by Mr. N. Bhaskar Rao. Rama Rao read out a pledge and all the MLAs were asked to take the oath. Mr. N. Srinivasulu Reddy in his speech said that the Telugu Desam must occupy all Zilla Parishaths and Samithis for smooth administration. Senior members of the party went to the Governor and handed over the party’s resolution informing him the unanimous election of Rama Rao as its leader. By that time, Mr. Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy submitted his resignation and was asked to continue till further arrangements were made. Mr. K.C. Abraham, the Governor asked Mr. Rama Rao to form the new Ministry.

The intelligence department swung into action and prepared break-up figures of the legislators, caste and religion-wise. They also prepared the background information of the would-be Ministers. The Chief Minister had hurried consultations before finalising the names of the Ministers, and on 9th January the list was submitted to the Governor for his customary approval.

The oath-taking ceremony was arranged at the Lal Bahadur Stadium, Hyderabad. And, for the first time, a Chief Minister and his Cabinet was sworn in among the public. It was a fifteen member compact Ministry and everywhere there were signs of relief after enduring the airbus cabinet of the Congress-I Governments especially that of Mr. Anjaiah. After the Governor left, the Chief Minister read out a prepared speech (the last speech prepared by Eenadu), and promised the thousands of people who had come there that his party would fulfil all its election promises. Several prominent personalities attended the swearing in ceremony including, Mr. Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy and Mr. Bhavanam Venkatram.
Central Authority Questioned

With the emergence of the Telugu Desam as a powerful Regional Party the Congress-I was unhappy. Mrs. Gandhi had gone on record saying that regional parties are harmful as well as dangerous to the unity of the Nation. She was of the opinion that only a strong Central Government could keep the Nation unified. On the other hand, Mr. Rama Rao countered this argument by saying that only powerful limbs could create a healthy body. He was of the opinion that strong State Governments are necessary for strengthening the unity of the country. In any case the people of Andhra Pradesh backed Rama Rao’s ideas and his party was voted to power with a massive mandate. In 1971, the people of Telangana had voted for the Telangana Praja Samithi which was a regional party. Hence, regional parties are not a new phenomena in Andhra Pradesh. But the ruling party at the Centre did not take kindly to the victory of the Telugu Desam. Mrs. Gandhi was not even sportive enough to send a congratulatory message to Mr. Rama Rao on his landslide victory.

The Legislative Council in the State was used as a political asylum for defeated leaders of various political parties. The Telugu Desam decided to abolish this body and made an election promise to press for its abolition. This also meant a saving of over Rs. 60 lakhs per annum. The Government passed a resolution in the Legislative Assembly asking the Central Government to introduce a Bill in the Parliament for the abolition of the Upper House. This resolution was passed with two thirds majority and sent to the Centre. Inspite of sending several reminders to the Centre, the resolution was not taken up in the Parliament. Later it was conceded and Council was abolished.
Mr. Rama Rao started playing an important role in the politics of the country. A majority of the opposition leaders were seeking his support. Mr. Rama Rao too did not lag behind in encouraging them. The first ever Conclave of the Opposition Leaders was held at Vijayawada in May 1983 under the stewardship of Mr. Rama Rao. All the opposition parties sent their representatives and it was considered a grand success. The meeting ended with a demand for more powers to the State Governments and it asked the Central Government not to encroach upon the States’ powers. the leaders who participated in the conclave were Mr. M.G.Ramachandran, Mr. Ramakrishna Hegde, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, the then Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, Mrs. Menaka Gandhi, Mr. S.S. Barnala (Akali Dal), Mr.L.K.Advani (BJP), Mr. Ravindra Verma (Janata), Mr. S.N.Mishra (Lokdal), Mr. Sharad Pawar (Congress-S), Mr. H.N. Bahuguna (Democratic Socialist Party), Mr. M. Basavapunnaiah (CPI-M), Mr C. Rajeshwar Rao (CPI), Mr. Rathubhai Advani (Rashtriya Congress).

Meanwhile all the non-Congress-I State Governments raised their voices against the powers of the Central Government and questioned the omnipotent attitude of the Centre. To make them quiet, the Central Government appointed Justice Sarkaria to go into the gamut of Centre-State Relations. But the terms of reference of the Commission were not elucidated. The Opposition Conclave at Vijayawada pleaded for the expansion of the scope of the Sarkaria Commission.

A second conclave was planned at Chandigarh under the leadership of the Akali Dal. The conclave had to be shifted to Delhi due to adverse conditions in Punjab. Nothing came out of this conclave as the various parties could not agree on a national alternative to the Congress-Party. Meanwhile the Opposition parties were divided into two camps. The Bharatiya Janata Party and the Lokdal decided to form a National Democratic Alliance keeping their respective identities. The United Front was formed by the Janata Party along with Congress-S, Democratic Socialist Party, Rashtriya Congress, and some other parties. The third Conclave to be held in Srinagar.
was thus doomed from the beginning with the NDA leaders refusing to attend. Both these alliances approached Mr. Rama Rao for his support in the Lok Sabha Elections. But Mr. Rama Rao decided not to align himself with any Front.

The Central Government started interfering in the affairs of the State, though in a subtle manner. Mrs. Gandhi commented publicly on the decision of the Government in A.P. to reduce the retirement age of government employees from 58 to 55. Mr. Rama Rao immediately sought a clarification and the Prime Minister replied that she had voiced the stand of her party. During the NGO’s strike, Mr. Rama Rao approached the AIR for the second time to address the people of the State. The authorities refused to grant permission. This mounted to sheer callousness towards the Chief Minister of a State. Though the issue was sorted out soon, it left a bitter taste and relations with the Centre were even more strained. The entire press took up Mr. Rama Rao’s cause and attacked the Central Government over this issue.

When the people of Madras City were suffering from severe shortage of drinking water, the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu met in Hyderabad. The Telugu Ganga Project materialised at this meeting. The scheme was meant to supply water from the river Krishna to Rayalaseema area of Andhra Pradesh as well as to the people of Madras City. This project was appreciated in all quarters and the Prime Minister attended the inauguration function in Madras. The cost of the project was to be borne by both the Governments. The Tamil Nadu government named it as Dravida Ganga. The Union Minister Mr. Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy, stated that the Centre would not give any money towards this project. This came at a time when the State had requested the Centre to take up the project as it served the people of the South. The people of Rayalaseema resented the Centre’s attitude. Similarly the State Government has asked the Centre to take up several projects and schemes of the State but nothing has materialised out of these requests.
The Lokayukta Bill was passed by the State Legislature and sent to the President for his approval but he signed it only after six months.

The State suffered extensive losses due to unusual floods and cyclones, storms for nearly a fortnight during October 1983. Though the loss of life was negligible, extensive damage occurred to crops and cattle. The State Government immediately swung into action and took steps to provide help to the people. The Central Government was requested for a sum of Rs. 10 crores as interim relief. The Prime Minister asked two Central Ministers of Andhra Pradesh Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao and Mr. Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy to tour the affected areas. She came to the State on 9th October, 1983. She resented the attitude of the State Government in attacking the Centre. ‘Why should I give more funds when they are constantly attacking me?’ was the attitude of the Prime Minister. This angered the State Government and all the Opposition Parties. The Press was vehement in criticizing the Prime Minister for politicising the cyclone issue.

The State Government attacked the Centre over the release of funds. A Central Team came to Andhra Pradesh and visited the flood affected areas. The Central Team was to assess the extent of damage done and the financial help needed by the State. Mr. Rama Rao appealed to the people to donate liberally to the victims. The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister gave Rs. 1 crore towards the relief fund and several other private bodies came forward with donations. The Central Government released Rs. 78.88 crores at last and meanwhile, the State Congress-I leaders attacked the Chief Minister for neglecting the relief works.

On the whole, the relations between the State and the Centre were not cordial. There were areas of constant conflict which appear to have no solutions. The Telugu Desam Government had demanded more financial autonomy and opposed the levying of Excise Duty replacing the Sales Tax on several items as proposed by the Central Government. But it had not adopted openly the anti-Centre stance like that of the West-Bengal Government. Being a non-Congress
Government it was able to raise its voice against the domination of the Centre. The conflict between the National and the Regional Parties was continued. With the new Government of Rajiv Gandhi coming to power, there is renewed hope for the betterment of Centre-State relations. As far as Andhra Pradesh was concerned both the Parties knew that criticising each other would lead them nowhere. And with Telugu Desam having a strong lobby in the Lok Sabha, it was expected that the areas of conflict especially regarding overdrafts and taxation would receive much needed over hauling.
Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy in Opposition

For the State Congress-I leaders, sitting in the Opposition was an experience about which they were not at all happy. But the peoples’ verdict was final and they had no option. For some weeks after the new government was sworn in 1983 the Congress-I leaders were confident that they would be able to topple the Telugu Desam Government in a short time. For a Party which had engineered mammoth defections under Mr. Bhajan Lal in Haryana, toppling a Government would be very simple. But Andhra Pradesh was not Haryana and the Congress-I found the going rather tough. Soon the idea of toppling the Government was postponed and the Congress-I Legislators reconciled themselves to the idea of being in the Opposition for a long time to come.

Several leaders held Press Conferences, undertook Padayatras and resorted to other gimmicks to regain public sympathy. The prominent leaders who attacked the policies of the Telugu Desam Government were Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy, Mr. Rosaiah, Mr. T. Anjaiah, Mr. Govardhan Reddy and Mr. Kesav Rao. Dr. Rajasekhar Reddy, Deputy Leader of the Congress-I Legislature Party, was very vocal in his opposition to the Government.

Seeing Dr. Rajasekhar Reddy’s defiant posture, Mrs. Gandhi appointed him as the PCC President in 1983. Mr. K. Obul Reddy, a Lok Sabha Congress-I Member from Cuddapah resigned from the Party in protest against this appointment as they had been rivals in the Cuddapah District for a long time.

Dr. Rajasekhar Reddy (34) was the youngest PCC President and was supposed to enthuse a demoralised Congress-I cadre and inject new spirit into the Party workers. The Congress-I Party in the State is full of dissidence and Dr. Reddy’s appointment was not received favourably by the Party’s Legislators and leaders of Telangana region. An Executive Committee was nominated by the Centre and it had every Congress-I leader of the State in it. This
offset the enthusiasm over the nomination of Dr. Reddy as the Party President.

On the whole, the Congress-I Party had not been able to create the image of a good Opposition Party and had no sympathy from any quarter so far.

Came the Bhaskar Rao saga, and the Congress leaders scenting a comeback went all out in backing the lies and political blackmail of Bhaskar Rao. All of them temporarily united to wreck the Telugu Desam Party. The fact that they were helping Bhaskar Rao, their old foe did not matter to them. The fact that they were contributing to the murder of democratic norms and ideals was not their concern. What mattered was that Rama Rao had demolished them and they were unable to stomach their disgrace. They solely missed their cars, official status and power and were willing to go to any extent to get them back. Such was the moral and political degeneration of these so-called leaders. The move misfired and only led to a deeper distress among the people. Mrs. Gandhi’s death, though shocking, came as a boon to these local Congress men. Their inertia disappeared and once again all the fending groups came together to inflict a defeat on Rama Rao in the 1984 Lok Sabha polls. The elections came and went. So did the 1985 Assembly elections. The Congress was once more hounded out and barely retained a majority of their old seats. Dr. Rajasekhara Reddy who incidentally got the highest winning margin, for any Congress candidate in the State (30,000)resigned from the Presidentship of the PCC. Mr. Jalagam Vengal Rao, M.P. was nominated as the President of the PCC. Mr. Baga Reddy replaced Madan Mohan who did not contest despite being given the Party nomination, as the Legislature Party Leader. The Congress MLAs who were now only 50 in a house of 294 were but a despaird lot. Most of them were old hands but helpless in front of such a massive Telugu Desam and its allies. Even in Telangana the Party has lost its grass roots and grass root workers. There was no structural organisation worth the name. Internal squabbles have further aggravated this political isolation. Whether the party learnt from its past mistakes and try to redeem its lost glory by 1990 elections was yet to be seen. So far, nothing seemed to suggest such an introspection.
Political Sabotage

Mrs. Indira Gandhi and the Congress-I Party proved that in a democracy, majority is not the sole criterion to decide upon the leadership. What happened in Andhra Pradesh from 14th August to 15th September 1984 was a fraud in the name of democracy and elected governments. Mrs. Gandhi and her party showed the least respect to the Assembly and the sovereign people. But they ultimately failed in their power game and had to obey the voter’s will and surrender the power to the legitimate leader who had the majority support among the people and the legislature.

In the Andhra Pradesh Assembly N.T. Rama Rao was the leader of 199 Members out of the total house of 294 legislators. He started the Telugu Desam Party in 1982 and won the elections with a massive mandate and displaced the Congress-I which had been ruling the State ever since independence. Congress-I became the main opposition with 60 members. All the non-Congress-I members and independents put together were only 19 and they were extending support to Rama Rao.

N.T. Rama Rao inducted into his cabinet in January 1983 four former Congress Members one of them, N. Bhaskar Rao, the Finance Minister, was in the Cabinets of Dr. Channa Reddy and also T. Anjaiah during 1978-81. At that time, he had developed a close association with the late Sanjay Gandhi and Dr. Channa Reddy punished him for his clandestine activities by taking away the major portfolios from him. He remained a
Mr. Bhaskar Rao rebelled against Dr. Channa Reddy and led a campaign until the latter was replaced by Mr. Anjaiah. But Bhaskar Rao could not continue for long in the Cabinet of Mr. Anjaiah who dropped him very soon. Mr. Bhaskar Rao waited in vain hoping to get a berth in the Ministry of B. Venkatram during 1982. A frustrated Mr. Bhaskar Rao could induce quite a few of his followers into Telugu Desam Party and later some of them got elected as Legislators. He became the Finance Minister in Rama Rao’s Cabinet. Ever since, Bhaskar Rao had aspired to become the Chief Minister and had been waiting for an opportunity. Meanwhile he was in touch with his former colleagues in Congress-I and planned sabotage from within at the appropriate time. He defied the Party discipline by abusing Rama Rao both privately as well in public. The disciplinary committee of Telugu Desam recommended his removal from the Cabinet but Rama Rao was lenient towards him, underestimating Bhaskar Rao’s strength and wily manoeuvres.

