CHAPTER SIX

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES IN GUNTUR DISTRICT
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POLITICAL ACTIVITIES IN GUNTUR SINCE 1994

This Chapter attempts to portray briefly swift political changes, which took place after the advent of the Telugu Desam Party to power in the assembly elections of 1994, and the Political activities by parties in Guntur. In the course of around one year from November, 1994 to August 1995 unexpected political events took place in the state of Andhra Pradesh within the ruling party, while the opposition for the fact greatly routed were mute spectators to such developments.

Soon after assuming political leadership of the state, the Telugu Desam party Government led by N.T Rama Rao. recommended imposition of prohibition in the state, as assured in the party manifesto and repeatedly reiterating to bring about strict implementation of the policy. Besides, he had also revived the policy of Rs.2/- a Kg rice programme for the weaker sections. In fact the later policy measure was the backbone of the Telugu Desam Party, eversince 1983. The Party time and again, assured
implementation of these two measures in the course of over a year from 1993 onwards and even on the eve of elections, and hence the Telugu Desam Party Government seems to have decided to fulfil the two important poll promises soon after its return to political power.

The Party experienced series of crises not because the problems put forth by opponents or other political groupings. Basically the problems emanated within the personal and family members of N.T. Rama Rao. As is known, eversince N.T.Rama Rao married Laxmi Parvathi in 1993, a kind of tussle and uneasiness grew within the family which includes his sons, daughters, sons-in-law and others expressing a great deal of unhappiness and dis-satisfaction to the elderly man for the second marriage when he was already seventy. It is a fact that Madam Laxmi Parvathi, rendered a considerable service to the party through her involvement in the election campaign of 1994 with her spouse and attracted the crowds, influenced the voters and put up a great deal of show. However, the family members
of N.T. Rama Rao, did not raise an iota of protest during the hectic days of election campaign, but they had put up their resentment after the party had come to power. Another added dimension for such resentment of the family members of N.T. Rama Rao, was the suspicion among them that she might ultimately succeed N.T. Rama Rao both in politics as well as his property for she had legitimised her position rendering tremendous contribution to the success of the party.\(^1\) Therefore, the family members lead by Harikrishna, third son of N.T. Rama Rao, raised considerable hue and cry against Laxmi Parvathi and N.T. Rama Rao.\(^2\)

Political observers have pointed out that Mrs. Laxmi Parvathi played a significant role ever since the poll notification was announced for the assembly elections. She was also considered instrumental for the allotment of party banner to her loyalists not only in the past local body elections, but also to the state assembly. It is a

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1. a) *India Today*, January 21-5 February, 1994
   b) "Divine consort", *Sunday*, 10-16 July, 1994
2. a) See *India Today*, April 21-5 May, 1995
   b) *India Today* June 6-20, 1995
   c) *India Today*, August 6-20, 1995
fact that the party did not fair well in the local body elections where in the Congress emerged successful in a substantial manner, but it was a different story in the case of assembly elections. The Party leaders including the family members of N.T. Rama Rao, resented her increasing role and put up a kind of rebellion against her in matters of politics and party affairs. During the course of March to July 1995, there developed a serious rift in between N.T. Rama Rao and his son Harikrishna on the question of Madam's role from behind in party matters and decision-making in the Government. Basically, it was the desire of Harikrishna to enter the state legislative assembly by contesting the by-election from Tekkali assembly segment, owing to the resignation of N.T. Rama Rao from the said constituency. Harikrishna was aware that Laxmi Parvathi was equally interested to enter the state legislative assembly from the said seat of N.T.Rama Rao, Tekkali, and thereby occupy a place of significance.

3. NTR had won from 2 assembly segments viz. Tekkali in Srikakulam and Hindupur in Anantapur during 1994 Assembly Elections. He had opted to resign the Tekkali seat and retained the later.
in politics, and gradually secure a position in the state politics after N.T. Rama Rao. Therefore, he had effectively attempted to counter such a move. In such a mele, N.T. Rama Rao was placed in a most embarrassing situation for he was made to decide in between his son on one hand and his better half on the other. He could not resolve the family dispute which was brewing for quite sometime and tend to blow up quite significantly. Therefore, quite tactfully he denied the seat to both them and favoured a strong party candidate.

