

Chapter-IV

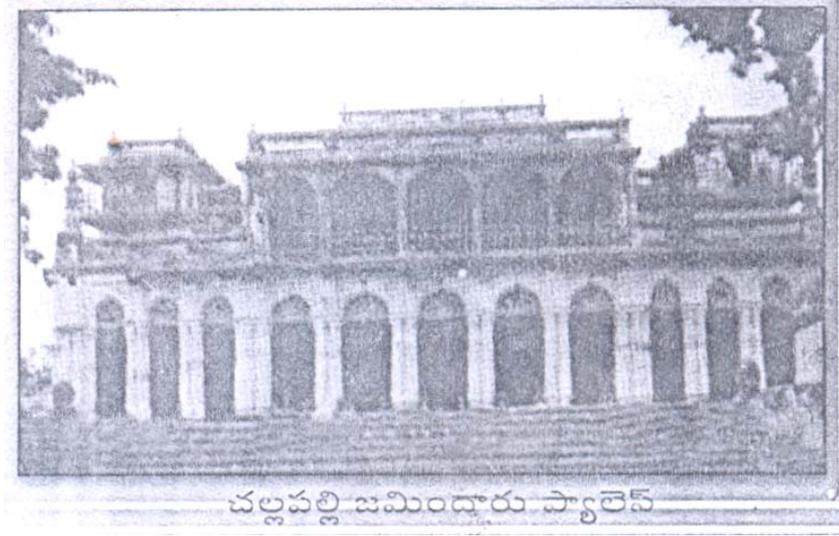
SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT UNDER THE ZAMINDAR RULE IN CHALLAPALLI ESTATE

The tax collection authority for the 60 villages on the north side of the Krishna was entrusted to the Challapalli Zamindar of Devarakota estate by the Nizam Nawab first and later by the British four centuries ago. By the time there was no anicut (dam) on the Krishna, no facility of highways, the crops were monsoon dependant. The tax collection authority was entrusted to the Devarakota Zamindar by the British in 1802 A.D. According to the conditions laid down an amount of Rs.1,20,000 was to be collected from the farmers, out of which Rs.80,000 to be paid to the British towards 'Peshchus' and Rs.40,000 was for the Zamindar. This tax was not in terms of money. The Zamindar was to get his share in the yield. The farmers used to cultivate food grains like paddy, maize, corn, etc., and half of the yield should be given to the Zamindar. This system was called "Asra" (or) "Amani" (or) 'Varamrates'. The thrashing of the yield should be done under the supervision of the Amanies of the Zamindar and the share of the Zamindar to be decided first. The farmers had to starve as the Amanies didn't use to come in time. The Zamindars used to exploit the farmers in many ways – in measuring the yield, in pricing the yield, etc.¹

When there was no crop due to famine or due to excessive rain fall, the farmers food was just palm fruits, some roots called 'Amadas' and some leaves called 'Alaka', this was to be cooked for seven times to make it edible. When there were natural calamities the farmers couldn't pay the amount of tax. But the Zamindar had to pay 'peshkas' to the British govt. If not the British Government would cease his estate and

¹ Challapalli Narayana Rao (2003). "Smaraka Souvenir", Vangala Subba Rao Challapalli, p.1.

Challapalli Zamindar's Palace



Challapalli Zamindar



Srimantu Raja Sivaram Prasad Bahaddur

the Zamindar with the support of the land lords like Vemuri Venkata Ramana collected the amount required from the land lords and retained his position. No tax by the farmers when there was no crop but the Zamindar had to pay 'peshchus' to the British Government. The farmers and the Zamindar were fed up with the problems of tax.²

As the goondas proved useless, the zamindar resorted to use the corrupt police officers. They too could not resist the united strength of the farmers. And the zamindar was able to split some selfish farmers and could break the unity of the farmers. The long and ferocious fight of the farmers was distracted. This fight is said to be the famous Dhaka fight. After the distraction, all this land was occupied by the zamindar. The Chinnapuram farmers had 250 acres of lease land in Majeru village. The remaining 600 acres of land was under lease farming by the Majeru farmers themselves. Indeed all this land was of the farmers which was affected in 1864 tidal disaster and was exploited by the zamindar. Pity is that the farmers had to take the lease of their own land. As the 1908 Estate land Act came into existence, the Chinnapuram farmers fought for their right on the 250 acres of lease land. They asked the Majeru farmers to get united against the zamindar. But the zamindar cunningly took possession of the lease receipts from the Majeru farmers and exploited the 600 acres of land. Thus the Majeru farmers lost their lands for the second time. But the Chinnapuram farmers fought hard against the zamindar and his goondas and the corrupt police officers. For this the farmers were dragged to the Madras high court. The farmers starved and suffered a lot to win the case and to retain the 250 acres of their land.³

² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³ *Rythulokam* (1981). Monthly Magazine, July, p.30.

The Zamindar occupied 800 acres of land in Bhogireddypalli village for the cause of non payment of tax by the farmers including the flood affected low land. All this land was later leased to the farmers. The farmers were united to regain their land. The Zamindar tried to cultivate the land himself but the farmers rebelled against him. With this the Zamindar filed false cases of theft and attacked them. But there was no use. At last he split some of the farmers and made them come to a compromise. Only $\frac{1}{5}$ th of the land was given to the farmers. There was a public land called Ghotakam in the Ghantasala village since the ancient times. During 1898 survey, the Zamindar managed the VDO to write the statement that “Ghotakam belongs to the Zamindar”. And the VDO repented later, changed the statement into negative on the papers in the Deputy Collector office. Despite this the Zamindar tried to occupy this land. Then the farmers of Ghantasala, Ghantasalapalem, Kothapalli villages rebelled against the Zamindar under the leadership of Gottipati Veeraraghavaiah, the father of the famous national leader Gottipati Brahmaiah. The zamindar filed a case in the Bandar sub magistrate court against seven members including Veera Raghavaiah. The farmers fought against the case unitedly. But the magistrate gave the judgement in favour of the Zamindar and fined each of them with an amount of Rs.35 for their intrusion. Then they appealed to the Deputy Magistrate court.⁴

There the magistrate thoroughly prosecuted the case, cancelled the fine and found fault with the Zamindar. The Zamindar spent Rs.20,000 for the case and the people, spent Rs.3,000. The farmers took shelter behind the rocks for their self cooking and acquired the records required and moved the case successfully. The land of Ghotakam

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 31.

thus acquired is of great use to the villagers till today. The 1908 Estate Land Act was in favour of the farmers but in those days the farmers had no united organisation to fight for their rights. Despite the enmity with the Zamindar, the farmers of all the villages were not united in the fight against the Zamindar. Except in the villages of Vakkalagadda and Ghantasala the fighting farmers were not supported by other farmers as they and the land lords were in favour of the Zamindar. Due to this the farmers lost thousands of acres of land even after the 1908 Act. The Zamindar became cautious after the 1908 Estate Land Act. He stopped leasing the land to the farmers. Either the land was to be self-cultivated or to be vacant according to the Zamindar. Even if the land was leased, there would be no receipts. The lease farmers were made to write on the papers that they were labourers on the land.⁵