Mr. N.T. Rama Rao was advised by his doctors to undergo heart (bypass)surgery in the USA. While Mr. Rama Rao was planning to go in July, Bhaskar Rao planned to topple the Ministry. The plot was hatched on 17th July, 1984 in Delhi where Mr. Bhaskar Rao had detailed discussions with the Congress-I leaders. Mr. Bhaskar Rao promised them that he would lure 95 legislators away from Telugu Desam and the Congress-I promised to extend its support to form a Ministry. This event was to take place on 22nd August at Hyderabad. Somehow the news reached Mr. Rama Rao and he decided to rush back to the Capital from USA. Communal tensions were created in old Hyderabad between Muslims and Hindus so that the Government could be removed as it failed in maintaining law and order. Curfew was imposed in the old city for nearly two weeks continuously. Central Ministers visited the city to observe the law and order situation. But actually they were holding discussions with Bhaskar Rao to execute their plot. Mr. Bhaskar Rao telephonically asked Mr. Rama Rao to take sufficient rest in USA and requested him to handover the administration to him temporarily. He collected the signatures of 95 MLAs supporting his proposal.

Mr. N.T. Rama Rao landed Hyderabad on 14th August and he
was received at the airport by Mr. Bhaskar Rao who embraced him with an outward show of affection. Minutes after this incident, Mr. Rama Rao recommended the dismissal of Mr. Bhaskar Rao from the Ministry. To pre-empt this action, Mr. Bhaskar Rao sent his resignation to the Governor. Mr. Ram Lal, the Governor was obliged to accept the recommendation of Mr. Rama Rao. On 15th August while Mr. Rama Rao was taking the salute in the parade grounds, Mr. Bhaskar Rao went to the Governor with the claim that he had the majority support in the Telugu Desam Legislature Party and hence he should be invited to form the Ministry. He submitted a list of 95 legislators. On the same day Mr. Rama Rao’s followers also visited Raj Bhavan to show their strength in person but Mr. Ram Lal refused to see them and dispersed them saying that he would invite them at the appropriate time, if necessary. On 16th August Mr. Ram Lal was told by the Congress-I Legislature Party Leader, Madan Mohan, that their party would extend support to Bhaskar Rao. The Congress-I High Command sent Mr. Panikkar from Delhi as observer and they certified that they had seen 95 Legislators in the camp of Mr. Bhaskar Rao. The green signal came from Delhi and the Governor asked Mr. Rama Rao to resign since he had lost the majority and invited Mr. Bhaskar Rao to form the Ministry. Mr. Rama Rao refused to resign and then brought all his followers (150 in Telugu Desam and 19 in combined Opposition) to Raj Bhavan. They were initially refused permission but later Mr. Ram Lal allowed Rama Rao and the Opposition Leaders inside. The Governor was deaf to the reasonable pleas of the leaders. He repeatedly said that he was thoroughly satisfied about the loss of majority support to Mr. Rama Rao. He abruptly asked the police officers to remove Mr. Rama Rao and others and arrest them. He hurriedly sworn in Bhaskar Rao as Chief Minister. While this drama was going on inside the Raj Bhavan, the followers of Rama Rao (all legislators) were sitting on the road outside Raj Bhavan. they were molested and insulted by the goondas of Bhaskar Rao and that too in the presence of the police. Then the Legislators and Rama Rao were removed and taken to the police control room. The police announced that they had arrested 169 Legislators. The same list was released by Mrs. T. Venkataratnam,
Secretary Legislature TDP to the Press. When the legislators were later released, all of them drove to the Ramakrishna studios located in the heart of the city. Mr. Rama Rao’s legitimate Ministry was dismissed and Bhaskar Rao became the new Chief Minister.

The entire State reacted against the action of the Governor and observed bundh on 17th August which resulted in 17 deaths. The horse trading began with the active support of the Congress-I party. The legislators in Ramakrishna Studios were harassed, lured, enticed and offered bribes. Mr. Rama Rao decided to take all his followers to meet the President of India. On 19th August they started out for Delhi by the Andhra Pradesh Express from Secunderabad. They were refused reservation and the police repeatedly interrogated them both at the railway station and at the studios. But all of them firmly told them that they were willingly going to Delhi. They were to meet the President on 20th August but the train was delayed wantonly. Mr. Rama Rao travelled by air but his plane was also deliberately delayed on 20th August. The President of India said that he was willing to receive Rama Rao and his followers whenever they went. They were paraded on 21st August at Rashtrapati Bhavan in the presence of the national and international press. Then all the Legislators were flown to Bangalore in a chartered plane. Mr. Ramakrishna Hegde, the Chief Minister of Karnataka took great interest in safeguarding the Legislators and kept them at Nandi Hills in Mysore for nearly 19 days. Bhaskar Rao and the Congress-I party made all sorts of attempts to lure some more legislators from Rama Rao’s camp, but in vain.

The opposition parties in both Houses of Parliament condemned the undemocratic action of the Governor and Congress-I. Mrs. Indira Gandhi in her reply lied that she was never consulted by Ram Lal and she came to know of it only through some news agency. Earlier Mr. Ram Lal had given 30 days time to Mr. Bhaskar Rao to prove his strength in the Assembly. After the statement of Mrs. Indira Gandhi in the Parliament, Mr. Ram Lal resigned (4th August) and left for Delhi. Mr. Shankar Dayal Sarma was appointed in his place and took charge on 19th August and on the same day Mr. Bhaskar Rao inducted 17 ministers into his cabinet. Mr. Tangi Satyanarayana, Mr.
Bhim Reddy, who were the speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Assembly respectively in Ramarao’s Government were among these 17 Ministers. He appointed 15 MLAs as Chairmen of various bodies. He also started taking vital decisions and undoing many of the decisions of the earlier Government.

Mr. Rama Rao repeatedly demanded convening of the Assembly and asked the Governor not to allow Mr. Bhaskar Rao to expand his Ministry. Mr. S.D. Sarma maintained a stoic silence on all these representations. The entire country reacted against the actions of the Governor and Congress-I in A.P. The Press in the country and abroad also vehemently protested against the rape of democracy. Congress-I and Mr. Bhaskar Rao in turn asked for the release of the legislators from Rama Rao’s camp, so that they may be “purchased”. They said that Assembly could not be convened unless and until the legislators were released from Karnataka. Mr. Bhaskar Rao attracted land grabbers, goondas, rowdies and pairaveekars into the Secretariat and anti-social elements gained the upper hand. Shady deals were struck. Money changed hands. Mr. Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy, the Central Minister from A.P. camped at Hyderabad to help Bhaskar Rao.

Rama Rao was advised complete rest due to erratic pulse beat but he did not pay any heed to the doctor’s advice. He addressed public meetings at Vijayawada, Guntur, Tenali, Hyderabad, Nellore, Ongole, Tirupati, Anantapur, Bangalore and Madras. Lakhs of people attended these meetings and expressed their support for the cause of democracy. The Opposition Party leaders too joined in this crusade.

PUCL took up the cause and Mr. V. M. Tarkunde, Mr. N. A. Palkhivala, Mr. Arun Shourie addressed public meetings at Hyderabad on 1st September where thousands of youth and intellectuals participated.

At last, the Governor was forced to convene the Assembly in spite of Bhaskar Rao and Congress-I. The Assembly was to meet on 11th September. Mr. M. Baga Reddy, a senior legislator of Congress-I, was nominated as protem speaker. Mr. Baga Reddy, a staunch follower of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, had earlier resigned from the State
Cabinet to work as the election agent of Mrs. Indira Gandhi in Medak, A.P. The Assembly was convened to prove the strength of Mr. Bhaskar Rao. Instead, Mr. Baga Reddy introduced other items like condolence motions etc. in the agenda.

When the date of the Assembly was announced, Mr. N.T. Rama Rao appealed to the people to come to Hyderabad in large numbers, so that they could hear the messages of the National Opposition Leaders in a public meeting on 11th September. To prevent this attempt Mr. Bhaskar Rao’s camp created law and order problems and imposed curfew. On 9th September, processions which had to converge by the evening at Hussain Sagar to immerse Ganesh idols were allowed in the old city. This sort of religious revivalism was encouraged during Dr. Channa Reddy’s regime in 1978 and every year the religious frenzy is on the increase. The goondas from Mr. Bhaskar Rao’s camp went round with petrol and burnt shops belonging only to Muslims on the main roads through which the procession moved. They attacked the Muslim residents in several localities. As communal riots flared up, curfew was clamped. An impression was created that the entire arson was indulged in by BJP. Mr. Bhaskar Rao also gave that impression in his address to the people over Doordarshan.

The next day i.e., 10th September, Mr. Rama Rao along with the legislators supporting him and several PUCL leaders arrived at the outskirts of the city from Mysore. The police harassed them for hours and asked them to travel in police vans. After prolonged negotiations, the police allowed them to drive directly to the Assembly building where they collected their identity cards. Here again Bhaskar Rao’s followers tried in vain to abduct a few legislators.

The Assembly session was held on 11th September under heavy security and curfew. The Press from abroad and the National Press were not allowed into the galleries. Visitors were prohibited. Legislators were screened with the help of metal detectors. Earlier Mr. Rama Rao had asked the protem speaker to arrange a separate block for his supporters. Mr. Baga Reddy could not recognise Telugu Desam members on either side though his party had extended
support to Bhaskar Rao’s faction. On the first day of the Assembly, Bhaskar Rao’s group came with the determination not to allow the proceedings to run smoothly. They know pretty well that if the vote of confidence was sought they would be the losers. They created ugly scenes, in the Assembly, abused Rama Rao and his followers, and attempted to manhandle some legislators. Surprisingly, Congress-I also joined in this rowdyism. They pulled out mikes, broke the benches and created pandemonium. Mr. Baga Reddy adjourned the House till the next day, giving more time to Mr. Bhaskar Rao for horse-trading. On 12th and 13th September also similar incidents occurred in the Assembly. On the last two days the Congress-I kept quiet, but Bhaskar Rao’s group even went to the extent of throwing on the floor a hand bomb which however failed to explode and was later diffused. But for the presence of marshals, Bhaskar Rao’s group would have whisked away some legislators in the hired taxis which were kept ready outside.

During the Assembly Session Mr. Rama Rao called on the Governor and appraised him of the situation and took all the legislators supporting him and presented them to the Governor. Bhaskara Rao’s group abused the legislative forum and converted it into a fish market. On 13th September Mr. Baga Reddy adjourned the house and intimated to the house that he had resigned as Protem Speaker. He was admitted into the hospital for treatment of his blood pressure and discharged after a couple of days.

The Governor appointed Mr. Salauddin Owaisi, leader of Itehad Majlis group as Protem Speaker. Mr. Owaisi had hurled unprintable abuses in the Assembly against Rama Rao during the earlier session. Naturally Rama Rao objected to his appointment. Mr. Owaisi can neither speak nor write English or Telugu which are essential to conduct the House. He was also involved in communal riots and criminal charges were pending against him. Already the Majlis members were supporting Bhaskar Rao.

Meanwhile Mr. Bhaskar Rao made futile efforts to win over the legislators from Rama Rao’s side. The opposition parties throughout the country were prepared for agitation against the attitude of Mr.
Bhaskar Rao’s Government and Congress-I. Mr. Owaisi, the Protem Speaker decided to convene the Assembly on 20th September. By 16th September the one month’s time given to Mr. Bhaskar Rao to prove his majority was to be over.

Mr. Wali, the Union Home Secretary visited Hyderabad and reported back to the Home Minister about the grave situation in Hyderabad. Mr. Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy, Union Minister who was camping in Hyderabad to buy the Legislators for NBR rushed to Delhi and gave his report to the High Command. Mr. Rajeev Gandhi and Indira Gandhi reiterated in the meetings that they had nothing to do with the internal quarrels of Telugu Desam Party. Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, Home Minister and Mr. Rajeev Gandhi defended the action of Mr. Ramlal, the ousted Governor. The political pundits of the country were not able to predict the outcome from the stalemate. Some expected President’s rule. Mr. Mukhasir Shaw, the Chairman of the Legislative Council visited Bangalore and called on the Prime Minister. He appraised her of the situation in Hyderabad. Informed sources say that by then the Prime Minister had already indicated to the Governor that Mr. Bhaskar Rao should be asked to step down. Had the Congress-I withdrawn its support to Bhaskar Rao, automatically he would have resigned. But Congress-I wanted to throw the blame on Bhaskar rao for failing to muster the required strength.

On 16th September, Mr. Bhaskar Rao completed one month of his usurped Chief Ministership. He was asked by the Governor to resign for not being in a position to prove his majority. Mr. Bhaskar Rao reluctantly submitted his resignation and it was a political murder for all his followers.