With the passage of time the unhappiness between the couple on one hand, Harikrishna and other family members including the two sons-in-law on the other got added up resulting in a wide gap centering on the leadership of Telugu Desam Party. N.T. Rama Rao felt that his son Harikrishna along with a few legislators, was indulging in a kind of rebellion. Interpreting it as anti-Party activity, NTR suspended his son from the party in August, 1995. It was indeed a god-sent opportunity to Chandra Babu Naidu, the second son-in-law of N.T. Rama Rao, an ace political
strategist, who was all along waiting in patience to succeed N.T. Rama Rao, to political power. It is a fact that he was a strong personality in the party matters and being a right hand man of party supremo eversince 1984, was dreaming of succeeding N.T. Rama Rao. He was greatly annoyed at such a decision of the Chief Minister to suspend his younger brother-in-law, Harikrishna, from the party. He had therefore, given a call to all the legislators of the party on August, 22, 1995 to come down to state capital so as to resolve the said issue with the Chief Minister. Despite the fact that bulk of the 216 Telugu Desam MLAs protested against the authoritarian and dictatorial attitude of the Party President, the Chief Minister N.T. Rama Rao simply dismissed such a rebellion. To his surprise a large number of legislators of the Telugu Desam party met at a meeting at Hotel Viceroy, Hyderabad, and elected Chandrababu Naidu as the leader of Telugu desam Legislative party with a strength of 144 MLAs. The newly elected leader communicated such developments to the state Governor requesting him through a memorandum to appoint him as the
Chief Minister of the state. The State Governor consequently suggested for a trial of strength by August 31st, 1995 on the floor of the state assembly. Looking at such swift political developments, N.T. Rama Rao immediately left for a tour of the districts to mobilise political support in his favour, similar to that of dramatic developments in August, 1994. Notwithstanding such a hectic political activity by N.T. Rama Rao, Chandra Babu Naidu got recognition as the leader of the Telugu desam Legislative Party on August 27, 1995, and got unanimously elected as the Party President on the following day. In the course of the ultimate one week of August 1995, N.T. Rama Rao experienced enormous stress and strain. He was even counselled by several well-wishers of Janata Dal viz. V.P. Singh, Sarad Yadav and others to resign from the position of Chief Minister. There were apprehensions of his loyal legislators being declared ineligible to continue as legislators under the anti-defection law in case they opt to stand by N.T. Rama Rao on the day of trial of strength on August, 31st 1995. All of a sudden
N.T. Rama Rao, was admitted to a nursing home following his sudden ill-health. He had tendered his resignation to the State Governor who had called on him at the nursing home to enquire about his health. It was a great deal of swift turn of events on August, 31st, 1995 which ultimately culminated in the exit of N.T. Rama Rao, from political power. In a way it was a teaming up of entire family members against him for his unwarranted decision to go with Madam Laxmi Parvathi unmindful of its incidents on the family, property, party matters and his control on Governmental setup. Political circles have pointed out that Naidu who was waiting in line for a course of not less than a decade quite eagerly to step into his father-in-law's shoes felt aggrieved when N.T. Rama Rao was leaning heavily on his wife ignoring him although he stood by him in thick and thin eversince August, 1984.

In this contest it is appropriate to point out that the rise of Telugu Desam Party in a curvilinear manner to

4.a) India Today, September 6-20, 1995
b) India Today, September 21- October 5, 1995.
political power in 1994 was mainly the basic result of his charisma of NTR and his populist measures. Besides, Laxmi Parvathi's participation in the election campaign was an added dimension for the victory of Telugu Desam Party. However, the succession to the leadership and stake of family members together were quite crucial in toppling N.T. Rama Rao from political power. It is an act of strategies and counter-strategies in between Madam Laxmi Parvathi visa-vis Naidu in which the latter effectively made the entire family of N.T. Rama Rao, to rally around him eventually making him to come out successful and stage a family coup or a palace revolution. In this process Naidu, while riding on the shoulders of his younger brother-in-law Harikrishna, put up a revolt and thereby succeeded. Although N.T. Rama Rao had quite often pointed out that the Telugu Desam Party was born with him and would also disappear with him, yet Naidu very effectively and most successfully hijacked the Party to his advantage and emerged as an uncrowned sovereign of the Telugu Desam Party.
On the question of Naidu staging rebellion and capturing political power, it is held by observers "in a representative form of Government, one should always recognise the crisis as package deal. Withdrawal of confidence in a leader is one of the inherent characters of Parliamentary form of government. In the absence of second line of leadership in the Telugu Desam Party, Naidu stands a little taller than others in terms of organisational leadership qualities and so he staked his claim. It is a game of the numbers, while the legal battle and the Governor come to scene later, There was no official split as such and the decks were cleared for the Governor to react quickly".  

Following the take over of the leadership of the state of Andhra Pradesh by Naidu, a total of 180 MLAs rendered support to him. Though the matter was settled quickly, it was subject to legal verdict because a few loyalist of NTR moved High Court through a writ petition. The High Court

5. Prof. F.D. Vakil, "Random views, Deccan Chronicle, October 29, 1995."
of Andhra Pradesh, however, pronounced that the appointment of Naidu as the Chief Minister by the State Governor was constitutionally right. The judiciary, however, passed certain strictures against the Speaker, Y. Rama Krishnudu for his excessive enthusiasm in the election of Naidu as the leader of the Telugu Desam Legislative Party. The court verdict was another setback to N.T. Rama Rao fighting a legal battle. By the end of January, 1996, Naidu had the support of a total 185 members of State Assembly coming from Telugu Desam Party and 8 Independents, while the party lead by N.T. Rama Rao was left with the rest of the Telugu Desam Party members. Among 6 Lok Sabha members as many as 5 stood by Chandra Babu Naidu, while just one followed N.T. Rama Rao. Similarly, among 2 Rajya Sabha members of Telugu Desam Party, the share of two parties was one each.