In 1920, the 21st Krishna Mandala Maha Sabha was held in Divi Taluk, Pedakallepalli. For the first time it was presided over by the farmer leaders. Kanuri Chalapathaiiah, Bhogaraju Pattabhisitaramaiah. Cherukuvada Narasimham, Kavuri Kondanda Ramaiah, etc., were participated. Then Cherukuvada Narasimham proposed his resolution to cancel the Zamindary system. The liberals were against the proposal. But Chalapataiah opined that the cancellation of the Zamindary system was the only way for the betterment of the farmers. In 1923, the Taluk Board elections were held. By the time, there used to be only one Taluk Board for Bandar and all the Divi Taluks. Till then only the Bandar lawyers used to be elected as the members of the village. When the congress Maha Sabhas held in Vijayawada and Kakinada towns the independence

⁵*Rythulokam* (1981). Monthly Magazine, August, p.31.

movement was spread even to the villages. With this instead of the Bandar lawyers, the congress men of the Taluk-Kavuri Kodanda Ramaiah, Vemulapalli Gopala Rao, Vemuri Venkaiah, etc., were elected. Their rival candidates of the Challapalli Raja were defeated. A voter's Maha Sabha was held in Mopidevi in 1926 and it was resolved that only the congress men should be made the contestants in the Taluk board elections of that year. There were 18 constituencies in the Bandar Taluk Board. Ten congress men and 8 justice party men won the elections. 8 congressmen of the ten won from the Divi Taluk itself under the leadership of Kavuri Kodanda Ramaiah, the Vice President of the Krishna District board. They were:

Kavuri Kodanda Ramaiah – Mopidevi
Vemulapalli Gopala Rao – Nagaitippa
Repalle Venkata Krishnaiah – Kasuri Vari palem
Gadde Nasaiah – Avanigadda
Kolli Seshaiah – Kishkindapalem
Mandava Venkata Ratnam – Narasannapalem
Chalasani Veeraiah – Bhatla Penamarru
Gattipati Brahmaiah – Ghantasala.⁶

Besides them, the congressmen Sedimbi Hanumantha Rao, Yerramilli Satyanarayana won from the Bandar Taluk. With the resentment of the farmers none of the Zamindar's candidates won. Among the winners of the justice party were Barister Jagannadha Rao Naidu, advocate Kollipara Ramanaiah Naidu, P.B.Dasu, Mandali Ramaswamy, etc. The British Government tried to increase the taxes in about 1930, Prof. N.G. Ranga, Gadde Rangaiah Naidu, Kommareddy Satyanarayana started the movement uniting the farmers. On this occasion, the resettlement Mahasabha of the Divi Taluk was

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

held in Mopidevi in 1931. Many a number of farmers attended. The elders like Ramaiah told the farmers not to pay the taxes to the government which was nothing but an injustice. Leaders like N.G. Ranga, Duggirala Balarama Krishnaiah, Mosalikanti Tirumala Rao were imprisoned. The government imposed 144 section for non-participation of the farmers in the movement. Leaders working in this movement like Kollipara Suraiah, Vallabhaneni Ramabrahmam, Atmuri Nageswara Rao, Guri Raju, Kaja Basavaiah, Gottipati Brahmaiah were prohibited to go to their Taluks of Gudivada and Kaikalur. The state farmers organisation of that day after intensifying the resettlement movement made a resolution supporting the lawful rights of the farmers in the state committee meeting.⁷

In 1930, the Challapalli Zamindar brought the Deputy Collector Jampala Venkatesam on deputation to his Estate as 'Devan'. His atrocities on the Pedanandipadu farmers in their non co-operative movement of taxes were well known. Venkatesam as the Estate Devan created fake records of the public lands in favour of the Zamindar and thus increased his lands.

Since 1930, the main participants of the national movement like Kamineni Venkatappaiah, Chalasani Narayana Murthy, Chalasani Jagannadha Rao, Chalasani Prakasa Rao, Devineni Bhimaiah and many others from the villages of Ghantasala, Bhatlapenamarru, Chinakallepalli and Gottipati Brahmaiah, Panditha Gorrepati Venkata Subbaiah and his wife, Kisan Gorrepati Venkata Subbaiah and his wife, Donepudi Sitaramaiah, Guthikonda Achchaiah and his wife were sent to jail. The college going

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.31

student Challapalli Narayana Rao and his brother the V.D.O. of Challapalli, Ram Das and Tangirala Raghava Rao of Ramannapet were also imprisoned.⁸

In 1933, the natives of Barlapudi, Koneru Narayana Rao, Chalasani Gangaiah, etc. were arrested in Howrah station when they went to the Calcutta special congress and kept them as detenues in Dum Dum jail. As the police arrested M.Anne, who was presiding over that congress, Madan Mohan Malavya came to preside over the meeting. He too was arrested. Then Mrs. Nihitisen Gupta presided over the meeting. The labour leader Thota Narasaiah, who was Lothi charged severely while hoisting the national flag atop the Bandar Robertson tower, was a resident of Pagolu village of this Taluk. The famous nationalist Pingali Venkaiah, who designed our national flag, was a native of Yarlagadda village of the Bandar Taluk. Kodali Anjaneyulu of the Kodali village resigned his government job and took part in the national movement since about 1920 and was imprisoned so many times. He not only took active part in the national movement, but also became famous as a great orator, a great poet and a great journalist. There was no much participation in the national movement from Divisima area due to less political awareness and more impact of justice party.⁹

In 1935, the Zamindary Kisan Mahasabha was held in Potarlanka of Divi Taluk. This was presided over by Baddepudi Venkata Narayana. The inaugural speech was by Acharya Ranga. The left youth of the congress used to work with Acharya Ranga in the Kisan movement. They used to wave the red flags with a symbol of sword and hammer

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.32.

⁹ Kutumba Rao Kavuri (2005). "Challapalli Estate Rythamga Poratam", Kavya Publications, Hyderabad, p.37.

together. The liberal leader Gottipati Brahmaiah was against the red flag. He hoisted the congress flag changing the symbol from the spinning wheel to the plough. The Challapalli Zamindar tried hard to break this meeting, but he could not as the farmers were united. The Potarlanka Munsif Kolli Venkatadri, the Kishkindapalem Taluk Board member Kolli Seshaiah, etc., worked very hard to make the meetings a success. After 10 years, Venkatadri was beaten by the Zamindary goondas. Despite this, the brave Venkatadri continued his heartfelt co-operation to the Kisan movement till his death of suspicion in 1947.¹⁰

The third Kisan Mahasabha of Divi Taluk was presided over by Kalluri Chandramouli in 1937. Maganti Bapineedu initiated the programme. The next day, the East Bank Canal Dam farmers held a meeting which was presided over by Bapineedu. Since 1908, the Divisima area was under cultivation with the help of pumping water at Puligadda (The Krishna River). But by the time of November and December, the Krishna river water could not be supplied as per the requirement due to the tides of the sea. Then, the East Bank Canal was dug from Yenamala Kuduru and the Aqueduct was constructed at Puligadda and thus the water was supplied to Divisima lands. Approximately 40,000 acres of land was irrigated with water facility with this canal. The Zamindar forced the farmers to pay him 'Nazarana' for the new lands brought into cultivation with this irrigation facility. The farmers agitated against this and won. This agitation was made successful with the efforts of Guthikonda Atchaiah and his wife who already went to prison in the national movement. Their son Uddanda Ramaiah also

