India, throughout her long and chequered history, was not politically united. Even during the heyday of the Mauryas (BC 324-236) and the Mughals (AD 1526-1707), the entire sub-continent stretching from Kashmir in the north to Kanyakumari in the south, Dwaraka (Gujarat) in the west to Dibrugarh (Assam) in the east did not come under one administration. It is only with the establishment of the British rule under the Crown (AD 1858), the country was united politically and administratively. This development and the growth of modern means of communications like railway and telegraph and the introduction of English as the official language and medium of instruction facilitated the growth of Indian nationalism.

Like the other regions of the country, Andhra was also pervaded by the spirit of nationalism and began to take pride in the Indian cultural heritage.
While realising the past greatness of the country it became aware of its contemporary political subjugation and economic degradation. This realisation was spurred by the rapid changes that took place in the social, economic and political spheres consequent to the establishment and consolidation of the British rule in the country.

The East India Company which acquired Andhra during the years 1766-1802 introduced two types of revenue farming in the coastal region and the western districts. In the former the Zamindari land tenure was introduced. Under this system the Zamindar as local chief paid to the government an agreed sum of revenue. The government had no direct dealing with the peasants. While in the western districts popularly known as the Ceded Districts, the Ryotwari settlement was introduced. Under this system, the government collected the land tax directly from the peasants without the intervention of the middlemen or the Zamindars. Both the systems acted as catalyst on peasants who formed majority of the population and
ushered in far-reaching changes in the society.

As the main object of the Company was to extract maximum revenue from the land, almost all the sections of the population were affected by the high rate of taxation. The high rates of 'peshcush' or tax money levied on the Zamindars ultimately affected the peasants, since the former passed the burden on the latter. This resulted in the pauperisation of the peasantry. Under the Ryotwari system also, the peasants suffered due to over assessment. The pauperisation of the peasantry led to many uprisings. There was, however, no centralised or organised revolt. The various outbreaks fizzled out in no time. The government learnt its lessons and tried to remedy the situation by safeguarding the interest of the peasants through legislation and improving the irrigation facilities. The anicuts over the Godavari and Krishna rivers which were constructed towards the end of the Company's rule radically changed the agricultural profile of the coastal districts and brought prosperity to the farmers and filled in the coffers of the government.
With the advent of the Crown's rule, the investments made on irrigation during the closing years of the Company's rule paid rich dividends. Agriculture became a paying proposition in the hinterland of the Godavari and Krishna rivers. A new middle class emerged which felt that the key to the good things in life is the Western education. As a result in the central Andhra coastal districts a number of English medium schools were opened.

With the establishment of the University of Madras in 1857, higher education in Andhra received a big boost. In 1864 Rev. Noble of the Church Missionary Society established a college at Machilipatnam. At Rajahmundry, the cultural capital of Andhra, a government college was opened in 1873. Colleges were also opened in places like Visakhapatnam, Berhampur and Parlakimidi to meet the growing demand for Western education. The spread of education in coastal districts created a new class of Western educated elite who imbibed the liberalism of the West and also the philosophy of French Revolution of 1789 with its emphasis on liberty.
While the central coastal districts were forging ahead as a result of agricultural prosperity, the other coastal districts like Ganjam and Visakhapatnam, and the Ceded Districts were languishing due to famines and heavy taxation. In these districts only few irrigated works were constructed. Neglect of irrigation ruined agriculture, and destroyed textile industry which depended on cotton. As a result people became sullen. They, however, could not show their disaffection openly for want of leadership.

The spread of Western education in coastal Andhra gave rise to journalism. During the years 1858-1905 many journals like Andhra Prakasika, Sasilekha, and Krishna Patrika made their appearance to cater the demands of public for information about the developments in the country and abroad. These early journals were

1. The only irrigation work constructed in the Ceded Districts was the Kurnool-Cuddapah (KC) Canal. In the Ganjam district an anicut was built over the river Rushikulya.