Mr. Rama Rao was sworn in as Chief Minister on 16th September and the Governor asked him to prove his strength in the Assembly within one month. Mr. Rama Rao said that he was willing to prove it within three days. Mr. Salauddin Owaisi was removed as Protem Speaker and Mr. Mahendranath was nominated as Protem Speaker. On 20th September, the Assembly met. The entire Press was allowed to witness the proceedings. Mr. Bhaskar Rao and his
supporters thought that they would lose face if the Confidence Vote took place. They played the same old game of disruption, but this time the Protem Speaker was firm and ordered the marshals to remove members who were obstructing the proceedings. While the election of the regular Speaker was taking place, Mr. Bhaskar Rao objected to the Protem Speaker’s nomination and started shouting. His followers alleged that the secrecy of voting was being violated and thus created a scene. Five legislators were removed from the House. On that pretext Mr. Bhaskar Rao and Congress-I legislators left the House and met the Governor. Meanwhile, the election of the Speaker was over. Mr. N. Venkatratnam got 169 votes and Mr. Vijayaramaraju (Bhaskar Rao’s candidate) got 9 votes. Immediately the Speaker called for the vote of confidence and put the figure in favour of Rama Rao as 161 and opponents nil.

This was how the month-long defection drama ended. All the Opposition Parties, PUCL and the people hailed the victory of democracy for which Mr. Rama Rao had become a symbol. When the dust settled over the issue, it left a trail of destruction all over the State. Several people were killed in the violent agitations especially in Anantapur and Rayalaseema, property worth several crores of rupees was destroyed. But perhaps the most significant aspect of this sordid episode was the assertion of the strength of the common man who had rallied behind Rama Rao all the way. It was proved beyond doubt that the basic tenets of democracy in our country could survive and triumph despite several strains. As long as men like Bhaskar Rao and Ramlal exist, politics in our country will never be free from corruption and vice. It is for the people to act as check to such nefarious activities that almost succeeded in dealing a mortal blow to democracy.

Mr. Bhaskar Rao served as Lok Sabha Member and later marginalised in Congress Party.
Mr. N.T. Rama Rao retained all the former Ministers who had stayed with him during the crisis and also inducted a few others. When the Telugu Desam MLAs realised that Rama Rao was not as invincible as they thought, they resorted to political blackmail of the lowest order by threatening to defect and thereby topple his Ministry which had a slender majority. The political circles commented on it and it was only then, that Mr. Rama Rao realised the importance of legislators! The same people who once feared to talk before Rama Rao now got away with anything they said.

On 31st October, 1984, Mrs. Indira Gandhi was assassinated by two of her own security guards. As the whole Nation remained stunned and silent, Rama Rao rushed to Delhi to pay homage to the departed leader. There was a tremendous outburst of sympathy for Rajiv Gandhi who was sworn in as the new Prime Minister. And to cash in on this, the Congress party decided to go in for the Lok Sabha polls. Elections to the State were announced once again and for a brief period, the voter was the sovereign.

Mr. Rama Rao was fed up with the constant pressures and threats and in a surprise move, recommended the dissolution of the Assembly. The Congress party did not want to repeat its past mistakes and the Governor, Shankar Dayal Sharma promptly dissolved the house and asked Mr. Rama Rao to continue as the care-taker Chief-Minister. This decision was received with dismay by the Telugu Desam supporters who thought that it was an ill-timed move. The Congress ranks were jubilant as they expected the Indira wave to destroy the Telugu Desam party.

The campaign began in earnest. The Congress-I contested all
the 42 seats with as many as five former Chief Ministers contesting on its ticket. The Telugu Desam and its allies in the Opposition also contested all the 42 seats. The rest of the country solidly voted for the Congress party but in Andhra Pradesh, the Telugu Desam bagged 30 seats, with its allies and Congress-I getting 6 seats each. The people had not forgiven the Congress-I for its role in unseating Rama Rao. A thoroughly demoralised Congress gave up all hopes of winning in the Assembly polls and lost even before the fight began.
The Assembly Elections were fixed for 5th March 1985. The Telugu Desam contested in 249 places while its allies contested for the rest. The Congress-I put up candidates in all the 294 constituencies, while Nandendla Bhaskar Rao who formed the Democratic Telugu Desam Party contested for 210 seats. The Congress Party fielded several new faces in a bid to give itself a clean image. But the odds were so high against it that several prominent leaders like Madan Mohan, Jalagam Prasada Rao and Pinnamaneni Koteswara Rao opted to sit out despite being given the party tickets. Telugu Desam’s victory was evident even as the campaign went under way. Despite this, Rama Rao toured almost all the 292 constituencies that were going to polls. The Prime Minister came to the State thrice and attacked the Telugu Desam for its wrong policies. He derided Rama Rao’s decision to contest from three seats—Gudivada, Hindupur, and Nalgonda representing the three zones of the State. The local Congress-I leaders claimed that the popular measures of the Telugu Desam were in fact gifts of the Centre. This propaganda failed to click and the Telugu Desam bagged 202 seats while its allies got 38. The Congress-I was reduced to rubble getting 49 seats, eleven less than what it got in 1983. The most notable feature of these polls was the total rout of Bhaskar Rao and his party. He lost by over 17000 votes to BJP’s Indrasena Reddy in the Malakpet constituency of Hyderabad and 218 of his party candidates out of 220 lost their deposits! Telangana, which had contributed the major chunk of Congress seats in 1983, overwhelmingly rejected the party and the Telugu Desam won very convincingly in many districts. Guntur, Krishna and Kurnool districts were the saving grace for the Congress. As ever, the Godavari districts, Vizianagaram,
Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam backed the Telugu Desam to the hilt. NTR won with handsome margins in Hindupur and Nalgonda and with a consideringly reduced margin in Gudivada. His entire Cabinet was re-elected including Vasantha Nageswara Rao, the Agricultural Minister who scraped through with 1700 votes in Nandigama. The prominent losers were G. Latchanna, the State President of DMKP who lost his deposit, Mr. Ramana Reddy, the former Telugu Desam MLA and President of the Rayalaseema Vimochana Smithi, Mr. D. Muniswamy and Mr. Venkaiah Naidu, the BJP Legislature Party leader who lost by over 800 votes in Atmakur. Prominent winners included Mr. Baga Reddy who won from Zaheerabad for a record 7th time, Mr. Pidathala Ranga Reddy, Mr. Ratna Sabhapathy, Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, Mr. Yathi Raja Rao, Mr. K.E. Krishna Murthy, Mr. M. Omkar and Mr. Chanumolu Venkata Rao.

Mr. Rama Rao along with twenty four of his Cabinet colleagues was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh in the presence of a mammoth crowd at Lal Bahadur Stadium. The Assembly elected Mr. G. Narayana Rao as the Speaker.

With this victory, Mr. Rama Rao got a fresh and massive mandate for another five years. But it was to be seen whether he could provide a smooth, stable, and clean government to the people who were fed up with the constant elections. It would be a mighty blow to the aspirations of the people if the Telugu Desam ended like the Congress-I, corrupt, inefficient and top heavy.
People in Vijayawada enjoyed Christmas holiday and slept peacefully. They woke up to hear the most foul murder of V. Ranga Rao (Ranga) a Congress Legislator in Vijayawada. The T.V., Radio flashed the news on (26th December, 1988). At that time Ranga was fasting, demanding protection for his life. It was on the fifth day of his fast, he was murdered brutally. Along with Ranga four of his associates were also killed in the attack. In the early hours of 26th some goondas came in a jeep and a bus, hurled country bombs at the Satyagraha Camp of Ranga and killed him. The news was a shock to many people in the state. There was a chain reaction. Ranga belonged to Kapu Caste (sudra, according to Hindu heirarchy). The Kapus of Andhra Pradesh reacted violently and attacked Kammas (another Sudra Caste) indiscriminately. Property worth Rs. 100 Crores was destroyed. Curfew was clamped in several coastal towns and villages for nearly a month! 42 people lost their lives in the violent incidents that followed Ranga’s murder.

V. Ranga defeated his Kamma rival, Telugu Desam Candidate Y. Rajagopala Rao (A lecturer of Physics in a local college). Prior to the election Ranga was a local factional leader. Earlier his elder brother was murdered by some Kamma faction leaders. Congress Party started grooming Ranga against Telugu Desam and made him City Congress President. In the Congress Party there had been two factions, one faction supported Ranga the other opposed him. G.S. Raju, a rich businessman was the leader of rival group. He was supported by J. Vengal Rao, Union Minister for Industries. At one stage Ranga was suspended from the Congress Party by J. Vengal Rao, then President of the State Congress Party. Dr. Y. S. Rajasekhar Reddy, Congress Legislator from Rayalaseema supported Ranga.
Rao. It is curious to know that though Ranga married Ratna Kumari from Kamma community the caste rivalry did not stop.

Telugu Desam Party headed by N.T. Rama Rao (Kamma) groomed Devineni Nehru (Kamma) to counter Ranga in Vijayawada. Thus Kapu - Kamma caste conflict went on since 1983. Ranga championed the cause of Kapus. Gradually he became the unrivalled leader of Kapus. Ranga’s followers murdered Murali, D. Nehru’s brother, (10th March, 1987) and his associates. At that time some Kapus were attacked. Ranga went underground and surrendered himself to the Court. Later he was released. But he scented danger to his life. He sought police protection. Two constables were provided to be his guards. He asked for more protection and commenced fasting unto death near his residence in Vijayawada. That was where the murder took place on 26th December, 1988. A bundh call was given by the Congress Party. The Kapus took revenge on Kammas. The houses, theatres, shops belonging to Kammas were destroyed. the Caste rivalry spread to the nook and corner of the coastal areas. Kammas in Congress Party were in a fix. They condemned the attacks on innocent Kammas. But Kapu Congress Leaders treated the Kamma Congress Leaders as excommunicated politicians. K.S Rao, Member of Lok Sabha, Ch. Venkat Rao,Legislator, P. Koteswara Rao, Zilla Parishad Chairman, P. Venkat Rao, ex-Minister, R. Sambasiva Rao, M.P., were insulted by Kapu leaders. P. Krishna Murthy, Ammulu and other Kapu leaders did not appreciate the role of Congress. Kamma Leaders condemned the murder of Ranga as well as the attack on Kammas.

Congress Party took sides and fully supported Ranga group. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi paid tributes to Ranga, describing him as a National Leader. This surprised many impartial observers. The Congress High Command sent Sheila Dixit, Mohsina Kidwai, Union Ministers. Ghulam Nabi Azad, Jagannath Pahadia, Sitaram Kesari to be present at the funeral of Ranga. These leaders gave provocative speeches. They commented that the property loss is nothing when compared to the murder of Ranga. This again roused the feelings of Kammas. Shiva Sankar, Union Minister, who aligned himself with
Kapus played havoc with the explosive situation and instigated Kapus for violence with his out-bursts.

N.T. Rama Rao, the Chief Miniser condemned the murder of Ranga. But he did not visit Vijayawada immediately. At that time Mr. P. Rama Mohan Rao (Kamma) was the Director General of Police. He too failed to visit the town. The local Police Officials failed to control the situation. A little later N.T. Rama Rao tried to call on Mrs. V. Ranga at Vijayawada, but her followers did not allow him. Curfew continued in coastal towns for a full month. The victims of riots were given liberal help. But Kapu-Kamma rivalry crystallised. Kammas organised themselves, collected donations to help the victims and consoled the sufferers. They got prepared to counter the attempts of Kapus.

Chegondi Harirama Jogaiah (kapu) ex-Minister in Telugu Desam resigned from the party in favour of Kapus. Maganti Ravindranath Chowdary resigned to Congress Party in favour of Kammas. He is a prominent contractor from West Godavari. Opposition Party leaders and Editors of prominent Dailies, Peoples Union for Civil Liberties visited the riot victims and gave different versions but all of them condemned the murder and the looting and arson followed gruesome incidents.

Kapu Nadu, the caste organisation was formed in 1987, (December, 10) and Ranga became its leader. Ranga toured coastal districts to enthuse kapus. Mudragada Padmanabham, a Minister in N.T. Rama Rao’s Cabinet resigned and joined Kapu Nadu in May, 1988. There were 24 Kapus in Andhra Pradesh Assembly at that time. Kapus claim to be 15% of the State population (60 million). This claim could not be established by Census statistics. Many sub-castes were there among Kapus. They have different names in different regions. Some of them are listed under backward class. Thoorpu Kapus in Visakhapatnam, Srikakulam, Vijayanagaram are entirely different from Balijas of Rayalaseema. Munnuru Kapu in Telangana is a powerful caste to which Mr. Shiv Sankar, the Union Minister belongs. All these castes wanted to rally under one
Kammam in Coastal District differ from Rayalaseema and Telangana Kammam. Most of the Kammam in Telangana, are settlers, whereas in Rayalaseema majority of the Kammam are economically backward. The rich Kammam in coastal area are mainly agriculturists and of late they entered film industry, trade and commerce. Some of them exhibited their wealth in a vulgar fashion. This has become an eye-sore to others. Vijayawada is a place where Kammam started Kakathiya Society, established student hostels, colleges, schools and technical institutions. When N.T. Rama Rao came to power Kammam were jubilant though all did not vote for him and his party. Many key positions were occupied by Kammam and they became the target of criticism.

Caste is like Maya. One cannot catch it. But caste is practised. it has become reality for all practical purposes. Politics entered into caste. Gradually caste has become vote catching concept.
Decline of N.T. Rama Rao

Mr. N.T. Rama Rao came into politics in 1982, created Telugu Desam, a Regional Party in Andhra Pradesh and captured power within 9 months. His charisma, anti-Congress atmosphere helped him to come to Government in such a short time. He ruled the State for seven years with a short break of one month. He faced 1984 Lok Sabha elections, 1985 Assembly elections and retained his power with 200 Assembly seats. He also conducted Panchayat Raj elections, Co-operative elections and Municipal elections. Gradually his popularity started eroding and his charisma waning. Meanwhile the youth of 18 years too became eligible to vote.

Mr. Rama Rao depended on bureaucracy and Police in the day to day problems. The elected representatives and the Ministers were not given free hand in administration and in solving people’s problems. State-Centre relations deterorated day by day. Naxalites created havoc in three districts which the Telugu Desam could not tackle.