¹⁰ Krishna Rao, Y.V. (1986). "Andhra Pradesh to Rythu Udyamalu Porataalu", Visalandra Publishing House, Hyderabad, pp. 146-147

contributed a lot. Atchaiah and his wife led many movements for the abolition of Zamindari system.¹¹

During 1930-1932 many people actively participated in the national movement. As it didn't yield any result and great disappointment was there. For Harijana Seva, Programmes like the use of Khadhi were propagated as there were no active programmes. There was a kind of stagnation in the national movement. It was the time for the District Board elections in 1933. As there was stagnation, no congressman participated in the Krishna District Board elections. By the time, the Justice Party in the district split into two strong groups representing the castes such as Kamma and Velama on either side. These groups were led by the Challapalli and Mirjapur Zamindars. The congress men except a few started supporting either of the two groups, with this the Congress Party against the Zamindar was weakened. The Challapalli Zamindar won with majority.¹²

It was the time for 1937 Assembly Elections, the Krishna District had five Assembly seats. Vijayawada and Bandar towns had one seat. The West Krishna District had two seats and the East had two seats Gudivada, Kikaluru, Bandar and Divi Taluk were of the East Krishna District. There were two seats in total in this constituency, one general and one reserved. Gottipati Brahmaiah was the Congress President of the East Krishna District. No congressman came forward to contest for the general seat as Challapalli Raja was the rival contestant. Gottipati Brahmaiah didn't even come out from his native village Ghantasala. Then the congress Supreme Leaders Prakasam Pantulu, Pattabhi Sitaramaiah, Samba Murthy, Koteswara Rao, Mutnuri Krishna Rao,

¹¹ *Rythulokam* (1981), Monthly Magazine, May, p.27.

¹² Kutumba Rao Kavuri (2005). "Challapalli Estate Rythangaporatam", Kavya Publication, Hyderabad, May, p.27.

Cherukuwada Narasimham went to Ghantasala to meet Brahmaiah. They convinced Brahmaiah to sign the nomination form and paid the deposit amount of Rs.100.¹³

There was vibrating canvas for the East Krishna Elections. All India Congress leaders like Sarojini Naidu, Pattabhi Acharya Ranga, Cherukuwada Narasimham, Duggirala Balarama Krishnaiah, the extremist Alluri Satyanarayana Raju, etc inspired the people with their speeches. Settipalli Venkata Ratnam, the revolutionary poet greatly canvassed singing ballads with his manly voice. Many extremist people canvassed day and night in the villages. Even money was not short. Kasinadhuni Nageswara Rao Pantulu sent money, pamphlets and wall posters. The elders like Pattabhi, Mutnuri, Kollipara Suraiah collected big amount in the form of donations. After the elections the congress got more number of votes in Gudivada, Kikaluru, Bandar Taluk and Divisima. The Zamindar had got more votes in the Challapalli Estate area. The system of voting was in cumulative mode. That means the voter had the right to utilise his two votes for one candidate also. The Justice Party candidate for the general seat, the Congress Party candidate Vemula Kurmaiah for the Challapalli reserved seat won. The justice party voters used their two votes for Challapalli itself. But the congress party voters used their two votes for the two candidates. The voting was done as given below.¹⁴

General seat candidate G Brahmaiah (Congress)	-	52186
Challapalli Raja Yarlagadda Siva Rama Prasad (Justice Party)	-	60963
Reserved seat Kurmaiah (Congress)	-	10543
Venkaiah (Justice)	-	210

¹³ Oral Interview with Kantamaneni Atchuta Ramaiah, dt.5-3-2011.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Congress – total	-	62729
Total – Justice Party	-	61173

It was clear that Congress Party got more number of votes. Challapalli Raja could win gaining the two votes from each voter immolating the life of the reserved candidate. Morally the winning was with the congress. The selfish congress leaders who were mad after personal prestige and winning didn't canvas this moral winning among the people, instead they created such an atmosphere as the congress party was weakened there. In the West Krishna District, the Congress candidates Katragadda Venkata Narayana Rao, Vasireddy Durga Sada Siveswara Prasad, Jayanthipuram Raja could defeat the justice party leader Mirzapuram Raja and the famous lawyer Kattamanchi Kulandi Reddy.¹⁵

In the election review, Mutnuri Krishna Rao wrote an editorial in the Krishna Patrika. "This is a national revolution, a great revolution vibrating the whole India, right from the Himalayas. This forecast is that even the Challapalli Estate can't be safe as all the other Zamindars are surrendering". He spoke of the coming struggle to root out the feudal system. The elections symbolized that castism would not protect the Zamindars. The supporters of the Zamindars like the Panchamas, the Salis, the Gowdas, the Pallekaries would go against the Zamindary system which would lead to a new economy. These poor and starving people might be after a few coins of money for a few days. But they would definitely fight for their share in the zami lands.

A bill would be presented in the assembly to hand over the infertile and waste lands of the estate to the poor villagers. The Zamindars should realize that everything and everyone would go against them. The day would be a day of mourning for the

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Zamindars. The head of the Zamindars Bobbili Raja would not appear be seen the coming assembly. The Justice Party would remain a body without head. No one from the justice party would win in the coming elections. The poor farmers would acquire the ministerial positions in the future assembly. This would definitely grieve the Zamindars to see all the Gandhi caps in the assembly.¹⁶

Thus, the message was severe from his pen. The farmers and the young congress men believed in this. But all this belief was proved to be a house of cards with the selfish congress ministers. From 1935-1938 Acharya Ranga used to run a farmers school at Nidubrolu to create the young of the Andhra Pradesh.¹⁷

In 1937-1938, political schools were run by the prohibited Communist Party leaders, the left minded leaders of the congress attended to the schools at Kothapatnam, Mantenavaripalem of Guntur District. Many young farmers attended these schools. Among them were Ravuri Somasekhara Prasad, Ravi Subba Rao, Yarlagadda Lakshmaiah. By the time, K.V. Reddy Naidu's government which was in favour of the British prohibited the Kothapatnam school with in a few days and the men who revolted against this prohibition were severely lotty charged and imprisoned. One among them, Chandra Rajeswara Rao later who served as General Secretary of CPI and the young leader Kavuri Somasekhara Prasad and his followers were also imprisoned. The revolutionary young people of the school after their return from prison went into the politics of left and started working actively in Kisan–Labour unions. Chalasani Vasu Deva Rao and others Kommareddy Satyanarayana Murthy led a 'Rytu Yatra' from

¹⁶ Kutumbarao, Kavuri (2005). "Challapalli Estate Rythanga Poratam", Kavya Publications, Hyderabad. pp.43 & 44.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

Itchapuram to Madras to bring to the notice of the govt. the problems and sufferings the Zamindary lease farmers.¹⁸

Raja Gopalachari's Lecture

On 26th January, 1939, the Prime Minister of the Madras Government, C. Raja Gopalachari made a historic speech lecture in the Assembly on the Zamindar enquiry report. According to him, the Zamindars had no right on the lands. The Zamindars were just the government employees. They were not at all the owners of the lands. The farmers were very happy with this speech. The Divi Taluk farmers were very happy with this speech. The Divi Taluk farmers organisation sent memorandums to the State government and to the Zamindary enquiry committee to cancel the sale of the forest and the other lands by the Challapalli Zamindar. With this the Zamindar was scared.