As is known N.T. Rama Rao, never accepted a defeat. Despite the fact he lost the battle through the court and even through the political hierarchy staged by his own kin,

6. *India Today*, January 6-20, 1996
he was screaming to bounce back to power whole taking the
said issue to the general public. He proposed a
'Simhagarjana' meaning 'A Lion's roar' at Hyderabad in
February, 1996 and also hold a convention of the National
Front. Until then he was nurturing the ambition to play
his role in the national politics by seeking to revive his
grand old idea of 'Bharat Desam' and contest the Lok sabha
elections of 1996. However, all such hopes of unseating
Naidu and reviving Bharata Desam was set at naught as the
nature had ordained otherwise. His sudden death on
January, 18, 1996 halted his contemplated strategy to
avenge his removal from political power. Indeed it was
quite sudden and most unexpected. The continued strain
and stress emanating from his own family, his wife on one
hand and all other family members on the other,
were greatly instrumental in their desire for
succession and created a crisis of great magnitude
affecting his health. It was indeed a great loss to the
National Front since he was the very architect of it.
It was an irreparable loss to the Telugu Desam party. It was thus a sad end of N.T. Rama Rao who created history both in the film field as well as in Indian politics. It is underlying that he had greatly emulated M.G.R. of Tamilnadu, but in a way he had excelled the latter in visualising an alternative non-Congress Government at the centre in the form at National Front. "The grandiose showman of Andhra politics had shone like a star in films and politics and functioned in a most authoritarian manner. The sudden end occurred to him at a time when he was gearing up with increasing public support from several quarters. Though he had passed away, yet his performance in large number of films and his political role in a span of thirteen long years in Indian politics are memorable.  

The Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Chandra Babu Naidu,  

eversince taking over the political power started

7. For details see: (a) The week, Jan.28, 1996  
b) India Today, January 21, 1996 - Feb'6,1996  
c) "The rise and fall of a Legend, Deccan Chronicle, January 19, 1996

8. Ibid
consolidating the party around him and attempted preparing for political legitimacy at the hands of the general public. It is true that he had manoeuvred the support of an overwhelming strength of the Telugu Desam Party, yet it was to be ratified through the masses and the electorate. Therefore, the Lok Sabha elections of 1996, was a kind of God sent opportunity to prove his public image and a genuine legitimate successor to the Telugu Desam Party. On the eve of the Lok Sabha elections of 1996, the Party had a strength of five Lok Sabha members and one member in favour of N.T.R. Telugu Desam Party although a strength of 13 members were elected in 1991 on the party banner. Following the defection of 7 members of the Telugu Desam Party to Congress Party, the united Telugu Desam Party was left with only 6 members. In these elections it was contended that NTR-TDP would make a good success for she had put up a massive campaign against the Telugu Desam Party led by Naidu back-stabbing (late) N.T.Rama Rao. Besides her image as a crowd puller in the 1994 assembly elections, was quite fresh among people. However, the Telugu Desam Party came out quite successful in
securing as many as 17 seats in the state, while the Congress Party captured 22 seats and 2 seats had gone to friendly opposition CPI and CPM. One seat had gone in favour of AIMIM at Hyderabad. The party polled on the average 32.5% valid votes, while NTR-TDP secured 10.6% valid votes in the state. However, the party drew blank. Thus it was in a way legitimised the political leadership of Naidu in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Since then he started playing a pivotal role in national politics. At the level of the state he had continued the populist programmes like Rs.2/- a Kg rice and strict implementation of prohibition. The Chief Minister, soon-after the Lok Sabha elections, made great deal of efforts of roping the DMK, TMC & AGP including his party in the form of conclave rendering support to the united Front led by the National secular party. He was successful ultimately in clinching the Janatha Dal leadership of UF Government in favour of H.D.Devagouda of Karnataka soon-after the fall of 13 day BJP Government led by Atal Behari Vajpayee. In such an effort Naidu came out quite successful and earned a great
deal of applause from several non-Congress secular parties. Another acid test to Naidu concerned with the bi-elections to one Lok Sabha constituency and 11 Assembly segments during September '96. In these elections, the Telugu Desam Party led by Naidu made an impressive performance, while N.T.R. TDP faced a miserable political defeat. Once again it had proved the political credibility and legitimacy of TDP led by the Chief Minister, Chandrababu Naidu.

In the course of 2 years from 1996 to 1998 the Chief Minister having gathered enough confidence and securing commendable political legitimacy as true successor of the Telugu Desam Party after N.T. Rama Rao emulated his father-in-law in implementing image-building activity in the state. It includes the programmes like the Government at the door-steps of the people popularly known as the PVP (Prajala Vaddakku Palana), Shramadan and the Janmabhoomi activity in the state. \(^9\) Besides, the Chief Minister had