Mr. Rama Rao depended upon welfare activities to sustain his popularity. The poorer sections were given rice at the rate of two rupees per kilo. The hand-loom cloth was distributed at subsidised rate. Pukka houses were constructed for weaker sections. Mr. Rama Rao wanted to strengthen his charisma among weaker sections especially the backward communities by reserving 44 per cent jobs, educational facilities etc. for them. This was resented by the upper castes while the scheduled castes were lukewarm to this attempt. The upper caste youth violently reacted against these reservations and demanded the withdrawal of the concessions. The backward classes could not resist the movement. The High court through its verdict asked the government to assess the situation which saved the state from chaos.
During N.T. Rama Rao’s tenure communal tensions and riots were absent at Hyderabad and other places. But the ugly caste war tarnished the image of N.T. Rama Rao and his Telugu Desam Party. It was dubbed as Kamma party. A Kapu legislator from Vijayawada was murdered while he was fasting for the protection of his life. The Kapus from coastal Andhra reacted violently and attacked. Curfew was clamped for a month during early 1988. The bitterness creating conflicts between the Kapus and Kammas reflected in the elections and also had its impact on political parties.

Telugu Desam has become one man’s charismatic rule. Mr. Rama Rao’s two sons-in-law have become the suprimos in the party. While Mr. Rama Rao rose to the level of President of National Front, his party’s performance was under bitter attack from all political parties in the State. Friendly Parties like CPM and BJP charge sheeted Mr. Rama Rao for arbitrary rule and misdeeds. CPI constantly attacked the policies of Mr. Rama Rao. Congress-I did not spare Mr. Rama Rao and his Party and attacked them from all angles. Congress Party exposed Mr. Rama Rao through High Court and Supreme Court. The High Court passed some strictures and made some observations against Mr. Rama Rao’s behaviour.

When the general elections were declared in November 1989, Mr. Rama Rao asked for the Assembly elections simultaneously. He gave tickets to 50 percent new candidates. Earlier the Ministers who resigned from the Cabinet (or removed by Rama Rao) rebelled and started Telugu Nadu Party. Later they joined the Congress. Some others who were denied tickets contested against the party. They also played and contributed their might to erode the margins in the Assembly and Parliament. People by and large became anti-establishment. Rama Rao is the only leader in Telugu Desam who attracted crowds. His actor son Mr. Balakrishna also toured and attracted crowds. Congress Party gave stiff fight and encashed on the mistakes of Telugu Desam Party. Mr. Rama Rao lost his seat in Kalwakurthy (Telangana) and won in Hindupur (Rayalaseema). His party’s strength was reduced to the main opposition (from 200 to 73 in Assembly and from 36 to 2 in Lok Sabha).
Mr. Rama Rao did not accept the defeat on its face value. Instead he blamed rigging, alcohol, money for this change. Obviously he has not learnt lesson from the game of election rules. He accepted to sit in the opposition. One had to wait and see how long Telugu Desam would remain intact under Rama Rao.
Where is the Popularity Gone?

Telugu Desam Government under N.T. Rama Rao’s Chief Ministership, conducted all the elections due to Local Bodies, Panchayat, Praja Mandal Prishads, Praja Zilla (District) Parishad - the three tier system - Congress Party postponed these elections for a long time. The Presidents of Mandals and District Bodies were elected directly by the people. In the process Congress Party gained some District Bodies, some Mandals too. Similarly elections were conducted to all the Municipalities. Telugu Desam lost majority of the towns and the State Capital Hyderabd Municipality which went to Ittehad Majlis. Co-operative Body elections were also conducted, thus completing the democratic process at all levels. Elections to Library Bodies were not conducted, instead the Government nominated its own Body. In the Universities elections were not allowed. Autonomy was not respected.

Many decisions of the State Government were struck down by the Courts saying that they were either illegal or extra constitutional.

Karshak Parishad, a Peasant Body, was constituted with Sri N.Chandrababu Naidu, the son-in-law of the Chief Minister, as its President but the Court held it invalid.

N.T. Rama Rao tried to woo the Backward Classes, by declaring 43% reservation to them in educational institutions, jobs etc. But the upper castes did not take it as a friendly gesture. The upper caste youth of all parties and groups came out on to the streets and violently demonstrated against Government’s decision. The voice of Backward Class became feeble. When the violence was mounting up the State High Court struck down the Government Order as invalid. Then the students withdrew their agitation.

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During his tenure, N.T. Rama Rao faced a couple of Court cases with charges of corruption, mis-rule, nepotism, abuse of power etc. At one stage the High Court found that in 7 charges N.T.R's Government has prima facie reasons to be enquired into. Congress Party took active part in dragging the issues to the Court and many times demanded resignation of N.T. Rama Rao. In the Legislative Assembly too Congress Party blamed NTR for corrupt practices, caste biased administration and nepotism. They mentioned some names to indicate how N.T.R. favoured his own caste people in key posts, Corporations, Autonomus Public Sectors and few other Committees.

Dr. K. Ramakrishna Rao was made Chairman to Education Commission. But the Hight Court clearly stated that its formation was not proper. Mr. Ramakrishna Rao was appointed as the Advisor to Government in Educational matters.

Rama Rao stressed on Telugu Culture. He established Telugu University under his Chancellorship by merging all the Academies in it. The UGC objected to his Chancellor’s Post and refused to give grants to the University. N.T.R erected statues of famous Telugu Personalities from 10th Century onwards which has become tourist attraction. He favoured Buddhist Culture, Sculpture and Architecture which has become eye sore to Kanchi Sankaracharya. The Orthodox Hindu section condemned N.T.R. for his taking sides with Buddhist Culture. A huge Buddha Statue was erected on gibraltor rock in the midst of Hussain Sagar in Hyderabad.

The opposition parties like CPI, BJP came out with long list of charges blaming NTR and Government for their failure. Similar charges were constantly made by the Congress Party. Centre-State relations were strained. Mutual blames became the order of the day. Prime Minister during his visits to the State accused N.T.R. and his Government for diversion of Central funds and for claiming Central Schemes as their own. Congress Party echoed the views of the Prime Minister and demanded the dismissal of Rama Rao’s Government.

During 1989 there was budget leakage and Rama Rao made all his 30 Cabinet colleagues tender their resignations. He replaced all
of them with new members. A few Ministers left the party, started a new party, Telugu Nadu, which met premature death.

1988 saw bitter struggle between Kapu caste and Kamma caste. Both castes are non-brahmins (sudras). Congress Party sided Kapu and TDP sided Kammas. A Congress Kapu legislator from Vijayawada, Sri Vangaveeti Ranga was murdered and that led to violence, destruction of properties belonging to Kamma Community. Month long curfew had to be clamped in coastal districts of Andhra following the disturbances.

The welfare measures of TDP like providing rice at Rs. 2/- per kilo, house construction and supply of cheap rate clothes to the poor were the main attractions. Yet, TDP lost some votes in urban areas but its base remained with backward classes.

N.T. Rama Rao continued to be the cine actor and produced a mythological film “Viswamitra” during his tenure. Congress party took this issue to the Courts but the Courts could not decide anything against Sri Rama Rao since there is nothing to say against him constitutionally. The film could not be released during 1989 election, though audio cassettes were used for election propaganda.

Charisma was the main plank of Rama Rao in politics. In the party as well as in the Government, Rama Rao was omnipotent. Political corruption was reduced to the minimum level but administrative corruption was on the increase. Police also proved to be inefficient in facing extremist violence (Naxalite Communists) in some districts. Rama Rao made use of religion in politics and secularism was weakened. Muslims agitated for more benefits, jobs, recognition to Urdu language and demanded more Urdu medium educational institutions. Congress Party jumped into the fray but it did not pay dividends to them.

Constant friction between N.T. Rama Rao and TDP on one side and the Governor and Congress Party on the other side became an irritant point in politics. The Government controlled media, T.V., Radio encouraged anti Rama Rao propaganda with the support of Congress Party and the Central Government. Opposition parties
solidly stood with Rama Rao.

Telugu Desam Party under the monolithic charismatic leadership of N.T. Rama Rao was in power for 7 years (1983-90) which is the longest period for any Chief Minister since the formation of the State in 1956.

The Naxalites belonging to Peoples War Group under Kondapalli Seetharamaiah, constantly gave trouble to Telugu Desam Government in Karimnagar, East Godavari, Warangal and Adilabad Districts. They blamed the Government for false encounter deaths and curbing civil liberties. The Centre negotiated with them through Civil Liberties Association and blamed the State Government for its failure in curbing Naxalite menace. The State created Grey Hounds—Special Police cadre but they too failed to check Naxalites.

In the administration, constant transfer of IAS and IPS Officers had become a laughing matter. These Officers did not act firmly since uncertainty of their tenure was always hanging on them. No officer was retained for 3 years in any post. Financial Administration has weakened so much so Rs. 800 crores were returned to Centre due to non-utilisation by T.D.P. Government.

Occasionally, important persons deserted Telugu Desam Party and Government. N. Srinivasulu Reddy, Rajagoplo Reddy left the party and formed Sena. They joined Congress after the initial enthusiasm died down. M. Padmanabham left the Cabinet to form a caste organisation. He joined Telugu Nadu Party. Jana Reddy, K.E. Krishna Murthy, Vasanta Negeswara Rao too sailed with Telugu Nadu Party for a while but later merged with Congress-I. All of them except Vasanta Nageswara Rao won the election in 1989 and Mr. M. Padmanabham was accommodated in Channa Reddy’s Ministry.

became Congress Party Chiefs in quick succession. Internal bickerings continued in the Congress Party. The official media (T.V., AIR) tried to play down the importance of N.T.R. and TDP in its telecast and broadcast. State-Centre conflict reached its climax with bitter criticisms between the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister. They called names, abused each other and degraded themselves in the eyes of the public.

Mr. Rama Rao after his defeat in elections during 1989, remained the main opposition in the Assembly. He blamed money, terrorism and rigging for the success of Congress Party. This comment was not received well by the public.

Mr. P. Upendra, Rajya Sabha member from T.D.P, was inducted in V.P. Singh’s Central Cabinet as Minister for Information.

Mr. Mallu Ananta Ramulu was nominated as President of A.P. Congress in the place of Dr. Channa Reddy.
No Telangana - only Power Matters

After seven years eclipse, Congress-I was voted back into power in the State. The situation was similar to that of 1978. Dr. Channa Reddy the President of Praesh Congress Committee was elected as the leader of Congress Legislature Party in the presence of three observers. Earlier Mr. N. Janardhana Reddy claimed majority in the party. He was supported by a few Legislators, Members of Parliament and former Chief Ministers. But the final choice fell on Dr. Channa Reddy.

Dr. Channa Reddy consulted the high command of his party and constituted the Ministry. Like Mr. N. T. Rama Rao he too made his ministry take oath in the Nizam College grounds. The opponent groups were also accommodated in the Ministry.

Dr. Channa Reddy’s Ministry started reviewing the deeds of Telugu Desam Government and started reversing some measures. They also faced the extremists (Naxalites) and terrorism. People from all walks of life were demanding quick results from the Congress Ministry.

Since the Congress Party was no longer in the Centre, the Ministry in the state had to move carefully. Already the Channa Reddy’s Ministry announced that they will co-operate with the Centre.

Channa Reddy’s administration faced several calamities. During summer (May) 1990 severe cyclone hit the coastal Andhra, damaged crops. Peasants were put to heavy loss. Congress and opposition parties indulged in mutual criticism. Entire cyclone relief work was politicised. Dr. Channa Reddy had to postpone his visit to U.S.A. for two weeks. People faced the hardships bravely and
normalcy was restored. Due to the frequent cyclones on the coastal area, the administration had to gear up for rational attitude towards cyclone damages.

Dr. Channa Reddy wanted to eliminate bogus ration cards. This led to severe criticism from the T.D.P. and allied parties. Even some dissident Congress leaders felt that Congress would lose popularity among weaker sections if ration cards were controlled indiscriminately.

Dr. Channa Reddy had to face Naxalite problem as soon as he came to power. He announced concessions and freedom to the extremist Communists, no more arrests, even if the extremists openly addressed the public meetings. Some Communists welcomed this move. But the seniors watched the move of the government carefully. The front organisations came out and organised meetings and cultural programmes. Gaddar was the main attraction in the programmes. Simultaneously the extremists collected huge amounts of money throughout the state. The State Government sought the help of Centre in curbing extremist activities. The dissident Congress leaders also were critical of the State Government’s policy towards Naxalite problems. Peoples War Group of Kondapalli Seetharamaiah and Chandra Pulla Reddy’s factions continued their activities. They kidnapped persons, burnt the buses, and indulged in violent activities. People felt that there was no law and order. Police failed. Government machinery came to stand still in a couple of districts. Again encounters started. Naxalites condemned encounters as killings. Police justified them as self protection action. The Central Government blamed the state for its failure. The State Government issued statements saying that they will not keep quiet if Naxalites resort to violence.

Dr. Channa Reddy was suffering from kidney trouble for some time. He went to U.S.A. during May 90 and underwent kidney transplant. His son donated kidney. Dr Channa Reddy had to stay for 50 days in U.S.A for treatment. During his absence, the dissident activity mounted in the State. His Cabinet Colleagues G.V. Sudhakara Rao, N. Srinivasulu Reddy, Sangeetham Venkat Reddy too joined
the dissident camp and were critical of Dr. Channa Reddy. Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy, Bala Goud, K.S. Rao (M.Ps) toured the State to expose Dr. Channa Reddy. The followers of Channa Reddy countered the dissident statements.

On 26th July, 90 Dr. Channa Reddy returned to the State. Meanwhile Mr. Rajiv Gandhi toured the State and declared that Dr. Channa Reddy would not be removed. After the death of Mr. Mallu Ananta Ramulu the post of the State Pradesh Congress President was not filled. Congress Party activity rallied round power politics.