The Prakasam Committee made a noble report, the Prime Minister Rajaji argued that no compensation should be paid to the Zamindars. But this was not implemented. Meanwhile, the ministers resigned due to the Second World War. This made it clear that, only the speeches of the congress leaders were in favour of the farmers, but the actions were in favour of the Zamindars. The farmers were deceived due to lack of struggle in 1908, the year of the Estate Land Act. They were deceived again in 1939 by the selfish congress leaders.¹⁹

1940 District Board Elections, 1940 Legislative Council Elections, the Krishna journal reviewed the defeat of the congress. The reasons behind the defeat of Brahmaiah was not the strength of the opposition party. It was the result of betrayal of the selfish

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹⁹ *Rythu Lokam* (1981), Monthly Magazine, February, p.29.

congress leaders. Brahmaiah was wrongly portrayed to be the man of Challapalli Raja by his own congress men. Anonymous letters were sent to the Brahmin voters of the villages from Gudlavalleru firca. The congress men canvassed against Brahmaiah. The reason for the degradation of the congress in the Krishna District was the selfishness of the congress leaders and their nature of loosing ethics for success. The unselfish and spotless patriot Mutnuri Krishna Rao felt that the reason for the defeat of the congress was lack of consciousness among the people and that the Zamindar was stronger. But within four years he realized the selfishness of the congress leaders. Later in the history, the Challapalli Zamindar became not only the MLA but a minister of the congress also. The justice party leader Ramanaiah Naidu became the congress MLA. The congress workers were not responsible for this. The state congress president Prakasam Pantulu did not fight against this, instead supported. Even Pattabhi supported this.²⁰

The left, socialist young men of the congress party were fed up with the liberal attitude of the leaders and with their indifference towards the anti Zamindar programmes. During the period between 1939-1941, the Taluka farmers organisation was taken over by the left young leaders. These leaders and workers were running anti war movement directly and indirectly. The British Government issued arrest warrants against them. They started leading underground life. These men fought actively against the British govt. and the Zamindars considering the problems of the farmers.²¹

²⁰ Krishna Rao, Y.V. (1986). "Andhra Pradesh Rythu Vdyamalu Poratalu", Visalandra Publishing House, Hyderabad, p.151.

²¹ *Ibid.*

The Divi Taluka farmers organisation asked the workers to actively participate in the co-operative societies. By the time, all the villages didn't possess cooperative societies. Even the existing societies were not functioning well. The farmers and workers organisations established new cooperative societies in the villages like Nadellavaripalem, Nimmagadda, Merikenapalli, Pedaprolu, Mangalapuram, Ghantasala Palem, etc. Timely loans were given to the farmers and the amount was deposited into the Central Bank after the collection of loans. By the time, the Challapalli Cooperative society was under the management of farmer organisation leaders. All these societies were attached to the Krishna cooperative Central Bank. This Central Bank used to cover the four Taluks of the East Krishna District and the area upto Bhimavaram in the West Godavari District. Among the three Directors selected from the Divi Taluk were the representatives of the farmer organisation of Challapalli. One among them was Chandra Ramalingaiah, Kollipara Ramanaiah Naidu, the Central Bank President used to work well with directors elected. Bogharaju Patabhi Sitaramaiah was one of the founders of the Central Bank. He appreciated Ramalingaiah, a lawyer who donated his money to communist party. He instead of going to the court set up credit societies in the villages. He saved the farmers from the money lenders by giving them loans (interest free). Ramalingaiah was a real politician as he tried to brewing awareness among the people, solved their problems, Patabhi admired Ramalingaiah for his constructive work.²²

Ban on communist party was removed by the British Government in 1942. Arrest warrants on the farmer leaders were also removed. The circumstances of II world war made the leaders of congress party to oppose the war and slogans were given as anti War

²² *Rythulokam* (1981). Monthly Magazine, May, p.30.

group. But communists as anti Fascists supported the world war. So this led to a big division among the anti imperialists. It influenced over the Peasant organisations also. Almost the congress moderates came out of the Kisan Organisations. Then the Anti-Kisan Movement members had taken it as an advantage and supported the congress land lords. Owing to those circumstances Kisan Movement on anti landlords was completely destroyed. The Anti Zamindary viewed the congress leaders who were in the Kisan Organisation having the left viewers, Guttikonda Achaiah, Chellapalli, Narayana Rao, Chalasani Jagannadha Rao, Chalasani Vasudeva Rao, Devineni Bheemaiah, Chalasani Prakasa Rao etc., participated in the fight against the British since 1932. The activities which were taken by them as Anti Fascist imperialism, Anti-Zamindary agitation, Anti corruption, anti black marketing attracted the peasants and the youth very much. The middle class farmers and poor farmers opined that the Kisan Organization was theirs.²³

The Zamindary community made a serious proposal to avoid the Mudiraja labours from their cultivation of waste lands those who had been continuing their cultivation in Mangalapuram since 1942. But Zamindary instead of sending goondas to give the threat to the Agriculture labour took the support of Police to prevent them not to step into the lands for cultivation. The police declared 144 Section to disturb the labour. At that time, the leaders of Agriculture labour Chandra Rajeswara Rao, Challapalli Narayana Rao, Guntur Bapanaiah etc. stood firmly and supported the Mangalapuram Agriculture labour. The C.I. Neeli Venkateswara Naidu who got the name as kindless brute taking the support of Zamindars went with his Police battalion on the horses which were gifted by Zamindar and made lathi charge over the Agriculture labour very cruelly. The

²³ Oral interview with Kavuri Kutumba Rao, dt.15-10-2004.

Agriculture labour leaders Rajeswara Rao, Bapanaiah, Narayana Rao etc., were severely injured. That incident provoked the Agriculture labour of Mangalapuram very seriously. In that situation, many cases were filed on the Agriculture labour and the cases were endorsed to the Avanigadda and Bandar Courts. The Agriculture labour leaders Rajeswara Rao, Challapalli Narayana Rao also went along with the Victims to attend the courts. While going to attend the courts they used to sing songs on Kisan Agriculture labour lives, mobilising the villagers on the way made a big procession with red flags. The court adjourned the cases many times and at last along with Rajeswara Rao Challapalli Narayana Rao, Gunutr Bapanaiah, the Agriculture labour were sent to the Jails 3 to 6 months. The Zamindar felt happy temporarily, that incident became a base to the great anti feudal Kisan Movement “Abolition of Zamindarism”.²⁴

In those days, Agriculture labour had no work between September and November months. Every year agriculture labours used to have financial troubles. For their needs, they borrow one bag of paddy from the land lords and after harvesting the crops they return one and half bags of paddy to the land lords. That was named ‘Namu system’. The Kisan Organisers identified the problem of exploitation of Agriculture labour. So they counselled and organised the Agriculture labour and peasants collected paddy from them in different quantities to store in a place. That place was called in those days as ‘Dhanyam Pandu’. That corn was distributed to the Agriculture labours between the months September and November of every year and would recollect that corn from them the same quantity given. For that activity every one furnished their co-operation very

²⁴ Krishna Rao, Y.V. (1986). “Andhra Pradeshlo Rythu Udyamalu Porataalu”, Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, pp. 153 & 154.