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9. See Chapter-II for such activities in the State as well as Guntur district.
a great deal of fascination with development of information technology in the state. In this respect he had launched Info-Tech (Hyderabad information technology and Engineering Consultancy) in the city of Madhapur, which was contemplated to boost not only computer talent in the twin cities but also in the rest of the state and even in India. The exercise was the result of series of efforts for the past few years in the country. Prior to 1992 Hyderabad city had just 2 or 3 soft-ware development companies which in the course of last 6 years had grown to as many as 100 big and small soft-ware and hard-ware training and research organisations catering to the needs of its clients. The State Government under the leadership of Naidu initiated the pioneering scheme in a big way for the introduction of soft-ware technology in all the state departments and even provided requisite training to the state civil services personnel. It is a fact that the State Government was put to abundance of financial stringency owing to the continuation of the populist programme as evolved by N.T. Rama Rao and implemented by the State Government.
Therefore, frequently it had to resort to over-draft from the centre. At times the situation was acute and therefore, the chief Minister gradually attempted to acclimatize the people with the need for ending the said populist schemes. During the period of 2 years, the Chief Minister made great deal of efforts in matters like rural development, building infrastructure in rural parts, canal digging, road laying etc. besides he desired the development of state as a model information technology. In a project report with an outlay of Rs.120 crore on Electronic governance submitted to the Union Government, the Chief Minister reported to have called for Radical policy changes to assimilate information revolution. Consequent to the afore-said continued thrust, the Union Government had recognised the State to act as a Nodal Agency to prepare and supply soft-ware to all the other states of India to bunch Electronic governance throughout the country. The State Government, considering the development needs of the state, had relaxed the policy of prohibition as well as enhancement in the sale of rice to
weaker sections which considerably provided financial liquidity to the fund starved state. Besides he had contemplated several innovative schemes such as transforming Visakhapatnam, the port-cum-steel city, as the industrial capital of the state so that it ultimately emerged as the 'Eastern Gate Way of India'. Further, he had attempted to attract the good will and support of the minorities through his new found love towards Urdu language, allocation of additional grants to Urdu academy and State Waquf board. It is found that the state Chief Minister completed 2 successful years in office by September, 1997 and visualised to complete the remaining term until 1999 in a most successful manner for he had greatly stabilised politically as well as economically to some extent. He had maintained an overwhelming support of the Telugu Desam Legislators with considerable number of MLAs at NTR-TDP defecting in favour of ruling party during the period. Besides he had the good will of the friendly opposition parties such as the CPI&CPM. Naidu exhibited a phenomenal change in the psycho-political style pattern of Government.
In the course of 2 years he had earned enough aura and image, gathered enough confidence with high stakes and commendable role in Indian Politics. Besides, his successful attempts at national levels in politics of UF since 1996 making and unmaking the leadership of the Union Government being the convenor of UF steering committee, playing a vital role in the election of K.R. Narayanan as the President of Indian republic, election of state Governor, Krishna Kanth, as the Vice President of India and even in the Choice of Rangarajan, the Governor of Reserve Bank of India, as the Governor of state of Andhra Pradesh or a few such instances. Indian media and few quarters in political circles speculated of his ascendency to premiership also, though the Chief Minister is reported to have expressed his eagerness to fulfil the tasks in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Naidu having realised the hollowness and futility of populist programme being a drain on the economy, was forced to initiate radical reform measure in the form of exchanger met pria of in the supply of rice to poorer sections, power tariff to high tension
consumers domestic power consumers and agricultural 
sectors and a hike in commercial taxes and so on apart from 
the partial lifting of prohibition. It is a fact that the 
development expenditure over the year has been on a 
declining trend, while non-development expenditure had 
been on the rise. A comparative figure of 8th and 9th plan 
of the state would illustrate that the state had been 
striving to bring about alround development for various 
sectors. The draft 8th plan of the state formulated with 
an outlay of 13186.47 crores was cut-down to Rs.10,500 
crores provided 102% increase over the 7th plan. The 
allocation being, energy with an outlay of 3,042 crores, 
2,500 crores for irrigation and flood central, 2,066 crore 
for social services, 1,153 crore for transport, 533.97 
crore for rural development, 450 crores for special area 
development, 413 crores for agricultural and allied 
activity, 272 crores for industries and minerals and 6,784 
crores for other programmes. The State Government had 
finalised the 9th plan outlay at Rs.25,156 crores, a rise 
of 140% when compared to 8th plan. The relative allocations
on different sectors included 6460 crores on social services, 6006 crore on irrigation and flood control, 5301 crore on energy, 2874 crores on transport and 1972 crores on the rural development. Further, the State Government contemplated to plan around 7320 crores on different projects undertaken with the assistance of the world bank and other international financial agencies. Thus the state had shifted its priorities from populism of the past to economic reforms. Apart from the above he had even made an exercise with the closure of certain Public undertakings like Alwyn and even privatising the State Electricity Board. Although these measure partly lowered the image of the Chief Minister for having given a good-bye to the much professed policies of Telugu Desam Party as assured in 1994, yet unmindful of such negative effect, the Chief Minister moved further with these activities. Significant to point out that the shrewd Chief Minister had undertaken multifarious activities which includes building economic infrastructure in the state on a war-footing as well as the image-building activity like Janmabhoomi, Shramadhan,
PVP, file clearance week in different stages and even the much publicised 'Dial your CM' through T.V. channels. It was a kind of multi-pronged strategy converging on the array of activities simultaneously.

Notwithstanding of the aforesaid activities, the state administration was greatly affected by the increasing violence from PWG, allegations of corruption on several deals including Yelluru Land Scam and other land transactions at Begumpet, Banjara Hills, Madhapur Hi-Tech city, high taxation, the problems of small and marginal farmers and massive suicide deaths of cotton-growers. The problems of a section of Dalits viz., Madigas, demanding categorisation of SC segments a counter agitation by another SC cast segment 'Malas', the demand of tribals for similar treatment and so on. In substance, the state Chief Minister earned laurals as well as brick-bats.