Mr. Koneru Ranga Rao was dropped from the Ministry as there were allegations regarding his file disposals.

In the beginning conflicts arose between the Speaker Mr. P. Ramachandra Reddy and the Chief Minister due to personality clashes. Similarly there were conflicts between Mr. Mallu Anantaramulu the PCC Chairman and the Chief Minister. Due to sudden demise of Mr. Mallu, Channa Reddy emerged as unquestioned Chief Minister temporarily.

Dr. Channa Reddy was the President of Congress-I in Andhra Pradesh when he was elected as Legislator from Sanatnagar (Hyderabad). Some persons tried to contest for Chief Minister’s post. Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy, M.P., spearheaded the campaign against Dr. Channa Reddy, Dr. Y. S. Rajasekhar Reddy was humiliated in 1978 by Dr. Channa Reddy when he was Chief Minister. Since then, Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy took cudgels against Channa Reddy. But the option of Rajiv Gandhi and High Command fell on Dr. Channa Reddy. Mr. N. Janardhana Reddy who emerged as potential candidate withdrew at last minute. Hence Dr. Channa Reddy was unanimously elected as the leader of State Congress Legislature Party. Dr. Reddy was sworn in as Chief Minister but could not form the Ministry immediately. He rushed to Delhi, consulted the High Command on Ministry making. Due to several counterpulls, couple of dissidents also found place in Channa’s Cabinet. Among them Mr. N. Srinivasulu Reddy, Mr. G. Sudhakara Rao, Mr. Sangeetham

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Venkata Reddy, Mohd. Jani were there. Dr. Channa Reddy pushed his son M. Sashidhar Reddy into prominence. The recommendations of Sashidhar Reddy gained importance, politics rallied round him. Mr. Hashim, (M.P.), Mr. B.N. Reddy, Mr. Sashidhar Reddy and few others formed as close circle of Dr. Channa Reddy. But Dr. Reddy was sick with kidney trouble. There was cyclone devastation in coastal area during Dr. Reddy’s tenure. After attending to rescue operations, Dr. Reddy rushed to U.S.A. for kidney transplantation. After his return, he had to face dissident activity from Congress circles. Again Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy, M.P. belled the cat and all others rallied round him. Though a brief lull was there before the storm. Dr. Rajasekhar Reddy did not keep quiet. Meanwhile two Ministers Mr. G.V.Sudhakar Rao, and Sangeetam Venkata Reddy were dropped by Dr. Reddy. In the shuffling of Ministry, Dr. Reddy humiliated Mr. N. Srinivasulu Reddy by cutting his portfolios. The dissident Congress people represented their grievances to High Command. Prominent dissident leaders being Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy, Mr. J. Vengal Rao, Mr. Sivashankar etc.

Mr. V. Hanumantha Rao resigned from Dr. Reddy’s cabinet to take up the Presidentship of State Congress Party. He became extra constitutional party authority.

Congress high command did not act in a fair way. They did not remove Dr. Channa Reddy officially. But some ugly situations were created in the state capital which worked as pretext to remove Dr. Channa Reddy. When the opposition parties moved a No Confidence motion against Dr. Reddy in State Assembly on 12th, 13th October, 1990 Congress Party rejected it. Mr. Rajiv Gandhi declared that Channa Reddy would continue. During December, 1990, communal riots were engineered in old city of Hyderabad. On December, 7th these incidents triggered communal stabbings. Mr. Srinivasulu Reddy resigned from the Ministry, blaming Dr. Channa Reddy’s failures. The army was called in, shoot at sight orders were issued. As Chief Minister could not do anything, situation went out of control. Hindus and Muslims, inspired by communal parties, indulged in riots, stabbings, arson and looting. Curfew was clamped in Hyderabad. Congress
dissidents as well as opposition leaders blamed Dr. Channa Reddy. On moral grounds Dr. Reddy resigned, of course with reluctance. Before submitting resignation to the Governor, Dr. Channa Reddy distributed several posts to his followers, henchmen and loyalists. The Congressmen took the orders, hurriedly took charge fearing they might lose the opportunity.

After the resignation of Dr. Channa Reddy was accepted, the High Command choose Mr. N. Janardhan Reddy for the Chief Ministership. He was aspiring to become Chief Minister since a decade. All anti-Channa Reddy circles rallied round Mr. Janardhan Reddy.

On 16th December, 1990 Mr. N. Janardhan Reddy (54) was elected as the Leader of Congress Legislature Party. The High Command representatives blessed him. As usual Mr. Janardhan went to Delhi for consultation on Ministry making. Surprisingly Mr. Janardhan Reddy’s induction as Chief Minister ended communal riots in Hyderabad city. Normalcy was restored at once. Mr. Janardhan Reddy’s Ministry took oath in Lal Bahadur Stadium on 21st December, 1990. Earlier Mr. N.T. Rama Rao took oath twice in the stadium before huge gatherings. Mr. Janardhan Reddy imitated the same.

Later Dr. Channa Reddy was appointed as Governor of Tamil Nadu. He was at loggerheads with Ms. Jayalalitha, the Chief Minister of the State. He died during Governorship on 2nd December, 1996.
N. Janardhan Reddy-
Manipulated

Congress culture once again proved to be wrong in 1990. Frequent changes in the State Leadership resulted in defeat during 1982 elections. Congress refused to learn lessons. It repeated the same political game. After much hesitation, Congress High Command decided to change the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. Second time Chief Minsiter Dr. Marri Channa Reddy was replaced with Nedurumalli Janardhan Reddy. (N.J.)

N.J. assumed power on 1990 Dec 17. On the same day one of his Cabinet collegues Mr. Maganti Ravindranth expired due to heart attack. All the prominent leaders in Congress Party rallied against N.J. from the beginning. State Congress President Mr. V. Hanumanth Rao was running parallel unofficial Government from Party office. Mr. Nandendla Bhaskar Rao, Dr. M. Channa Reddy joined hands after a decade to opposed N.J., Dr Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy, Mr. Jalagam Vengal Rao (Ex- Chief Minister) and Mr. Siva Sankar played opposition role with in the Congress Party.

Initially N.J. curbed the communal tension in Old city of Hyderabad. In Nellore, his own district ladies started a movement demanding prohibition of liquor. That movement spread in the entire state.

During N.J’s regime, Lok Sabha elections came. Andhra Pradesh started
showing strength to Telugu Desam Party. In the middle of Lok Sabha elections on May, 21 1991. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was assasinated by LTTE suicide squad near Chennai. That incident changed the results of elections in the State and Congress regained 24 seats. The results gave a boost to N.J.

P.V. Narasimha Rao became the Prime Minister. Kotla Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy, Kamaluddin, Chinta Mohan, G. Venkataswami, M. Mallikarjun, P. Rangaiah Naidu, Mrs. Kamala Kumari from Andhra Pradesh were inducted into the Central Cabinet.

Suddenly N.J. issued an order sanctioing 12 Medical Colleges and 8 Dental Colleges. The order favoured private management to have 50% seats for them and empowered to collect capitation fee. Among them, N.J. favoured one Medical College to his own family members under the name of Janapriya Endowments. This led to an agitation. High Court struck down the order as illegal. The Central Government tried to save N.J. through an Ordinance stating that prior permission from Medical Council is necessary to start Medical and Dental Colleges.

Despite all the agitations, and stiff opposition within the Congress Party, N.J. had solid support from 160 Legislators. But that is of no consequence in Congress culture.

N.J. reconstituted his Ministry on Aug 5, 1991, inducted some of his former opponents like Madala Janakiram. The Legislators were sanctioned 25 Lakh rupees each to spend in their respective Constituencies.

Central Government and Congress High Command decided to change the state leadership. Mr. K. Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy was deputed to assess the situation. As a result, N.J. had to yeild and resign to his Chief Ministership.

Mr. N. Janardhan Reddy’s was elected later to Lok Sabha but remained in side lines
Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy-
Second Defeat

K. Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy was enjoying as Minister in P.V. Narasimha Rao’s Central Cabinet in 1992. Suddenly he was asked to saddle on Chief Minister’s seat in Andhra Pradesh. That was his second coming to the post. Earlier he was in that position for 4 months and handed over power to N.T. Rama Rao’s Telugu Desam Party with humiliating defeat in Assembly elections. Perhaps he never dreamt of repeating the same performance. But it happened. Mr. Kotla Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy could not save Congress Party in the State. After devastating defeat he had to transfer power to Mr. N.T. Rama Rao again.

K.B.R tried to sustain power through several popular schemes and programmes. Yet they became futile with the inner party struggle.

On Nov 9, 1992 K.Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy was sworn in as Chief Minister of A.P. with 31 Ministers. He reconstituted his Ministry on Sep 8, 1993.

Keeping up Congress culture all the dissident Congress leaders Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, Jalagam Vengal Rao, K.E. Krishna Murthy, P. Siva Sankar and M. Padmanabham were united against K.B.R’s regime.

There is a joke circulated on K.B.R during his second term of Chief Ministership. 90% of visitors to KBR were Reddys; among them 90% were from Kurnool district; among them 90% were above 70 years; among them 90% were from his constituency; among them 90% were his relatives!

That apart, KBR could not rise above factions. All his populist
slogans and programmes were futile and could not catch votes.

Kanumuri Bapiraju, Minister involved in distellaries scandal contributed to the unpopularity of KBR. As a result Bapiraju had to quit the Ministry. Kapu Community expressed discontent against KBR through Pantam Padmanabham. Mudragada Padmanabham expressed his discontent through fast unto death which roused the Kapus.

Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy campaigned against KBR for various reasons, including the cancellation of Barites Mining Lease contract in Cuddapah district. KBR demanded disciplinary action against Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy but Congress High Command failed to follow it up.

KBR faced Assembly elections during Dec 1994. TDP routed Congress in that election, NTR came back to power. Congress could get only 26 seats while the stalwarts lost to TDP.

CPI and CPM supported TDP and mutual understanding helped the leftists to get 19 (CPI) and 15 (CPM) seats and TDP won 219. BJP could get only 3 seats. It contested independently.

NTR Suffered in Opposition

Nandamuri Taraka Ramarao the charismatic movie star, ruled the state for seven years. During 1989 Assembly elections N.T.Ramarao was relegated to Opposition Leader with 71 T.D.P. seats. Congress came back to power with 180 seats.

NTR was not successful as Opposition Leader. He had no habit of sitting in Assembly, observe the proceedings carefully, follow the rules and regulations. N.T.R. had no habit of reading Assembly procedures. He was a demagogue, good speaker and intolerant to criticism.

During 5 years of opposition role, NTR was helped by his son-in-law Chandrababu Naidu and others. During 1991 Lok Sabha elections NTR wave was seen. Suddenly with the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi the trend was reversed and Telugu Desam lost 24 seats. Congress workers attacked N.T.R. properties in Hyderabad and considerably damaged NTR’s properties. N.T.R. demanded inquiry into the rowdy actions and punish the guilty. He observed fast unto death on Tank bund but was forcibly removed to hospital.

N.T.R. concentrated on movies and played hero roles in his movies Samrat Ashok and Major Chandrakant.

On 1993 Aug 7 Mr. Sivareddy, legislator from Jammala-madugu, Cuddapah was murdered. N.T.R. protested against this murder and demanded inquiry. He sat in the premises of Governor Bungalow and submitted a memo to Governor Mr. Krishna Kant. This issue was discussed in the Assembly. TDP Legislators went to podium to protest for government’s inaction. All TDP members were suspended from Assembly including NTR, making him to boycott Assembly.
NTR lost his wife Basavataram in 1984. Then onwards NTR had indifferent health problems. He suffered paralysis stroke. His large family could not attend on him regularly. At that juncture NTR met Lakshmi Parvathi. She wanted to write the biography of NTR. She served NTR in crucial health crisis. Obviously this pleased him. They agreed to marry. Lakshmi Parvathi divorced her husband Veeragandham Subba Rao on Sep 11th 1993.

NTR and Lakshmi Parvathi married happily and lived together. The family members of NTR resented the marriage. People did not look down NTR for this marriage. On the other hand they voted him back to power in 1994 Assembly election. NTR and Lakshmi Parvathi jointly campaigned in the elections. As the wife of NTR naturally, Lakshmi Parvathi played prominent role until his death.

The male dominated society blamed Lakshmi Parvathi for trapping NTR. There were many stories spread around the marriage. NTR was a public figure, who came into politics since 1982. He was not innocent to marry a lady as blamed by some gullible persons. N.T.R married Lakshmi Parvathi and willingly allowed her to play dominant role in his public life. Naturally, all those persons who were importance hitherto felt neglected. That made them angry. That was all part of power game.

N.T.R. as the Chairman of National Front played a key role in rallying the various parties against Congress. When NTR was in opposition at State level his importance at National level was marginal.

NTR and Lakshmi Parvathi toured the State during 1994 elections. People received them well. Lakshmi Parvathi was also a good speaker in Telugu. She was in key position to select TDP candidates. Both sons-in-law of NTR were not given importance. That made them soar against Lakshmi Parvathi.

1994 December Assembly elections put NTR again on the Chief Minister’s throne. CPI and CPM parties supported TDP and gained seats in Assembly. On 12 Dec. 1994 NTR constituted his Ministry with 32 members.
NTR kept his election promise and introduced total prohibition. Another order was issued to give rice to poor people at Rs. 2 per kilo.

NTR was a bundle of contradictions. He saffronised education system in the State by introducing Astrology in Potti Sriramulu Telugu University. He wanted Vatican status to Tirumala Tirupati. He practised religious ceremonies in official functions.

On the other hand NTR put Andhra Pradesh on India’s map prominently. Telugu people got recognition for the first time.