happily. That system had been implemented in the villages of Bhatla Penamarru, Mangalapuram, Chinna Kallepalli, Nagayatippa, Nadakuduru, Pedaprolu etc., and for the sake of Agriculture labour the work schedule was fixed between 10 A.M. and 5 P.M. by Agriculture labour Committee. So that land lords could behave softly with labours and labours also could feel their responsibility. Owing to active participation of Agriculture labour Committees thefts, anti social activities, gambblings were controlled. The system was maintained on those days that if anybody made any wrong, he was punished by the (Agriculture labour) committees. Adult education programme was also implemented by these committees to create more awareness. This was carried out at their (Agriculture labour) at their leisure timings. So that the youth could have a capacity of reading the news papers and to understand the social inequalities and political awareness. The youth who had good awareness out of reading the news papers used mega phones to read out the news, from the news papers at about 7 p.m. everyday for bringing awareness to other illiterate people standing on a high stand pandal, (Manche).²⁵

It was unforgettable event in Indian History in a way the public meeting was conducted at Vijayawada in 1944. Merely eight lakhs Kisans were gathered. The great leaders who sacrificed their lives in the freedom movement, Gaddar party and other kisan leaders Swami Sahajananda, Sardar Prudwisingh, the great Pandit Rahul Samkrutyayan, Baba Gurumukh Singh, ZA Ahamad, P.C. Joshi, Jeevanandam, attend along with the other freedom fighters. That was the first Public Meeting with above one lakh people gathering in Andhra Pradesh for the sake of farmers. Vijayawada city was covered with

²⁵ Kutumba Rao, Kavuri (2005). "Challapalli Estate Rythanga Poratam", Kavya Publications, Hyderabad., pp. 60, 61.

red flags on that day. The people from remote areas came to attend the meeting on bullock carts and on foot together with their small kids also. Accommodation and food facilities were provided for those people under the persuasion of the young and dynamic leaders Puchalapalli Sundaraiah and Chandra Rajeswara Rao.²⁶

For that meeting thousands of (Agriculture labours) ladies and gents from Divi Taluk participated and paid donations in different ways like rice, vegetables, curd etc., the people of Divi Taluk took active part in cooking and serving to the people as they felt that they were the responsible people. After the Kisan Mahasabha Challapalli Narayana Rao, Kavuri Kutumba Rao and the leaders invited the Prudvi Sing who fought against British imperialism and an ideal man of Indian youth imprisoned and escaped from the jail had visited Challapalli. A great procession was Organised while Prudvi Sing was came to Challapalli on a decorated chariot. Sardar Prudvi Singh gave a thundering speech that every Indian should not take rest until the abolition of Fascism, British imperialism and Zamindary system. He announced that the problems of Indians can be solved only in the independent India. After that Prudvi Singh wanted to meet all the Local Congress leaders. The message was passed to the congress leaders to gather in a place to have a discussion with Prudvi Singh, but except Pandit Gorrepati Venkata Subbaiah, nobody came to meet Prudvi Sing because they are anti communists. Prudvi Sing, worried very much about the differences of Indian people. He lead the movement as the President of Indian Freedom Fighters and recently at the age 96 years.²⁷

²⁶ Oral interview with Kavuri Kutumba Rao, dt.15-10-2004.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

In the year 1945, Krishna District Kisan Maha Sabha was held in Pamulapadu, Gudivada Taluk. In those days there were no road facilities, for attending that Maha Sabha 400 Agriculture labour and farmers started from Salempalem village of Diviseema. While going to Mahasabha they invited and gathered the people from different villages on the way and giving slogans, singing songs, hoisting the red flags via Challapalli and Movva villages reached the village Penamaru. They were hosted that night by Penamaru villagers just got a nap and reached to Pamulapadu Mahasabha by next early in the morning. They walked to attend the Maha Sabha 40 miles distance and it was unforgettable perseverance. Many resolutions were passed for the sake of Agriculture labour in that Maha Sabha. On the dais songs were sung by Praja Natyamandali viewing on the Malabar Kisan Youth of Kayyuru Comrades who were sentenced to hanging. Every one sitting there shed tears less while listening those songs. At that time, many of the participants raised slogans and took the oath that they would fight against the British for release of the Kayyuru comrades from the jails and could make the British imperialists run away from India. They heard the revolutionary speeches from the great leaders, farmers and organizers moved back to their own villages to take active steps to fight against the British.²⁸

The negotiations were being made between British Government and congress leaders after the Second World War. Assembly elections were declared in 1946. Until 1946, there was no tight competition to Challapalli Zamindar. He defeated the Congress, communist and Kisan Organisations in any election using his money and Goondaism but

²⁸ Krishna Rao, Y.V. (1986). "Andhra Pradeshlo Rythanga Udyamalu Porataalu", Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad. pp. 155 & 156.

Kisan Organization of Divi Taluk, Communist Party did not loose their perseverance. At that time, Challapalli Zamindar was unable to look after his family because of so many reasons and causes. He started to develop closeness with congress moderates. Because of his influence no office was organised for congress party until 1936. But now he started to give strong support to the congress leaders. In 1946, Assembly elections Mrs. Vallabhaneni Sita Maha Lakshamma, Vemula Kurmaiah contested on behalf the Congress Party for general and reserved seats Chalasani Vasudeva Rao, contested on behalf of communist party. Guntur Bapanaiah contested on behalf of agriculture labour Organization.²⁹

For the 1946, Assembly elections some seats were reserved for the muslims and Christians. T.J.M. Wilson who got the Law Degree from a farmer family belongs to Communist Party was given a chance to contest in the election as an independent candidate. On those days, as per Pune compact very first panel elections were conducted. Panal election means election would be conducted for the reserved candidates. Only Harijana people should cast the votes in that election. The candidates those who could get $\frac{1}{4}$ of votes, they were eligible for contesting in general elections. In the Panel election, the Communist Party candidate and the leader of Agriculture labour organisation Bapanaiah got majority of votes than the congress candidate Vemula Kurmaiah. Those days there was no adult voting system. The people those who were paying taxes and educated only got voting right. On account of those elections, a great open meeting was conducted in Challapalli in favour of Agriculture labour. One lakh people gathered themselves to succeed and made that open meeting. Until that day no

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

such great public meeting was held in any village. From that open meeting dais, P.C. Joshi, who was the Secretary of Communist Party of India, Andhra leaders P. Sundaraiah, Ch. Rajeswara Rao gave speeches against the British rule. They suggested the people to fulfill their desires and dreams that they should elect Vasudeva Rao and Bapanaiah for the assembly elections.³⁰

The Challapalli Zamindar who ruled as monarch got fear and realised that he was not the man of public support. He amicably approached his uncle Chirumamilla Nayudamma and proposed him to felicitate Joshi and the other leaders on the dais with garlands. By knowing this proposal Joshi made a satire in his speech that was “your Challapalli Raja rashed you with stones but trying to felicitate us with flowers what a different view”. Joshi shrewdly said to Zamindar that he should stop looting the farmers and Agriculture labours. Joshi advised the Zamindar if he had any mercy on labours better to help them. Through that goodness he could reach very close to the farmers. Then only they might have a satisfaction of getting felicitation from Zamindar hands. Like that Joshi politely refused the garlanding felicitation from Zamindar. In 1946, Assembly election were held and Congress Party got abnormal majority. Tanguturi Prakasam Pantulu was elected as the Chief Minister of our State. Kisan leader Acharya Ranga was elected as the Chairman of Andhra Rastra Congress party. All the farmers and Agriculture labours felt happy and hoped that their lives would be happy.³¹