10. In the recent past Madigas staged an agitation for categorisation of scheduled castes alleging that one of the section, Malas, have concerned all the benefits in the course of last 50 years. The Malas have contested the same. The tribals too demanded similar categorisation.
Consequent to a total change of political environment following Assembly Elections throughout the state, Guntur projected the presence of a total of TDP legislators, three coming from Left parties (two of CPM and one of CPI), three from Congress and one independent. In other words, the dominance of TDP and its supporting allies prevailed over the District. With a change in the state political leadership following ascendancy of Chandra Babu Naidu to political power in August, 1995, there had been some impact at the level of District also. Barring a few leaders, a large contingent of legislators of this district sailed with the ruling party. Even the Marxists and the CPI Legislators following the directive of their central leadership rendered political support to the ruling party. Besides, it is pointed out that of the six Lok Sabha members, five sailed with the ruling TDP and one with NTR TDP party. The Zilla Parishad Chairman of Guntur, Yedlapati Venkata Rao, also supported the ruling party. The Mayor of Guntur Municipal Corporation Dr. Kolli Sarada also joined the ruling TDP mainstream.
Besides bulk of the mandals where the TDP in power fell in line the party in power. In this process, a predominant majority of the political elite without any reservation have stood by the Chief Minister, Naidu and rendered political support. Those left with NTR-TDP were on finger counts with little following in the District of Guntur. Such a trend pattern is quite understandable because the political elite, by and large tend to remain loyal to the ruling party though it was the charisma of NTR which was singularly instrumental for great majority of political-elite to win the polls in 1994. Yet with a change of power structure and the lure of power and positions, they tended to remain with Naidu after assuming political power.

As is known, the Congress Party has been badly routed in the Assembly Elections of 1994 with a total strength of 26 elected members throughout the state. However, three legislators coming from Chilakaluripet, Pedakurapadu and Duggirala were elected from the District. From the foregoing complexion, the ruling TDP occupied a dominant
position in the district. Consequently the district provided peaceful political environment. There were major political agitations, turmoils or upheavals embarassing the State Government. On the contrary, three Lok Sabha members, 12 party legislators and three legislators coming from friendly parties, a part from bulk of leaders from the urban and rural local bodies put up a shield to the Chief Minister and stood by him consistently.

Guntur District being a part of well-developed Delta districts of South Coastal Andhra is far advanced in matters of economy and politics. They very fact that the bulk of the leadership coming from this district continues to render support to the ruling party, devoid of political hindrances to the State administration. However, a few political activities of different parties is worthy of presentation to denote their services for the cause of certain sections of the people and also to keep their political identities in tact. It concerns more with the CPI, CPM and the feeble Bharatiya Janata Party.
COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA:

Once upon a time united Communist Party of India had a predominant say in the Guntur District. But its preponderant influence had declined with the passage of time, and presently it is confined to one Assembly segment of Tadikonda reserved Scheduled Caste Constituency. Besides, it has some noticeable influence in a few mandals of the district. The Vice Chairman of Narasaraopet Municipality and Mangalagiri belong to CPI. Further a few Councillors from Mangalagiri, Narasaraopet, Chilakaluripet, Repalle and Guntur also belong to CPI. Added to it, a few village Panchayats, namely, Vinukonda, Vemur, Ponnekallu, Macharam, China Kakani and Ramapuram are controlled by the Party.

The Party maintains considerable membership among agricultural labour, youth, student federations, women, trade unions, weavers and peasant organisations.¹¹ These organisation are said to be the backbone of the Party, and

¹¹. The data collected from party office at Guntur.
stand by it as and when political agitations are launched, protest movements are organised, Pada Yatras and processions are undertaken in the district in particular and the State in general. During the year 1994 the membership of agricultural labour was 20,000 which has enhanced to 35,000 by 1997. Similarly the youth organisations which provided a strong contingent of 12,000 in 1994 has now swelled to 20,000. The Students Federation which rendered support to the Party by way of 12,000 membership is now placed at 20,000. Even the student federation had enhanced from 15,000 to 25,000, while the Mahila Samakya is now placed at 25,000 membership, AITUC 35,000, Weavers 5,000 and peasant organisations around 20,000. Thus a total of 1.60 lakhs of membership is now claimed by the Party in the district. Added to it, the party controls bulk of the employees in A.P.S.R.T.C., Rice Mills, oil Mills, and fertilizer concerns.
TABLE NO.6.1

PARTY MEMBERSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Agricultural Labour</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Youth Organisation</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Students Federation</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Mahila Samakya</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>A.I.T.U.C.</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Weavers</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Peasants Association</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Party Office, Guntur)

By and large, the party is ever vigilant in regard to the problems of working class and agricultural labour, and continues to strive for their betterment and working conditions, living wage, health and hygienic problems and habitation. The Party has been quite alive to the on-going problems of India, for instance, new economic policy and
liberalisation. In this context, the district CPI Unit had put up a great deal of restlessness against such a policy for it attempted to affect the economy of the country in general and living conditions of working class in particular. Therefore, the party workers greatly put up resentment and even courted enmasse arrests during 1993-94 which were reported to be around 4000. Even the Party staged jail Bharao programme also. Besides the party workers made siege of the Collectorate when there were attempts to affect some of the policies concerning agriculture and agriculturist. Even in regard to rising prices, land problems, and problems concerning distribution of surplus land in the district, the Party and its cadre never hesitated to putup their dissatisfaction by wave of several Satyagraha activities.