NTR imitated Vivekananda in formal dress and later gave it up. There was gulf between his rhetoric and practice.

Though NTR returned to power with absolute majority (219 seats) he could not enjoy power any longer. Within eight months NTR faced unusual situation. 162 MLAs rallied in Viceroy Hotel, Hyderabad under the leadership of Mr. Chandrababu Naidu, the son-in-law of NTR. Poor NTR tried to win back the Legislators by driving his Chariot all the way to the hotel, along with his wife Lakshmi Parvathi. But none came out to meet him or greet him. With utter disappointment NTR went back.

The political game started on August 24, 1995 and ended within a week. All venues were closed to NTR. He was compelled to resign on 30 August 1995.

Mr. Chandrababu Naidu successfully managed the sabotage show. Unlike Nadendla Bhaskar Rao, he won the confidence of majority of MLAs and legally saddled in Chief Minister’s post.

NTR could not survive his humiliating removal from Chief Minister ship. On his behalf his wife Lakshmi Parvathi went round the State to explain the sabotage game. Mr. Harikrishna, son of NTR also toured the state to narrate his version of the political gimmick and the role of Lakshmi Parvathi. People heard both versions. But there were no elections to decide the fate of persons. NTR did not reconcile with his son-in-law Mr. Chandrababu Naidu. The power game
continued. The leaders of National parties remained dumb witnesses of the game.

NTR died on 18th Jan 1996. Sympathy wave attracted huge gatherings who mourned the sad demise of the great movie hero and politician. National leaders were physically present to pay their tributes. Lakshmi Parvathi the wife of NTR was not allowed to follow the dead body to the cremation ground. Thus ended 15 years of political charisma of the saffron star.
Seperation Game

After 30 years gap, separate Telangana agitation once again started in Sep 2001. Mr K. Chandrasekhar Rao former Minisiter in TDP and Deputy Speaker of Assembly resigned to his post, started separate Telangana agitation. People in Telangana received him sympathetically. He contested the bye election in Siddipet, Medak district and won with overwhelming majority. He also won the Zilla Parishad of Karim Nagar and Nizamabad districts. While Mr. K. Chandrasekhar Rao was gaining popular reception, BJP leader Mr. Narendra came out of Party to commence his own wing of separate Telangana agitation. Congress legislators in Telangana too started their own agitation.

During 70’s separate Telangana agitation was led by Mr. M. Channa Reddy. Telangana Praja Samithi contested and won 10 out of 14 Lok Sabha Seats. But surprisingly they dissolved the party, sabotaged the movement and merged in Congress. Thus a great mass agitation was mortgaged for the sake of political power. At least 4 Chief Ministers from Telangana area ruled the State afterwards. 2001 again witnessed Telangana agitation with starting trouble.

M. Satyanarayana, nominated President of State Congress asked Legislators to resign before demanding separate Telangana. Mr. Indrakaran Reddy, Legislator and others strongly opposed Mr. M. Satyanarayana’s proposal. Congress infighting, as usual, continued.
Bill Clinton Blessed
Chandra Babu Naidu

After removing his father-in-law from elected Chief Ministership, Mr. Chandrababu Naidu was nominated as Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh (Sept, 1995). Once in power, Mr. Chandrababu consolidated his position quickly. Legislators solidly stood behind his leadership. Election Commission recognised his Party. Assembly supported him with 227 Legislators. After the Ministry was formed, Mr. Daggupati Venkateswar Rao another son-in-law of NTR left Chandrababu and rejoined his father-in-law. Harikrishna son of NTR was inducted into Ministry.

Mr. Chandrababu Naidu faced Lok Sabha elections in 1996. His party won 16 seats. That made Mr. Chandrababu a prominent figure in Central politics. Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee stayed only 13 days as Prime Minister. At that crucial juncture Mr. Chandrababu supported Deve Gowda from Karnataka who became the Prime Minister on May 14th, 1996.

Telugu Desam candidates were inducted into Central Cabinet. Then onwards Mr. Chandrababu became very prominent in decision making even at the Centre. Leftist parties—both CPI and CPM supported Mr. Chandrababu. BJP charge sheeted Mr. Babu with 100 mistakes.

During March 1998 Lok Sabha elections were conducted. TDP gained 12 seats. Mr. Chandrababu changed his strategy and supported BJP. The Left parties started campaigning against Mr. Babu. Mr. Balayogi, TDP candidate was elected as Speaker of Lok Sabha. Mr. Chandrababu refused to join Central Cabinet and started playing key role from outside.
1999 Assembly elections were crucial for the leadership of Mr. Babu. There was the Congress wave and Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy was projected as impending Candidate for Chief Minsiter post. His meetings were largely attended.

Chandrababu emerged as strong personality after 1999 Assembly election. His rivals Mrs. Lakshmi Parvathi, Mr. Hari-krishna, son of NTR who opposed Babu then were routed. Congress was pushed to main opposition party. CPI and CPM were relegated to irrelevant positions.

On 1999 Oct 11 Mr. Chandrababu assumed power once again as Chief Minsiter. He started to concentrate on converting the State to Hi-tech methods. Information Technology was introduced. Tele conferences became the order of the day.

Mr. Naidu toured USA. He was received well in the World Bank, and he met Bill Gates, the Microsoft icon. Telugu people in USA were delighted at the elevation of Mr. Naidu.

Bill Clinton visited Hyderabad to see the Hi-Tech city. That was a prestigious event to Mr. Babu.

The Chief Ministers of other States and Prime Minister of India are attracted to the techniques of Mr. Chandra Babu Naidu. The special features are, using information technology for adminsitration, retaining water through watersheds, construction of flyovers, widening the roads, etc.

The criticism against Mr. Chandrababu Naidu was that the State economy was in bad state, mortgaged to the World Bank, privatisation of Government sectors, heavy concentration of power at State level, Corruption in elections etc.

One recurring problem faced by the State Government was extremist violence. To curb the Peoples War Groups, The Police often indulged in encounters. This was depicted as violation of Human Rights. But violence was unabated in the State.

Mr. Chandrababu Naidu reversed the total prohibition of liquor
policy and allowed it in 21st Century.

Socially, reactionary policies were adopted for expediency. Politics entered into religion. Babas galore was promoted. State Government, Chief Minister and Ministers visited temples “officially”, promoted anti-secular trends among people. Superstitions like Astrology, Geomancy (Vastu), Yogic, Pranic healing etc., were encouraged.

State Government did not realise that Hi-Tech and reactionary social religious trends cannot go together and society will have imbalance in growth which is regressive.
Wachiavelli divided the rulers into two types- the lions and the foxes. N.T. Rama Rao belonged more or less to the category of lions. With an acting career that spanned more or less half a century, he had earned the charisma that none in the political field could challenge. He acted mostly as the gods and heroes of ancient Hindu mythology and never as a villain. He had acted in so many films that people started identifying him with the hero of the epics. The tragedy was that he himself began to imagine himself as the reincarnation of the mythological characters like Lord Krishna or Rama and began to feel that he can change the society with his summary orders even as those mythological heroes did. He had absolutely no political experience to realise that societal changes cannot take place with the turn of finger or the oral orders.

But the situation in Indian politics gave him a chance to exploit it to full advantage. The Indian National Congress was becoming unpopular and it’s influence over Andhra Pradesh was shaky. Which meant that the Chief-Minister every time was a Reddy and just a few times a non-Reddy. The other more influential community, the Kammas, never had the chance to rule the State. The time was now for the Kammas to strike and strike they did when they discoverd NTR who could fill...
the bill! The purse strings of the Kammas were loosened and NTR with his tremendous capacity for rousing the people with his well structured speeches and his histrionic talents was chosen as the candidate to voice the general grievance of the masses and the hidden aspiration of the Kamma community to claim leadership that was denied to them all these years. NTR with his newly found opportunity to dominate the State politics rose heroically to the occasion. His hurricane tours allover the State, in his specially built automobile which he called Chaitanya Ratham or the Chariot of Resurgence and consciousness attracted thousands of people wherever he went. His calling the car a chariot is also a gimmick. People waited for hours to hear his booming voice condemning the misrule of the Congress and the insult that Rajiv Gandhi hurled against the previous Chief-Minister Anjaiah, as an insult to the pride of Andhra.

Behind all these tactics of Rama Rao was a dark horse who was a wily politico who had imbibed the tactics of the Congress since he was originally a member of that party. Congress Party knew all the tricks of the election trade. Impersonating the voters, bribing the voters, making all sorts of promises, using rowdyism, ballot-snatching, appealing to appropriate castes at appropriate places, all these just to win the seats at any cost. The whole election politics in India became a mockery of democracy and people began to wonder and still wonder whether democracy is such a great virtue that people have to put up with all sorts of misrule. Anyway, there is no going back on democracy whatever its havoc is in civic life of India. The man who knew the whole ‘book of Indian democracy’ chapter and verse was Chandrababu Naidu. He is one of the sons-in-law of NTR. He hails from the southern-most district of Andhra Pradesh where the Kammas sport the suffix ‘Naidu’ to their name unlike those in Circar districts.

Thus NTR established his dominance over the State politics and could even fight against Mrs. Gandhi’s usual threat of imposing Central Rule over any one whom she did not like. He could muster general opposition to her imposition of one Bhaskar Rao as the Chief Minister.
It is of interest to note that once this very same Bhaskar Rao was one of the close confidants of NTR. During all these days Chandra Babu Naidu was lying low but was silently building up his own support structure. NTR too in his own way helped Naidu to do so, whoever came to NTR with a proposal, he insisted that the proposal be first shown to Naidu ‘Garu’ and then to him. Thus silently and unostentatiously the son-in-law was slipping into the shoes of his father-in-law.

One of the typically Indian diseases of the Indian professionals is the anxiety to promote their dynasty. Actors make their sons actors, advocates make their sons follow their line and more than these the political leaders want their sons or daughters to succeed them. From Motilal up to his great grand son Rajiv Gandhi, his wife Sonia Gandhi it was the trend. Others may not have this long line of succession but the ambition among them is unmistakable. Only leaders like Kamaraj and Gandhiji are exceptions. NTR too was a victim to this disease. Of course one of his sons got into the tinsel world. Others did not do well. NTR being a highly superstitious person became a victim to this sorcery. He was a widower and his sons were worthless for political mantle that he could pass on. Then appeared a crafty woman who under the excuse of writing NTR’s biography, approached him and became very close to him by tending to his requirements and became so indispensable that finally she divorced her legally wedded husband. She became a widower’s second wife and he a divorcee’s second husband. True it was that none of his sons and daughters ever cared very much for his health and welfare and when he got some affection from the middle-aged woman he gave her more than she bargained for in political power. But he could not give her a son to create a dynasty. Before she came into his life rumours were rife that he had married some one for some tantric ritual and worshipped corpses brought from the morgue. Some of them were half-truths. When this middle aged divorcee came into his life as his life-partner, hopes of a successor were kindled not only in his heart but also in the heart of this new wife Laxmi Parvathi. She was equally anxious to give NTR a successor and be a dowager till the issue grew up.
In her over-ambition this ‘harikatha’ artist from a remote village in Guntur district, coastal Andhra, became rather over-bearing and had alienated every political leader and every member of the NTR family including the son-in-law who was waiting behind the side curtains for stepping into his father-in-law’s shoes.

Till this woman came into the life of NTR, the whole family was loyal to him and he commanded respect and fear from them. His eldest son earlier drove his chariot during his whistle-stop campaign. With the marriage of NTR and Laxmiparvathi the whole family turned against him. For one thing NTR had earned a lot of money in the cinema and was extremely niggardly and the sons and daughters may have had their eye on the property. They would have inherited a property duly divided among all of them. Now the whole lot will devolve on this ‘usurper’.

NTR during his campaign was supported by the two faction of the Communist Party- the CPI and the CPI (M). These two parties are part of the communist movement which was as old as 1926. But the charismatic power of NTR was such that they had to go to him asking for a few seats in the elections. He had formed the usual hackneyed thing called ‘United Front’ of all anti Congress Parties. He was even asked to lead the country.

During the hey-day of his rule NTR did many populistic and hare-brained things. In a flamboyant style on the day he took his oath he signed the order prohibiting liquor before a huge crowd of people who were asked to gather in the play-ground instead of in the Assembly. This was a gimmick. He also announced a measure to distribute rice at the rate of Rs.2 per kilo. Other such uneconomic and quixotic actions characterised his rule. But the marriage was the last straw that broke the patience of his advisers and relatives.

The behaviour of his new wife was no less unpopular. She began to show off her power and the party-men began to feel the heat of the kitchen rule. Corruption reached the lowest limits. The party men and the members of Rama Rao’s family began to protest and finally demanded the reversal of his actions. NTR is known for his obstinacy
and thus he paved the way for a split. This was a great opportunity for the son-law of NTR and soon the party men also joined him.

Now it was the turn of the Fox. Musterling all the dissident MLA’s in the Viceroy Hotel, Hyderabad. Where all sorts of comforts were provided, he openly rebelled against NTR and Parvathi’s domination. The MLAs who were housed in the Viceroy Hotel were not allowed to leave the premises and he provided all things to see that they did not have to move out. NTR for his part dramatically came before the people who had gathered at the Hotel premises to harangue about his son-in-law’s betrayal. He appealed to the MLAs to abandon Naidu and come back to the old camp. But none proved to be a prodigal son. No fatted calves attracted them since Naidu was also making all promises that proved more attractive to them. He was able to parade his followers before the Governor and claimed the Chief Minister’s post. Seeing a majority of members in Naidu’s camp even the Communist party offered their support. Thus Chandrababu Naidu was declared the Leader of the House and he promptly began to form his cabinet. These tensions told upon NTR’s health. None of his kith and kin came to see him regularly in his last days. Perhaps Laxmi Parvathi was the only companion to this fallen lion. During the rule of NTR nothing of any great significance was done except some statues being installed on the Tank Bund, Hyderabad to remind the Andhras of their imaginary or perhaps real glory.