In Challapalli Estate area, outskirts of Gajullanka, Potarlanka there were some villages named Kishkinda palem, Tippalakatta, Juvvala palem, Nadakuduru, Sivaru

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 157 & 158

Amudallanka. Today except Amudallanka all the above said villages are merged in Guntur District. Because of Krishna canal floods the soil of those villages washed out and some new soiled lands used to be formed. The farmers used to pay the tax for the cultivated lands but for the broken lands which were kept vacant could not be paid tax. That system of tax paying was called 'Asra'. Asra system was changed as 'Veesabadi' system. As per 'Veesabadi system' the farmers need not pay the tax for the lands which were drowned by the Krishna river. After drowning the cultivated lands the farmers would forget them but when the other lands which were shown as delta lands on other season they were occupied by Zamindar. Thus in Lanka villages six thousand acres of land was occupied by the Zamindar. But the occupied lands were not cultivated by the Zamindar. They used to create two parties among the Lanka people and they would get surrendered the leaders of the two parties. Zamindars used those lands as 'Kamata' lands. The lands were given to the farmers for Kamata which was called 'Puksalu' and Zamindar received the Promissory Notes from the farmers. Even after paying the Puksalu the Zamindar would not return their Promissory Notes.³²

Zamindar assumed that Congress Government would pass the resolutions to cancel the estate lands so they proposed to sale the lands which were under their control. By that proposal the land of Gajullanka was sold to Donepudi landlords and their relative who was Kolluru village landlord Chirumamilla Chandra Mouli.

After having known this aspect the farmers of Gajullanka approached the Kisan Organization and described the Zamindar's activity. Immediately, Challapalli Narayana

³² Oral interview with Kakarla Gopichand, dt.11-1-2011.

Rao, Kavuri Kutumba Rao etc., responded to the farmers appeal and visited the farmers of Gajullanka, studied the pitiable status of the farmers. They consoled the farmers and declared instantly that the farmers of Challapalli should not migrate from their villages and Zamindar had no rights on those lands. On that aspect, Kutumba Rao rushed to Challapalli and prepared a pamphlet against the Zamindar activities. The pamphlet was printed and distributed to the leaders and the public.³³

Until then the Gajullanka farmers who were being run as two parties understood the situation came to the conclusion to be united. The united Gajullanka farmers started to plough the lands. But the Zamindar who had a habit of Goondaism provoked 400 goondas to attack the farmers of Challapalli during night and provided facilitates to those goondas. By knowing that conspiracy of Zamindar Kavuri Kutumba Rao, Chava Umamaheswara Rao rushed to Challapalli and suggested the farmers not to go for ploughing the lands on the next morning and sent telegrams to the collectors of Krishna and Guntur districts that Zamindar provoked hundreds of Goondas to kill the Challapalli farmers. So the Government was requested to give the protection to the farmers from the Zamindar attack. The same day the collector of Guntur district was in the camp at Kollur village which was in the surroundings of Gajullanka. On that day he was in 'Boat Rowing' in Krishna canal for entertainment. While he was enjoying the messenger from the collector office brought and handed the telegram which was given by Narayana Rao about the attack of Zamindar. At the same time he noticed the mob of Goondas walking

³³ Krishna Rao, Y.V. (1986). "Andhra Pradeshlo Rythanga Udyamalu Porataalu", Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, p. 155.

with weapons and sticks through the Krishna canal bridge towards Kolluru from Gajullanka. The Collector gathered the information that they were going to the house of Chandramouli, the land lord of Kolluru. After gone through the telegram, the collector understood the situation and immediately moved to the police station and taking the police support he rode on to Landlord's house. The police arrested many of the Zamindar followers. Some of them ran away and escaped. In the history of Estate that was the first time police attacking and arresting the people of Zamindar.³⁴

At the same time, the Collector of Krishna district also responded to the telegram and informed to Bandar Deputy Collector Swamidasan and ordered to look after the situation in Gajullanka. The Deputy Collector rushed to Gajullanka and went observed the situation. He invited all the Kisan Leaders of Gajullanka and Estate Divan to Bandar Deputy Collector office for pursuing the matter.³⁵ The Chief Minister, Prakasam Pantulu promised the Kisan leaders that he would support them but he did not. Moreover, he blamed that the farmers and kisan leaders were occupying the lands of Zamindars. For that reason, in 1947 January, he announced preventive detention ordinance. Under this ordinance, Kisan Oraganisation activists, farmers, some congress leaders and the Munasabs of Peddaprolu and Nimmagadda villages were arrested and were sent to Rayavelluru as detenues. Police camps were clamped in Lanka villages. Zamindar goondas and police people combinely started to threaten the Lanka farmers.³⁶

The Lanka farmers did not yield to the police orders and Zamindar goondas threat. So that many false cases were filed against the farmers and the police fired a

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.155.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 155 & 156.

³⁶ Oral Interview with K. Atchuta Ramaiah, dt.5-3-2011.

reaping woman Bavireddy Viyyamma while she was reaping the reed in the fields and some other farmers also on 10-4-1946. That incident made the estate people very furious. All the people including kids hated the congress government activities and the people played homage to Veera nari Viyyamma and the other three farmers who were fired by the police and they raised the slogans glorifying the martyrs. Many politicians, farmers, village administrators were detained. The criminal cases were filed on the farmers and made them to attend the courts thoroughly and they were given punishments and sent them to the jails. But Zamindar got a hope that he could occupy the lands and would sell them easily with the help of police and moderate congress leaders. He started to sell some Kamatam lands and waste lands of Bhatla Penumarru, Achampalem, Yarlaga, Lakshmipuram etc., villages. He did not conduct the open auctions and tried to collect the most possible amounts from the farmers.³⁷

Lathi charges, imprisonments, firings can not stop the movements of the people. Even though there were many impediments the estate farmers with great enthusiasm did not stop the activities preventing the Zamindars from the aggression of the lands and started ploughing the lands from Ayyanki to Pedakallepalli and Ayodhya. The farmers handing the spades, crowbars and such other tools moved like tides and sloganed against the Zamindar. From each village hundreds of farmers moved forward and occupied the lands which were captured by the Zamindar from the farmers. The farmers not only occupied the lands but also started to cultivate them. While cultivating those lands the Kisan coolies used to sing songs, like that from the Nidamolu village 250 poor farmers

³⁷ Oral interview with Kantamaneni Atchuta Ramaiah, dt.5-3-2011.

and coolies occupied 117 acres of land. By getting that inspiration from the villages named Pedamuktevi, Kaza, Mantripalem and Kondavaram 300 farmers occupied 250 acres of land at Jonnala Doddi area and 100 farmers occupied the land at Moola Doddi area and started cultivation. After having known the fact that the Zamindar had no right to sale the lands, the landlords stopped buying the lands. Pooshadam village farmers those who were unable to pay the land taxes, lost the 100 acres of land because of Zamindar's force. But getting inspiration from the Kisan movement they reoccupied their lands. Likewise, Chinnapuram, Majeru, Bhogireddy palli, Yendakuduru, Mangalapuram, Pedakallepalli etc., all village farmers also fought the movement against the Zamindars and occupied the lands to cultivate them for more production of grains.³⁸