It is within our reach that the Left partis have been supporting the cause of land grabbing and even encouraging such a measure ever since 1971 in India. It is appropriate to remind that when the Party gave a call for land grabbing
movement in 1971, the Congress (I) led by Indira Gandhi formulated the said laudable objective in the form of Land reforms in India. Though the land reforms have been a tardy venture in the course of last two and half decades owing to several limitations, the CPI has been greatly championing the said cause in Guntur District. During June 1994, govt. land to a tune of, 2000 acres in Guttikonda was captured by the party and distributed to the landless agricultural labour. Similarly in August, 1994, 350 acres of land in Venkatrayapalem village in Sattenapalli Mandal was distributed to weaker sections. In Vinukonda Mandal about 200 acres of land was similarly grabbed by the Party in September-October, 1994 and provided to the landless peasantry. Another instance related to Karampudi wherein 200 acres of forest land was occupied by the Party and provided to the poorer sections of the people. In the course of time, the party at the levels of district strove hard for securing the requisite pattas (ownership) to all those who were provided with occupied lands and even titles

got conferred. Thus they became legitimate owners of the land and enjoyed the benefits through the State Government machinery obtaining Government loans, for fertilizers and developmental activities.

The Communist Party of India has also been focusing on several issues. Implementation of Agricultural Labour Acts, wage structure insurance coverage facility to agriculture crops, relief to drought affected farmers, lifting a ban on recruitment to public services, implementation of right to work as a constitutional right, abolish application fee for the unemployed seeking employment in public services, compulsory education to children in the age group of 5-15 years, allocation of 10% national income for education, stoppage of privatisation of education and refrain from making education as a profit motive, problems concerning Hamalies of State Civil Supplies Corporation and enhancement of their Hamali Charges, implementation of Minimum Wages Act, Providend

Fund, E.S.I. and other facilities to 6000 Hamalies working all over the State, abolition of child labour in the State, the problems concerning the labour in Cotton, Beedi factory, Hotels, building construction and so on, bring about a kind of co-ordination in between the agricultural products, agricultural production and price structure vis-a-vis, industrial production and price structure, reduction in disparity in income in rural and urban areas, enhancement in rural living conditions, allocation of grants for irrigation, agriculture based industries, remunerative prices to agricultural products, rising prices in the State, reduction of enhanced prices on subsidised rice, allocation of 25Kg. Of subsidised rice to green-card holders, supply of ration cards to deserving sections of the people and eliminate bogus ration cards, reduction in bus fares hike, as well as power tariff, the problems concerning the tobacco and cotton growers and weavers within the State, abolition of Vetty system still prevalent in some parts of the district, stall attempts of privatisation of certain Public Corporations or power
structure, pension facilities, to the working class, total implementation of prohibition and vigilance on smuggling of liquor as well as manufacture of illicit liquor within the State, problems concerning Jayalaxmi Cold Storage fire victims, relief to peasants following the loss of crops in cyclone, the problems concerning foot-path vendors, educational advancement lack of Degree college in Piduguralla Mandal, house sites to the people of Gandhi Nagar and Srinivasa Nagar of Piduguralla Mandal, welfare measures to physically handicapped and old aged orphans, development and provision of welfare measures to industrial labour, rickshaw pullers, inclusion of certain castes such as Mondi Banda and Kunkapu Dasari as Scheduled caste, Auto Nagar at Piduguralla Mandal, protected water supply etc. Besides the above, the C.P.I. had also greatly emphasised on the problems of the District as well as the State and the country. In this context, quite often the Party workers have rallied round the leadership of CPI for strengthening the United Front at the Centre on the call of CPI National Committee, reservation to women to a tune

of 1/3rd strength of deliberative bodies, discourage the production of obscene films, stringent punishment against the obscene wall-posters, check the publication of obscene literature, completion of Pulichenatala project, effectively tackle the raising of the height of Alamatti dam, protection of certain values, check criminalization of politics in the country and so on.\textsuperscript{15} Added to the above, the CPI time and again pleaded for the development of Palnad area, problems of Mangalagiri, Dachepally, Narayanapur, Piduguralla, Sattenapalli, etc. In this context, the Party has a record of holding Dharnas, Rail Rokos, Pada Yatras, public meetings, processions, demonstrations Chalo Assembly and several other activities.

It is significant to mention that despite the party is weak greatly in the State of Andhra Pradesh in general and Guntur District in particular, yet the party cadre are still active and do not miss a single opportunity to put up their resentment against the powers that be—whether the State or the Union Government demanding social justice and