Once Naidu got the leadership of the party well in his hands, he tightened his grip and did not give any quarter to the other members of the family. In the next elections Laxmi Parvathi won a seat and remained as a Member of the Legislative Assembly. But she did not impress anyone and in the next election lost her seat. The other relatives - other son-in-law Dr. D. Vekateswara Rao and son HariKrishna duly lost their stakes and were thrown on the scrapheap of history. Babu was the sole monarch.

Babu holds a Masters degree from Sri Venkateswara University. He was a student leader of sorts during his college days and was in the Congress till his father-in-law formed the Telugu Desam party.
Even after he assumed his leadership, he wisely used NTR’s name and claimed NTR as his leader and guide. He did not disrespect the memory of NTR. The Fly Over road near the Tank Bund Hyderabad which was deservedly called Sir M. Visveswarayya Road was renamed after NTR. NTR’s portraits adorned his party offices. This reminds us of the way Stalin elevated the name of Lenin though he was least fond of the dead leader. Both Naidu and Stalin pretended to be the true followers of their respective leaders though in their heart of hearts they did not like them.

Naidu unlike his father-in-law is generally systematic and talks less. He does his home-work thoroughly before he makes his speeches, Facts generally are on his finger tips. He is nor flambouyant. In the troubled politics of India he has been able to hold his flock and also by virtue of this strength became a crucial factor in the formation of the Government at the Centre.

The decision to support the BJP-led NDA was taken after very thorough analysis of the situation. He did not want to act like Jayalalitha on the previous occasion betraying the trust she had given Vajpayee. At the same time he did not want to go the whole hog with NDA. There is a considerable Muslim population in Hyderabad and their votes would be solid. They were a prejudiced lot going by what their mullah proclaims.

They have no love last for the Congress. But they have a vague unproved idea that the Congress is secular and their interests would be safe in Congress’ hands. Now if Naidu were to support the NDA, he would automatically become the enemy of the Muslims though Naidu supported the NDA for pragmatic considerations and also to show to the people that he is opposed to the Congress which has been a corrupt organisation. He had opposed the Congress and now to switch on to support the Congress would be a betrayal of the trust that his supporters had reposed in him. Moreover his pretended bargaining power with the NDA is more. The proof of the pudding was in the eating. He held the balance even by mere extension of support from outside without joining the Government. Thus he thought
he would please the Muslims and their blind supporters, the communists. Communists are more ‘royal than the king’ so to say. They would champion the Muslim cause even if the Muslims donot feel that they have any cause. So even before the Muslims withdrew support to Naidu, the Communists loudly proclamed from house tops that they withdrew support to Chandrababu Naidu because he was supporting the NDA. One or two muslims did join Naidu but the withdrawal of support by the communists was total.

Without joining the Government so that he could keep his options open or atleast pretend to keep them open, he forced Mr. Balayogi, an inexperienced person as his candidate for Speakership.

Naidu kept the Telugu Desam Members of the Parliament who had ambitions of becoming Ministers in the Central Government under leash. Such was the power of Naidu that none could oppose him on any count. The fact that none in the Parliament including the ‘selfless’ Communists wanted another collapse of Government and re-election. That would be not only risky but also involve huge expenditure. So the wafer thin majority of the NDA prevailed and Naidu began to squeeze as much juice as possible from the precarious Centre. He would issue mild threats to the Centre whenever he asked for more. Here was Oliver Twist in reverse.

He had a very good business acumen. Vast lands on the outskirts of the city were purchased for a song keeping view in the future prospects. He felt that Information Technology was the in-thing and went for it very vigourously. His aim was to make the State of Andhra Pradesh the number one State in Computer Soft-ware Technology and towards this end he encouraged construction of a huge building in the outskirts of the Hyderabad, the High tech City, for the use of Computer and Information Technologists. A number of Andhras had already gone to the USA as Soft-Ware Technologists and he visited the US to appeal to them for help and assistance. He borrowed a good deal of money from the World Bank in order to bring about some face-lifting schemes like widening the roads and other structures and in the process none was listening to the poor. He had already
quashed the populistic scheme of his father-in-law regarding cheap rice. He slowly manoeuvred to lift prohibition which was causing a lot of deficit in the budget without achieving any beneficial results. Many flyovers were built in the capital city and the traffic was supposed to move more easily thereby cutting down the distances. Of course these helped the rich and had absolutely no effect on the poor. But Naidu would assure people that with the improvement in Information Technology every village would get the benefits.

Already the State of Karnataka had become the foremost centre for Information Technology and Naidu was hellbent on making Andhra the foremost. He worked very hard to make AP the foremost centre and, he was successful in making the President Clinton visit Hyderabad instead of Karnataka or any other place. It was at the last quarter of Clinton’s term as the President of USA. He visited India and he was prevailed upon by Naidu to visit Hyderabad. Clinton’s visit to Hyderabad, the only city he visited in this connection, added to the prestige of Naidu and he became quite well-known all over India as the most dynamic State Chief Minister. Even the West acknowledged his abilities.

In addition to these, he instituted other populistic schemes like ‘Janma Bhoomi’ -- an attractive name to rouse the patriotic sentiment and make the administration work with the people at the grassroot level. Lot of money was spent on popularising this scheme and except for paper records nothing much seemed to have been achieved. Using the techniques of communication, he was in direct contact with the District Collectors and stopped the Collectors from frequently visiting the head-quarters. This was a good thing since the District Collectors on some flimsy excuse used to visit Hyderabad. That was controlled. Whether it improved the efficiency in the old rotten administrative structure of India is a matter of doubt.

He felt that the middle-man in the vegetable market was making a lot money. Neither the peasantry nor the consumer got the benefits. So he instituted what was known as ‘Rytu Bazaar’ a central market where the producer would bring his produce and sell it straight to
the consumer thus eliminating the middle man. For some time it worked well. But for people to go to the Rytu bazaar and buy proved to be more expensive than buying in the local market. Apart from that, even the ryots also began to play their tricks of disposing of rotten stuff along with good ones.

He held tele-conferences with the District Collectors in the name of economy and direct contact. This did not prevent his own tours undertaken to see whether everything went alright. Suspicion is the characteristic of a fox. Though he talks eloquently about the benefits of decentralisation, in practice a suspicious person hesitates to give full responsibility to a subordinate. The rest of the Ministers became his tools and they did not have the courage to express their difference of opinion. Like in the case of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the Ministers became mere yes-men and the Democles’s sword of dismissal was always hanging over their heads. They were not leaders in their own right but puppets installed by him. Money makes many things.

He is a bundle of contradictions so to say. He believes in scientific and technological advancement and talks of scientific spirit but himself is as crazily superstitious like his father-in-law. He believes in astrology, Vastu (Geomancy) and such other nonsensical mumbo-jumbo.

In Andhra there is no party which could challenge him effectively. The Congress became so corrupt that people at large would prefer anyone to the Congress. The Communist parties with their meaningless theoretical hairsplitting behind which their personality conflicts were concealed fared no better. They also have become as bad as any other ‘bourgeois’ parties. Naidu never ruffled the feathers of the NTR admirers as he was always invoking his name. In the elections of 1999 he won comfortably establishing his monopoly in State politics and also a very influential position in the Centre by successfully evading any criticism of the Central Government and taking credit for the good they did. He resisted the temptation to become an all-India leader.
The opposition did not have much to oppose and most successful one was the protest against the enhancement of electricity bills. The Communists and the Congress joined together to protest against the higher power tariff and called upon the people to refuse payment. A sort of a degenerate 'no-tax' campaign was launched. But none seems to have obliged since consumers were flocking at the collection centres to promptly pay the bills. The next thing that the opposition tried was to unleash a violent demonstration in the city. They brought goons and some Communist Party (ML) groups which were waiting for some excuse to cause chaos also joined in. Rocks were collected for hurling at the Police men. Every one witnessed that the stone-pelting was done without much Police provocation-infact it was the Naxalite crowds that started provoking the Police to open fire so that they could complain that the Police committed excesses. But people did not buy this, though one demonstrator was killed in police firing.

Naidu spun out many schemes and one of them was on drinking water. Everyone knows that thousands of villages donot have potable water and most diseases are caused by the horribly impure water that they drink. Every Ministry talked about providing water to every village but none succeeded in doing anything good. Naidu pitched upon this and made much noise without any water trickling down in the villages. Water, power, literacy, telephones, roads, village markets, women’s welfare, etc. were the problems he legitimately raised without doing much about any of the these issues. He made a demonstration of rebuking the Civil Servants for their inefficiency. It was said that he had many benami transactions including urban land and dairy Plant.

Like Napoleon III, he too indulged in great populistic measures without affecting his own interests in the bargain. Roads looked comparatively cleaner, there are many beauty spots like the Necklace Road, a number of flyovers, and so on in Hyderabad. But public services were like in the old days working on bribery, indifference and red-tape. These have not changed. Nothing reached the people
or what were known as the target groups. There was also no way of checking these things. Hospitals were not helping people and they did not trust either the Government Doctors or even the private ones. Gutters over flowed all over the place.

One might ask whether it was worse than the other States in India. The answer was obvious ‘no’. There were much worse States with much worse Chief-Ministers. Atleast Naidu had some ideas and the others had bankrupt brains. His own father-in-law was one such hare-brained obstinate populist. So are the Ministers in other States with Bihar being the worst in the list. Hence one had to ponder if Chandrababu Naidu was replaced with the Congress Ministers, even this marginal benefits will be rare. There is no meaning in the Congress kettle calling Chandrababu Naidu’s pot black. India was said to have three rather efficient and young Chief Ministers. Chandra Babu is one of them the other two being Krishna of Karnataka and Digvijay Singh of Madhya Pradesh.

The disgrunted elements in his cabinet had threatened him with the separatist cry saying that Telangana was treated badly by Naidu and hence a separate State should be formed. The other threat to his Government was the Naxalites. Universities have become big breeding grounds for rowdies, with political backing. Muslim element was opposed to him just because he supported the NDA and more than the Muslim elements, the Communists were flying at his throat for this offence and only this offence. Otherwise they were supporting him and were the beneficiaries of Naidu Government’s largesse. Then they clung to his coat tails.

The last gimmick that Naidu imposed on the city was the Great Mall, where he contemplated to bring various products from different countries and make it a great show in 2001. There is no business like show business; But that time the terrorists attacked on US Trade Centre (Sep 11, 2001) and the Pentagon rendered general participation of various countries difficult. At the same time the transport workers went on strike thus preventing many pleasure seekers for visiting the Mall. So it was a fiasco.
Like the Ramzan moon he was a mere streak and then developed into a full moon and whether he would shrink back to the original shape or completely lose his position like the moon on the new moon night was a political puzzle. But Naidu will be remembered for the concrete structures like the flyovers and the Hightech Industry, for whatever they are worth.
Dr. Y. S. Rajasekhar Reddy -
Emerged Triumphant

After a long spell of Telugu Desam rule, the Congress Party came back to power under the leadership of Dr Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy (YS) in 2004 and repeated the performance in 2009 elections as well.

YS undertook a walkathon (tour by foot-paadayaatra) during the scorching summer of 2003 commencing from Chevella near Hyderabad and ending at Ichapuram of Srikakulam district bordering Orissa. He walked for more than fifteen hundred miles stopping at villages and meeting thousands of people. The paadayaatra was well received by the poorer sections of the society. The campaign had a great impact on the people. Similar impact was witnessed only during the chariot tour of late N. T. Ramarao during 1982 soon after launching the Telugu Desam Party.

Nara Chandrababu Naidu, the then Chief Minister, was attacked by naxalites of People’s War Group (now Moists) on October 1, 2003 at Alipiri in Tirupati. He and his Minister Bojja Gopalakrishna Reddy had a miraculous escape from the heavy explosion caused by land mines. Naidu calculatedly tried to en-cash on a perceived sympathy that the people might have for him in the wake of the dastardly attack. He, as a strategy, opted for early elections, a move which did not fetch him the desired result.
The Congress had entered into an alliance with both the Communist Parties and Telangana Rashtra Samithi (a separatist outfit demanding formation of a Telangana State) in order to defeat the ruling TDP in 2004 elections. As a run up to the elections, the Congress and both the Communist Parties (in fact, a coalition of nine Communist Parties) had spearheaded a popular agitation against power sector reforms implemented by Naidu’s government. The mood of the people was very much against the Ruling Party what with crisis in the farm sector due to continuous failure of monsoon and rising prices of essential commodities. The grand alliance led by the Congress Party won the 2004 elections with a comfortable majority and YS became the Chief Minister. While the Communist Parties supported the Congress Government in Hyderabad and the Government of Congress-led United Progressive Alliance in New Delhi from outside, the TRS chose to join both the Governments. However, the honeymoon did not last long. The Communist Parties distanced themselves from the ruling party in no time. On the issue of formation of a separate Telangana State, the TRS fell out of Congress and left the governments at the Centre and in the State. The Congress engineered a split it the TRS. YS ruled the State with a comfortable majority in the Assembly. A huge loan of 15 thousand crores of rupees was waived and a subsidy of five thousand rupees was given to the peasants in the State. This was in keeping with the promises made by YS during the walkathon to rescue the hapless farmers who were committing suicide out of frustration caused by crop failure and the pressure mounted by private money lenders. Arrears to the tune of Rs.1,400 crores towards power bills were waived. Agricultural loans were disbursed on the spot and one-time settlements were made in case of arrears. These measures gave the farmers a ray of hope. The suicides by farmers did not altogether stop even though the frequency and the number have come down.