The farmers were occupying the lands one side, on the other side Zamindar was trying to sale the lands by deceiving the farmers. He invited the Chinnapuram farmers and bargained with them that they could pay Rs.250 per acre to buy 350 acres of land. Likewise for Majeru farmers 150 acres for Bhogireddypalli farmers 200 acres, for Yendakuduru farmers 70 acres were proposed and requested them for leaving the remaining land for him. The farmers of all areas did not forget the past mean activities of Zamindar like goondaism, filing the false cases, endorsing the cases to the Civil courts. But the farmers realised and got away nees against the Zamindars and they united among themselves. The farmers decided to sacrifice their lives for protecting their lands and proved their unity. In the estate lands, there were so many agricultural wells dug by the farmers for the safety of the surrounding villages and some generous land lords spend

³⁸ Kutumba Rao, Kavuri (2005). "Challapalli Estate Rythanga Poratam", Kavya Publications, Hyderabad. p. 76.

their own money for digging big ponds for the sake of poor farmers and villages. Zamindar did not take care of those ponds any day but he occupied and marketed the fish from them. Pedaprolu village people gave strong fight for protecting their village pond. Then Zamindar had taken it very prestigious and filed the cases against the village people. Even though he applied his power he could not occupy the pond of Pedaprolu village.³⁹

While this agitation was moving on, the former revenue minister Karanth disclosed in the assembly that the zamindar multitude lands are being sold and requested the District Collector to stop those sale of lands. The orders were sent was true. The next Revenue minister, Kalavenkata Rao also promised to the Krishna District farmers that he would send the orders to the collector for stopping the sales of multilands by Zamindars. The same thing was declared openly in Madras Assembly on 10-5-1947 by Kalavenkata Rao that multilands, kamatam lands, waste lands should not be purchased and an act would be made that zamindars had no right to sale the lands. After that disclosure the government asked the zamindar a reconciliation until 1802 how much land was in the hands of zamindar, how it was accumulated by him. To give the answer for that question zamindar requested the government for many adjournments but escaped from giving the answer.⁴⁰

The abolition of Zamindari system was declared by the government on 7-9-1949 while giving the severe punishments to the farmers. Government deceived the farmers against the resolution which was given by the governor general Rajagopala Chari in the

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.76 & 77.

⁴⁰ Oral interview with Kavuri Kutumba Rao, dt.15-10-2004.

year 1939. The government accepted to give the lakhs of rupees compensation, the pattas for thousands of acres, for that a special act was made. By the support of zamindar, the police shot the great leaders Challapalli Narayana Rao, Chalasani Jagannadha Rao. Challapalli zamindar thought that he had to settle and secure everything before the Kisan leaders were to be released from the jails. Because of that only reason zamindar played those tricks. In the year 1952, Assembly elections were declared. For that purpose, all the political prisoners were released to cast their votes. In the month September 1951, the great personality national leader, a friend of Andhra people A.K. Gopalan participated in the Challapalli Public meeting. Until then the people of Divi Taluk were very silent because of police threatening. When A.K. Gopalan stepped into their taluk, people attended the meeting raised slogans. They sloganed against the police, the Zamindars and used to sing revolutionary songs and hoisted the red flags. They proved that no power could stop them from that movement. It was an unforgettable event in the history of Andhra Pradesh.⁴¹

Zamindar thought that the congress govt. became very weak and got defame because of the deaths of Agricultural labours and the arrests of leaders, so that he moved forward to contest in the elections. In the ban period Challapalli zamindar and congress leader Gottipati Brahmaiah became very close friends. Zamindar asked Brahmaiah showing his pretending affection that they should not have any competition with each other, so that he proposed Brahmaiah to be an MLC and he would be an MLA. But Brahmaiah did not accept it. At last, they came to a understanding that they submit their applications for MLA seat to the Congress Party. And who ever gets the congress seat

⁴¹ Kutumba Rao, Kavuri (2005). "Challapalli Estate Rythamga Poratam", Kavya Publications, Hyderabad, p.87

the other candidate will break to extend the support. This was the understanding agreement between them. But the congress party declared the MLA Ticket for Brahmaiah. In the same constituency, the reserved candidate Vemula Kurmaiah on behalf the congress was proposed. For the Bundar Parliament seat, the prominent and famous leader of Justice Party Kollipara Ramanaiah Naidu name was announced by the congress party. For all these selections made the zamindar very angry. He himself decided to contest in the elections as independent candidate. He contested in the elections with camel symbol. The congress leaders hoped for Zamindaryes support were disappointed.⁴²

On behalf of the communist party for the Assembly Senate, the well known farmer, Kisan leader and a famous advocate Chandra Ramalingaiah was nominated. For the reserved seat Kisan Cooli leader Guntur Bapanaiah for Bundar parliament seat a Kisan leader Sanaka Buchi Kotaiah was nominated. On those days the entire Divi Taluk and Gudur, firmaguda of Bundar unified as one Assembly constituency. In the parliamentary constituency except Divi and Bundar Talukes, Bheemavaram etc., West Godavari areas were also connected. The contest was very serious. Zamindar spent lakhs of rupees like water in the election. For the last 20 years, Zamindar won the electing with out facings serious contest and enjoyed the power. But the first time in this election, he was badly defeated in the hands of kisan leaders. Agriculture labour leaders Chandra Ramalingaiah, Guntur Bapanaiah were elected to the assembly and Sanaka Buchi Kotaiah was elected for parliament. The people thought that those victories were their own and celebrations and processions were organized in each and every village.

⁴² Oral Interview with Kakarla Gopichand, dt.11-1-2011.

Except Nuziveedu and Kaikaluru Assembly seats the remaining all Assembly constituencies and three parliament seats in Krishna district captured by the leaders of Agriculture labour. By their support the brother of the great poet, Singer, Smt. Sarojini Naidu Harindra Nath Chtopadyaya also won the election. The other winning two congress leaders also not related with congress party any day. They were Vuyyuru zamindar M.R. Appa Rao, Adusumilli Subrahmanyeswara Rao. Even though they were not congress party leaders they were elected on behalf of the congress party.⁴³

From so many years, the farmers had been eagerly waiting for the abolition of Zamindari Act, but it was done by congress government in the year 1949. The C.M.C. Raja Gopalachari and Revenue minister Tangururi Prakasam Pantulu in the year 1939 argued in the assembly and favoured to the Zamindars. While consoling and washing the eyes of the farmers they announced the Zamindar Abolition Act but really they protected the Zamindars.

- 1) Lakhs of rupees should be given to the zamindars as compensation.
- 2) Before the day of Estate abolition Act the land which was being cultivated for 12 continuous years, for those lands pattas should be issued to the zamindars.
- 3) Before 5 years of the Abrogation Act, the lands which were sold to the farmers, for those lands also pattas should be issued.
- 4) The dependent heirs of zamindar had the right of getting the lands 1/5 from zamindar lands.

⁴³ Oral interview with Kantamaneni Atchuta Ramaiah, dt.5-3-2011.