\textsuperscript{15} ibid, Sept 15, 1997.
welfare of the poor, needy and deserving sections of the people. The researcher has minutely gone through their minutes book and could find that the Party held series of public meeting and the aforesaid aspects were deliberated. The party held such meetings on May 9-10, 1995 in regard to Andhra Pradesh Agricultural Labour (B.K.M.U) at Dachepally and Narayanpur demanding social justice, enhancing agricultural labour, wage rate, land reforms, distribution of surplus lands in places such as Ganeshuni Palem, Ummadivaram, Annavarappadu, Tipparlapadu, Santhagudipadu, Gogulapadu, Guttikonda, Atmakur and Navlur. Similarly another public meeting was held at Guntur in regard to imposition of prohibition, withdrawing cases against those agitating against smuggling of liquor or manufacture of illicit liquor, and so on. During the year 1994, another united meeting of all the Left parties was held in regard to imposition of total prohibition in the State without restrictions and help the weaker sections in the improvement of their economic well-being. During the year 1995, the Party through various
organisations had held as many as eight public meetings in the course of September, 1995 to December, 1995 covering on issues like Dalitha Vimochana investigations into the death of Kakani ChinaKotaiah, unity among Left Parties for a concerted struggle against the problems of the country and for a concerted movement of Left parties and the problems concerning unemployment and so on. In regard to 1996 the Party organised 18 such public meetings covering on various issues concerning Chilakaluripet and Guntur, cotton growers, tobacco cultivators, Palnad area workers, problems of Rythu Sanghams, rising prices, etc. In this process, commendable activity has been under taken by the CPI in the mobilisation of workers, articulation of issues, creating public opinion against the impending problems concerning the country apart from the State. The CPI in this respect appears to be far advanced as compared to the Congress or the BJP because the Party believes that the strength of the organisation largely hinges on the rank and file and the cadre. The cadre building activity dates back to genesis of the Party in India. Therefore, despite
its weak and feeble position in Guntur district, still the party has won in one constituency but it has significant following in several villages and Mandals. Although it does not have the potential to provide for significant representation to the State Assembly or the Union Parliament, it has taken a strategic step of standing by the ruling party, despite the party circles more often criticise it as another Bourguoisie party in power. It was a calculated step to get the problems ventilated concerning different sections of the people. Another significant dimension of the CPI relates to its maintenance of distinct identity and not to lose its profile while aligning with the TDP, the ruling party of the State. While it supports the ruling party, it also maintains vehement criticism on the party and never hesitates to put up its resentment against the issue like privatisation of public undertakings, abolition or winding up of certain under takings, privatisation of power projects of Electricity Board, rising prices, hike in bus fares, petroleum products and settlement of
pensions and so on. All these features amply substantiate that the CPI maintains its role as a constructive opposition in State politics, while being friendly opposition party to Telugu Desam in the State. There have been certain criticisms on the CPI that it has deliberately aligned with the TDP for the sake of a few seats to the State Legislative Assembly, so as to make its presence felt. It may be partially true but it is equally significant to point that the Party has not lost its objectives and continues to make a dispassionate evaluation of the policies, from time to time, and even make cogent observations by way of seathing attacks on the ruling party within the state.

COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MARXISTS)

As is known, the undivided Communist Party was a strong force during 1957 to 62. With the split in the Communist ranks during 1964 and more particularly at Tenali in Guntur district, which is of historic importance, the two parties have gradually lost their political legitimacy in the State. However, the CPM still maintains significantly a
few pockets of influence in the State and in two Assembly segments of this district, namely, Sattenapally, and Mangalagiri. Besides the Party has control over a few Councillors from Mangalagiri, Chilakaluripet and Sattenapally municipalities. It has some following among Z.P.T.C. members also and one of its members hail from Bhattipallem. The Party greatly believes in peoples organisations popularly known as Praja Sangham. During the year 1994 its membership among weaver workers was 450 while it has enhanced to 11,000 by 1998. There are around 1000 members among Taddy tappers union also. Praja Natya mandalam is regarded as the publicity wing of the party, which a provided membership of 704 during 1994 has now enhanced to 1045. Besides, it has some base among the sheep farming workers union also, which provides for a total of 1000 members as on today. Agricultural labour Union is regarded as a strong organisation, which provides sufficient party cadre. During the year 1994 the membership among such Union was around 23,750 which has now almost touched 48,000. It is regarded as a significant achievement. Similarly it has penetrated quite deeply
among the Rythu Sangham peasant organisations in which it has a membership of 29,700. It was quite meagre in 1994 stretching to 14,700 only. Thus, there has been phenomenal rise in the membership in the course of last four years.

The CPI(M) maintains women membership by way of democratic women organisations. It is found that the total membership of progressive women within the party was around 25,150 in 1994 which has enhanced to 32,000 by 1998. It is further noted that the party has a firm grip on the youth and student community all over the State. In regard to the district it is led by Democratic Youth Federation of India which provides a good contingent of enthusiastic supports of the Party and its membership is now 28,100 which was around 25,250 in 1994. Similarly the S.F.I. is another organisation which provides sufficient youth power to the Party which maintains a membership of 20,217. In this case, there is no phenomenal change except for a small rise in it compared to 1994. The party has a strong hold over the trade union also. The Centre for Indian Trade Union affiliated to CPM and as many as 54 wings are spread over different concerns in Guntur district. Presently it has
a membership of around 10,000 all over the district which was quite low in 1994 (4765). From the aforesaid data, it is evident that the party has considerably enhanced its sphere of influence in several walks of social composition such as weavers, toddy tappers, sheep farming workers, agricultural labour, Rythu Sangham, women, youth students and working class segments. As is known, the party enjoys considerable influence over the down-trodden segments of the people and more particularly the toiling masses, and therefore, it has been concentrating on such sections of the people since past.