2. Christian missionaries took a lead in bringing out Journals in Telugu to propagate the gospel. Satyadoota published from Bellary in 1835 is regarded as the first Telugu Journal. Other early Telugu Journals included Vrittantini and Vartamana Tarangini.
bold in criticising the government for its lapses in the administration. They also helped the spread of new ideas of nationalism and democracy.

The spread of Western education and the growth of journalism paved the way for the social reform. The lead in this regard was taken by Kandukuri Veeresalingam. Though born in an orthodox family, Veeresalingam developed a modern and progressive outlook. His crusade for widow remarriage and education of women created a great stir in social and intellectual circles of Andhra and accelerated the pace of public life in the coastal districts.

Many associations were formed for social, literary and political purposes. The Literary Association of Kakinada, submitted two memorandums to the Secretary of State for India to raise the age limit for the entry into Indian Civil Service.

Political activity in the Madras Presidency began long before the birth of Indian National Congress in

1885. As early as 1813 the citizens of Madras used to hold meetings and send petitions to the government on their various problems like salt tax and teaching of Bible to the Hindu students in the schools run by the Christian missionaries. In 1830 'Madras Hindu Literary Society' was formed with Kavali Venkatalakshmaiah as President to discuss various matters relating to the administration. George Norton, Advocate General, used to take lively interest in the deliberations of the Society. The Society, however, became dormant within few years. In 1852 'Madras Hindu Debating Society' was established by M. Venkataramayulu Naidu, and it also became defunct with his death in 1863.

Madras Native Association established in 1852 was the foremost among the early associations of the South which evinced interest in public affairs. Under the leadership of its President Gajula Lakshminarasu Chetty it submitted as many as three petitions to the British Parliament in 1852, 1859 and 1861 for the removal of the various disabilities of the citizens of Madras Presidency. After the death of Chetty in 1868, the

Society became dormant and merged with 'Madras Mahajana Sabha' formed on 16 May 1884. Two leading Andhras of Madras city, P. Rangaiah Naidu and P. Anandacharyulu, were respectively the President and Secretary of the Sabha. Many delegates from the Telugu districts attended the first conference of Sabha. These associations instilled interest in the public of the political developments of the country.

The establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885 was the momentous event in the history of the Indian nationalism and freedom struggle. Many delegates from Andhra towns like Berhampur, Bellary, Anantapur and Machilipatnam attended the inaugural session. Prominent among them were P. Rangaiah Naidu, P. Anandacharyulu and N. Subba Rao of Rajahmundry. Within six years of the formation of the Indian National Congress, P. Anandacharyulu became its President at its Nagpur session in 1891. He was the first Andhra and South Indian to attain that position. Among others who actively participated in the

deliberations of the Congress were A.C. Parthasarathi Naidu, Gutti Kesava Pillai and Sabhpathi Mudaliar.

Delegates to the annual sessions of the Congress were elected at special meetings held for the purpose in different places. In 1886 such meetings were held in Visakhapatnam, Gudivada, Rajahmundry, Nellore, Gooty, Penugonda and Madras. At these meetings views were exchanged on the country's problems. Local problems affecting the districts were also discussed.

On the model of Indian National Congress several District Associations were formed in Andhra, the first being the Krishna District Association organised in July 1892 by Ramaswamy Gupta, an active member of the Indian National Congress. The Association exerted great impact on the ryots of the district. When the government increased the irrigation cess in 1894, the ryots held a conference at Eluru and refused to cultivate their lands unless water rates were reduced. They were prepared to undergo imprisonment to achieve their demands. 6 In course of time associations were formed in

other districts also. They used to meet in regular annual sessions to deliberate on the various problems of the districts. Apart from the annual sessions, special meetings were held to discuss specific subjects. Such meetings were held not only in bigger towns like Vizianagaram, Kakinada and Vijayawada but also in smaller places like Bapatla and Markapur. These developments indicate the impact of Indian National Congress on the public of Andhra. However, real political awakening in Andhra emerged only in 1905 when the Vandemataram and Swadeshi movements shook the country.