YS gave impetus to Power and Agriculture sectors. Under a much publicized ‘Jala Yagnam’ (a scheme to construct a series of irrigation projects) a considerable progress has been registered bringing thousands of acres of land into cultivation. This ambitious
plan to build more than twenty five small, medium and major irrigation projects with a layout of more than 56 thousand crores is unprecedented. No other state in the country can boast of such a massive initiative by a Government. Andhra Pradesh would live up to its reputation of the rice bowl of India (The food giver- Annapurna) if all the proposed irrigation projects were completed. Similarly ‘Arogya Sri’ (a health scheme for poor) was implemented with a lot of publicity. Talking about the ‘108 ambulance’ Services in the election meetings YS used to mimic the sound of the vehicle’s siren (kui kui…). Under this scheme, poor people can get health services at the corporate hospitals without any charges to be paid. Old-age pension was enhanced and disbursed at the door-steps of the poor people on the first day of every month. Thousands of houses have been constructed for the poor under various yojanaas. Despite numerous defects in implementation, these and similar other Welfare Schemes had tremendous impact on the poorer sections and resulted in retaining the Congress in power in 2009 elections. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme funded by the Centre also helped the Ruling Party in winning hearts of the people.

George Bush, President of USA, visited the State during the first term of YS rule and paid tributes to the agricultural sector (President Bill Clinton and Bill Gates of Microsoft too came calling during the TDP regime and patted Chandrababu Naidu for the impressive progress made by the State in the field of Information Technology). So did British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

The All India Congress Committee meeting, successfully organized by the State Unit, has added yet another feather in YS’s cap. He became an unquestioned leader of the party in the state. Unlike the previous Congress Chief Ministers, YS was not bothered by dissidents as they were not encouraged by the Party High Command. The Congress was changing its Chief Ministers very frequently till then. It is no more the case. YS had not only split the TRS, he made the Telangana protagonists in the Congress irrelevant. Senior leaders like Venkataswamy, Jaipal Reddy, D. Srinivas and Purushotham Reddy had to toe YS’s line as they found the Party
High Command giving unstinted support to the Chief Minister. So much so, Telangana sentiment took a back seat in the recent elections and YS came to be considered as the protector of the integrity of the State. While all the other political parties, excepting Loksatta, supported the Telangana sentiment in various degrees in the elections, the Congress party was non-committal though leaders were making ambiguous statements.

As against this background, the Congress party faced elections in 2009 and won 157 seats in the 12th Assembly and 33 in the 15th Lok Sabha. Analysis of the results show a clear mandate for the UPA Government led by Dr. Manmohan Singh which helped the Congress to romp home in the State. Had there been no goodwill for the UPA dispensation, the Congress would not have managed to win in the State for the second time. YS was the first politician to realize this factor. He told a conference of District Collectors that the people of the State gave him a pass mark and not a first class mark as expected. He exhorted the Permanent Executive to strive to improve the performance of the Government so that people would be more favourably disposed towards the establishment.

The second term of the Congress party in the State started on a positive note. A special effort has been mounted to encourage cooperative farming with the blessings of reputed agriculture scientist Dr. Swaminathan. Earlier the late Jawahar Lal Nehru proposed Socialistic Pattern of Society with cooperative farming as the mainstay.

But Nehru’s idea never materialised in its true sense. Even the Collective Farming System as envisaged by Vinoba Bhave, the disciple of M K Gandhi, failed miserably. In the light of the past experience, the State Government has to take several measures to overcome the obstacles and make the experiment a success. It is a new challenge that the new government has taken upon itself.

The uniqueness of Dr Y S Rajasekhara Reddy:

It was during Jalagam Vengalarao’s regime(1972-1978) that
Dr YS Rajasekhar Reddy entered into active politics. He finished MBBS at Gulbarga in Karnataka and returned to his native Pulivendula in Kadapa district. He practiced medicine for a while. But that was not his cup of tea. His father Mr. Rajareddi was already in local politics and he made a solid foundation for his son to succeed in politics. Mr. Bandaru Ratnasabhapathy (a backward classes leader from Kadapa) and Mr. Kunda Ramaiah advised Mr. J. Vengalrao to induct Dr. YS into politics against Mr. Basireddi. Mr. Basireddi emerged as a strong leader and was also a Minister. His rivals wanted to counter him with forceful young leader. Mr. Vengalrao followed the advice and brought Dr YS into politics.

Dr YS was campaigning for Pulivendula seat even before the elections were announced in 1978, the year in which the Congress was split once again by Indira Gandhi. YS was with the break-away group called Congress(R). Though there was a lot of pressure on the young YS to contest on Congress (I) ticket, he preferred, true to his character, to sail with Congress(R). Though the Congress(I) with Dr. Chenna Reddy as the PCC president swept the polls in the elections, YS won from Pulivendula thus making his debut in electoral politics. And then on there was no looking back for him. He never, since then, lost any election, be it for Assembly or Loksabha. He was first inducted into Ministry by Mr. Anjaiah and continued in the Ministry of Mr. Bhavanam Venkatram and Kotla Vijayabhaskar Reddy as well.

When the matinee idol N. T. Ramarao entered politics like a colossus and swept the state with an unprecedented victory in 1983, Kadapa district also felt the impact though YS got elected. The Congress had to do something spectacular to stop the TDP chariot. Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, made Dr YS the PCC President at very young age with a view to giving impetus to the youth. YS spearheaded the Congress campaign in the midterm polls for the Assembly in 1985. The elections were preceded by a huge movement for restoration of democracy in the wake of arbitrary removal of NTR from the Chief Ministership by the then Governor Ramlal. NTR’s deputy in the TDP, Mr. Nadendla Bhaskar

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Rao, had revolted when the Chief Minister was away in the US for medical treatment. NTR, like a wounded lion, led a historic movement which was whole-heartedly supported by all the opposition parties. The Central government has realized the folly in dethroning a popular leader and quickly decided to restore the order. Ramlal was duly replaced by Dr. Shankardayal Sharma who went on to become President of India. It was an uphill task for any PCC president to conduct an election campaign in the face of a popular upsurge. Not surprisingly, the Congress lost the elections badly ending up with 50 seats. When Congress came to power once again in the State with Dr Chenna Reddy as Chief Minister for the second time, Dr YS emerged as a strong and resourceful dissident leader within the Congress party. He opposed all the three Chief Ministers- Dr. Chenna Reddy, N. Janardhan Reddy and K. Vijayabhaskar Reddy. YS was playing his cards deftly and boldly though he was a Member of Loksabha.

Vijayabhaskar Reddy had the mortification of handing over power to NTR, as he did in 1983, again in 1994. However, with in one year of assuming the reigns, NTR was replaced by his son-in-law Mr. Chandrababu Naidu in a Palace coup. NTR’s second wife Lakhmi Parvathi became the divisive force. Her influence on the supreme leader was the cause of heartburn and a feeling of insecurity among NTR’s kith and kin. All of them rallied around Mr. Naidu in the name of saving the party from the hands of the leader who was under ‘evil influence’. NTR did not live to fight his son-in-law. He died reportedly of heart attack. It was at that time that Dr. YS became the president of Pradesh Congress Committee for the second time. He was also the main opposition leader in the Assembly. He led agitations against the rule of TDP and campaigned for Congress.

Dr. YS had the good fortune of having a loyal and good friend in Dr. K.V. P. Ramachandra Rao, who was also his classmate at Gulburga. Both of them remained best friends in need and continued to be so. They sail together in rain and shine. When Dr. YS came to power in 2004, Dr KVP became the official advisor to the State Government. He was overseeing the party affairs and also helping
the implementation of welfare schemes. He is seen here, there and everywhere tirelessly working for his friend and mentor.

YSR’s son Mr. Jagan Mohan Reddy, in the meanwhile, established a newspaper called ‘Sakshi’ and a news channel of the same name to counter Eenadu and Andhra Jyothi, the two newspapers which, according to him, were bent on showing YS in poor light. Having succeeded in creating an alternative newspaper, Jagan entered into politics in a big way and contested for Kadapa seat in Lok Sabha. He won without much effort. In fact, he did not have to campaign in his constituency. He toured other parts of the State canvassing for his party. Mr. Jaganmohan Reddy is a dynamic Youngman and has to be watched with interest.

**Praja Rajyam and Lok Satta**

Two new parties had emerged in the State since 2004 when YS became the Chief Minister. One of them is Lok Satta, a political party founded by Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan, popularly known as JP, a civil servant who resigned from service to devote himself to public life. JP was very successful as District Collector. He also worked as Personal Secretary to NTR while he was the Chief Minister. After leaving the Government, JP organized Lok Satta, a voluntary organization. It was about ten years ago. Lok Satta was fighting for electoral reforms and clean public life. It was also responsible for the Right To Information Act. Realising that voluntary service alone will not be able to change the society without political power, Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan, had decided to launch a political party. The party contested alone in a majority of the constituencies (246 to be precise) and secured a respectable percentage of votes. However, only JP had won from Kukatpally Assembly constituency while all other candidates of Lok Satta lost.

Cine hero Chiranjeevi launched ‘Praja Rajyam Party’ (PRP) on August 15, 2008. A lot of hype was created by his fans and friends who held meetings both in Andhra Pradesh and the US urging him to take the plunge into politics. He kept the watchers guessing for months before ultimately taking the call. The huge rally at the time
of announcing Chiranjeevi’s entry into politics organized at Tirupati was attended by an estimated crowd of eight lakh people. This has created a lot of hope in the hearts of his admirers. But the way in which Chiranjeevi built the party and persons he surrounded himself did not do any good to him or to his party. His excessive dependence on his brother-in-law Allu Aravind affected the morale of the senior leaders who left the TDP and the Congress to join the new party. PRP toyed with the idea of aligning itself with the left parties and the TRS. There were negotiations which were not fruitful. The PRP contested the election alone and won 18 Assembly seats. It could not win a single Lok Sabha seat. Aravind also lost in Anakapally Lok Sabha constituency. Mr. Chiranjeevi himself lost in Palakole (Godavari District) while managing to win from Tirupati, the temple town from where he commenced his election campaign perhaps with a belief that the blessings of Lord Venkateswara would ensure his success.

Dr. Mitra, Dr. Brahmareddy, Gattu Ramachandraiah, T.V.Rao were some of the key persons who helped Mr. Chiranjeevi at the formation stage. After announcing the political party several defectors from other political parties joined PRP. Mr. C. Ramachandraiah, Mr. Hariramajogiah, Mr. P. Upendra, Mr. P.Sivasankar, Mr. Parakala Prabhakar were some of the senior politicians who nurtured the party. Chiranjeevi came into politics when he almost reached a point in his film career where he cannot expect many new roles. His popularity among youth and students was also on the wane. Another factor was the caste colour the PRP came to acquire, perhaps without any contribution from the mega star who in his film life was supported and sponsored by other caste groups. But the elections proved that even the kapu voters in Congress Party did not vote for the PRP.

Mahakutami (Grand Alliance)

During 2009 elections, four parties came together and formed a grand alliance (Maha Kutami). Telugu Desam, Telangana Rashtra Samithi, both Communist Parties (CPI and CPM) came together to challenge the ruling Congress. In fact it was a case of reversal of
roles. In 2004 elections both the Communist Parties and the TRS joined hands with the Congress in order to beat the then ruling TDP. The three parties which helped the Congress in dethroning the TDP had come round in five years to support the TDP in its fight against the Congress. But the grand alliance this time around did not succeed. TDP went out of the way to lure the TRS by declaring its willingness to support the formation of a separate Telangana state. This stand did not seem to have gone well with the people. The CPI also supported the Telangana cause while the CPM stood for integrated state even though it aligned with the rest of the opposition parties with a view to defeating the Congress. But the Congress has won a second term in the State for the first time in 31 years. While the Congress bagged 157 Assembly and 33 Lok Sabha seats, the TDP got only 90 Assembly seats and six Lok Sabha seats. The third position went to PRP which won 18 Assembly seats. The TRS had to be content with ten Assembly and two Lok Sabha seats. The CPI won in four constituencies while the CPM was successful only in one. Bharatiya Janata party (BJP) got only two Assembly seats and not a single Lok Sabha seat.

Majlis Ittehadul Muslimeen (MIM) improved its tally from the five in 2004 to seven in 2009. It also retained the lone Lok Sabha seat. The MIM had an understanding with the Congress. On August 9, 2007 Bangla Desh writer Ms Taslima Nasrin came to Hyderabad to release her novel Shodh and another book entitled Wild Swans by Jung Chang (both translated into Telugu by Venigalla Komala), the MIM legislators along with rowdy gang physically attacked her in Press Club. But the Congress Government failed to arrest them and book cases against them. Thus Congress Government behaved in a very anti secular way. The Lok Satta was victorious only in one constituency while four independents had won.

While the Congress had polled 37.03 percent of votes, the TDP got 29.09 and the PRP 15.6 percent. TRS got 4.16 percent while the BJP was given 2.88, the Lok Satta 1.72, the CPM 1.16 and the CPI got 1.15 percent. Overall, the difference in the percentage of votes got by the Congress (37.03) and the grand alliance (35.56)
was minimal and it does not justify the difference in the number of seats won by them.

Dr. Y.S. seemed to be a changed politician when he started his second term in right earnest. He was talking about implementing the welfare measure more vigorously. He was obviously trying to make sure of a third innings for the Congress and himself.

Unexpectedly, Dr Y.S.Rajasekhara Reddy the Chief Minister died on 2 September 2009 while travelling from Hyderabad to Chittoor District in a helicopter. The crash took place around 9.40 am in Nallamalai forest hills near Kurnool. It was a tragic demise. His body was traced on 3 Sep 2009.

Mr K. Rosaiah, the senior Minister in the Cabinet of Dr. Rajasekhara Reddy, was sworn in as Chief Minister on 3 September 2009.