The government brought out the message which was announced by the Governor General, C. Rajagopala Chari in the Madras Assembly in the year 1939 that no compensation was given to the zamindars and zamindars had no right on the lands. One more thing, the grand father of zamindar Mallikarjuna Prasad Naidu said that those lands not belong to any individuals. In the year 1880, the eldest of the Challapalli zamindar brothers Mallikarjuna Prasad said that estate was not divisible property so that he registered his name only in the government as the owner of the estate. The remaining his two brothers argued that the estate lands were divisible and the lands should be divided and distributed to them. In case the court felt that the estate lands were undivisible, the own kamata lands would not belong to the estate and they said that those lands were procured by their father. So that they appealed a petition in the court for the distribution of their own kamatam lands. But their elder brother Mallikarjuna Prasad argued that not only estate property but also own kamatam lands were undivisible. So the own kamatam lands also should not be distributed. They attended all kinds of courts but finally they appealed to the Supreme Court which was in England named Prevy council. That court declared that the estate lands were undivisible, even own kamata lands also undivisible. The court declared that the zamindar brothers had the right to get the allowances of those lands. As per zamindars argument, if the Zamindary system was abrogated along with that their own kamatam lands also should be handed over to the government. Even though that condition was right nobody was there to take care of it.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Oral Interview with Kantamaneni Atchuta Ramaiah, dt.5-3-2011.

When the abrogation of zamindari system Act was made, few kisan leaders were in the jails. So the government had given many concessions to the Zamindars. In the year 1952, when the kisan leaders were released from the jails, they noticed that the Zamindars got the rights from the settlement courts that the lands which were being cultivated by them they were their own lands and courts issued the original pattas' to them. After releasing from the jails the farmer leaders participated very shrewdly in the settlement court sessions. Zamindar had appealed a petition in the court that he had more than 17 thousand acres of land and he had asked the court that court should give him 'Pattas' for that land. But really zamindar did not cultivate the lands of Mopidevi, Merakanapalli, Lankabeedu any day. But the zamindar gave the bribes to the revenue department officials and surrendered them and played as zamindar said. Then the revenue official created the records in favour of the zamindars. On basis of those records zamindar applied for the Power of Attorney. But farmer leaders every time interrupted the zamindar activities. On the whole, Zamindar attained Pattaas for 10 thousand acres of land. Settlement court rejected to give the pattas for nearly 7000 acres of land especially for the lanka lands. Even though the zamindar did not stop their appeals. They approached the Supreme Court to pass the time for utilizing the lands. After 20 years persuasion of these cases the court decision was made that the zamindars had no right on those rejected lands. Until then they utilized those lands very happily and enjoyed the fruits.⁴⁵

The farmers were deceived by the courts and the zamindars. There was a condition in the govt. act that was $\frac{1}{5}$ th of land should be given to the heirs of the farmers.

⁴⁵ Oral interview with Kakarla Gopichand, dt.11-1-2011.

Even the act was made that land was not given to the farmers. Zamindars and their heirs approached the courts from the lower courts to the higher courts. Because of those court appeals the judgements were not announced for many years. Meanwhile the zamindar proposed to sale the lands which were secured from the settlement courts and sold six thousand acres of land during the period 1950 to 1960. In the villages, Bhatla Penumarru, Ayyanki, Nijamolu, Kaza, Chitturpu etc. Ten centuries back, some kings and charitable men constructed the temples and allotted the hundreds of acres land for the security of those temples. Still now those lands are in the disposal of endowment department. The income from those lands and the income of offerings from the devotees still being pooled. For all those temples Challapalli zamindar was trusty. The remaining temples were handed over to the endowment department by the govt. Even though they were under endowment department, the Challapalli zamindar only the trusty of those temples. How it was reasonable the patriotic congress leaders had to say. The congress leaders what they promised the farmers in the assembly in the year 1939 forgotten and if we look into the history of those leaders, it is understood that they say one thing and they do another.⁴⁶

The M.L.A's who were elected in the 1952 elections the Kisan Organisations demanded the government to decrease the land taxes to the farmers and the waste lands should be distributed to the poor people. They demanded for the separation of the State from Andhra to Andhra Pradesh: Like this they fought for many problems. Potti Sriramulu with the help of Andhra people sat for hunger strike and attained the state as the Kurnool Capital. Because of no confidence motion the communist party moved a

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

resolution in the year 1954 so the congress government was dissolved. The mid-term elections were conducted in the year 1955 because of the allegations of opposition parties and their no confidence motion over the ruling govt. In the 1952 elections, the ministers and congress leaders were defeated. After the formation of 'Andhra Rastra' the opposition party leaders, defeated the leaders like Prakasam Pantulu, Acharya Ranga who formed government in the elections. So the entire congress leaders got frustrated.⁴⁷

The Government of Andhra Pradesh introduced land reforms second time. That time government had just made simple changes of the same act of 1961 land reforms. As per that 1973 reforms, one family is a unit, parents and three minor children were together called a unit. Even though that act was made in 1973, the instructions were given that the land reforms should come into force from 21st January 1971. The Challapalli which belonged to the Challapalli Zamindar. Sugar factory, lands also taken into the Land Reforms Act. Before the first land reforms act made, the Zamindar had sold 1200 acres of land from the 3918.73½ acres which was allotted to the sugar factory.

The labour organisations, communist party, farmer cooli associations fought against the Zamindar. They demanded that the extra lands, waste lands and the lands under the sugar factory should be distributed to the poor people. Between 1969 and 1973, 400 farmer coolies were arrested in the fight for Lanka lands. Because of the fight 400 acres of land was given to the poor people. At that time, the Secretary of Communist Party, Malempati Bala Bhaskara Rao was murdered. Between 1970 and 75 under the instructions of Communist Party, anti Zamindary movements were organised very

⁴⁷ Oral Interview with Kavuri Kutumba Rao, dt.15-10-2004.

seriously. In the year 1978, the both agricultural cooli organisations unified and occupied the extra lands of Zamindar. In that aspect, thousands of labours were arrested and sent to the jails.⁴⁸

Anti Zamindary struggle was successful because of communist leaders and kisan organisation leaders. They fought against the Zamindar and sacrificed their lives. That was not one day fighting that was 50 years incessant fight of those great personalities. This victory gave the inspiring to all the district poor people to fight against the landlord system. They demanded the government to distribute the extra and waste lands of those areas. From the year 1942, Mangalapuram Mudiraja labours Land fight turned into different styles of direct participation and the general secretary, Communist Party of India, Chandra Rajeswara Rao faced lathy charges, imprisoned and sacrificed his life. So Divi Taluk people could not forget his name and his efforts justifying the poor people for distributing the lands. The Anti Challapalli Zamindary Fight in Andhra Pradesh remained ever lasting Kisan Cooli movement and named as a historical fight in the history of Andhra Pradesh. Divi Taluk people till today salute the great personalities who belonged to Gajullanka Kisan families and revolutionary Tigers Challapalli Narayana Rao, Chalasani Jagannadha Rao and other forty martyrs. They were the real heroes to the Divi Taluk people who sacrificed their lives for the sake of the poor people.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Kutumba Rao Kavuru (2005). "Challapalli Estate Rythangaporatam", Kavya Publication, Hyderabad, pp.104 & 105

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.105.