An important dimension of the Party concerns with its reaction to various on-going problems of both nationally and international, and even concerning district. Quite frequently the party cadre and the leadership is involved in spearheading different agitations from time to time. In the course of two years from 1995 to 1997, the Party put up a few agitations. It is found that the August, 1995 agitation launched by the Party concerned with the rising prices. It is a fact that the incidence of price rise has
been unabated affecting more particularly the lower segments of social hierarchy. In this case, it was a voluntary involvement of the people who are greatly affected by the rising prices. It is found that a total of 20,000 general public participated in the said agitation in order to bring about the issue to the attention of the State Government. Similarly the party held Dharna In August, 1996 resenting the attitude of the State Government in the enunciation of certain policies which were termed as anti-peoples programmes. It includes issues such as the contemplated policy of privatisation and closure of certain economically non-viable public undertaking within the State. The party office informed the researcher that different party activities had high educative value also. As many as 2500 general public, party cadre and others participated in the Dharna programme. Similarly in September, 1996 the party organised Rastha Roko programme at the Collector's office, Guntur in order to put up its resentment on certain social problems. It is a fact that the CPM has been supporting the United Front Government from outside at the Centre, yet it was quite frequently demanding for reconsideration
of certain Central Government policies with regard to economic issues. At the call of the central party office, the District party cadre put up demonstrations and even public meetings against such policies of the Union Government. In February, 1997 once again the Party attempted to drive home its dis-satisfaction at the growing prices, high taxation and the increasing incidence of such policies on the general public. Similarly during June, 1997 the party held picketing at 14 Mandal Revenue offices in the district by way of its strong protest against the policies of the State Government. It had considerably attempted educating the general public of the wrong steps of the State Government in several matters such as smuggling of liquor, manufacture of illicit liquor, partial lifting of prohibition, closure of certain public undertakings, high tariff on power and so on in the State. Besides the party attempted to make a massive campaign against the Congress Party of India for the issue concerning Hawala racket in the country and thereby enlighten general public of the phenomenal shortcomings of the Congress party and its

16. Ibid., June 11, 1997
involvement in several Hawala rackets which took place in the country. In the process, the CPM was quite quick to react to certain basic issues concerning All India, State, and those in regard to the district.

**TABLE NO.6.2**

**PATTERN OF MEMBERSHIP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Sections of the people</th>
<th>1994</th>
<th>1998</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Weavers, Workers Union, Taddy tappers</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Workers Union</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Praja Natya Mandalam</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>1045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Sheep farming workers Union</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Agricultureal Labour Unions</td>
<td>23,750</td>
<td>48,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Rythu Sangham</td>
<td>14,700</td>
<td>29,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Indian Democratic Women Societies</td>
<td>25,150</td>
<td>32,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Democratic Youth Federation of India</td>
<td>25,250</td>
<td>28,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>S.F.I.</td>
<td>20,116</td>
<td>20,217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Centre for Indian Trade Unions (54 Unions)</td>
<td>4,765</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The researcher has contacted the party office and interviewed a few Office bearers and attempted to ascertain the nature of activities undertaken by the Party from time to time in Guntur district. It is found that the party had been focusing on certain issues like price rise in essential commodities, hike in petrol and diesel prices, provision of minimum wages to agricultural labour, house sites to transport workers, revival of sick industries, issue of privatisation of power sector, distribution of essential commodities through fair price shops, provision of ration cards to deserving weaker sections of the people, abolition of bogus ration cards, problems concerning the R.T.C. Employees/personnel, their wage structure, retrenchment, gratuity and pension problems., the Bank employees and their legitimate demands in regard to reduction of disparities in between different cadres, industrial labour, Insurance programme concerning the State A.P.S.R.T.C. Drivers, problems concerning 110 Municipalities, Corporations, regularisation of contract employees and other issues, surplus land distribution, revival of sick industries, additional grants to public
undertakings, problems of Anganwadi teachers, agricultural labour\textsuperscript{17}, relief to victims of cyclone.\textsuperscript{13} and drought, and so on. In other words, the Party is alive to the myriad problems affecting almost all the sections of the people and continued to put up its resentment and often stage Chalo Assembly, Chalo Tenali, Dharnas, public meetings, processions, demonstrations, picketings etc.\textsuperscript{19} In this context reference may be made to varieties of such activities in July, August, November and December, of 1995, February, March, August, October of 1996, February, June, July, October, November and December of 1997.

In regard to Lorry and motor workers Union, the party staged dharna demanding reduction in taxes, prices of petrol and diesel, payment of minimum wages, house sites to transport workers and welfare measures to the employees. As regards the essential commodities and issue concerning the food grains, the party staged a Dharna to distribute 14 essential commodities through fair price

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}
shops, release of 50 lakh tonnes of food grains from godown of Centre to open market, bring 50% of the stocks from the millers for open market, etc. Concerning Bank employees it demanded conceding legitimate demands of the employees and reduce the disparities in wage structure among different cadres, etc. Even on liberalisation and new economic policy, the party attempted to educate the general public of ill-effects of such policy on the Indian economy. In this process, the CPM has been attempting to educate the general public, promote public opinion and pave way for increasing political awareness among the masses concerning the on-going policies in matters of public importance, which affected greatly the lives of the general public.

It is a fact that the Party has been supporting the non-Congress Governments at the Centre as well as the regional Telugu Desam party in the State of Andhra Pradesh. However, it has not refrained from mounting criticism as and when the Party felt that the policies enunciated are affecting the general sections of the people. It made a
strong attack on the Government led by P.V. Narasimha Rao for its failure in promoting national integration and even bringing about economic reforms through the process of massive loans from International financial institutions like I.M.F. and World Bank. It made a vehement attack on the BJP for its avowed policy of communalism and Hindutva, which roused the communal sentiments in the country. Quite frequently the party raised the issues of demolition of Babri mosque, issue of Ram Janmabhoomi, etc., and demanded that such forces of communalism are to be kept under control. Though the CPM continued to be friendly opposition party in the state, yet it realised and even publicly maintained that the TDP is a Bourgeoise party. It has deliberately aligned with the regional party so as to fight the Congress and contain it from political power. The CPM did not hesitate in mounting attack on the TDP for emulating the Congress party in regard to economic policies and the policy of privatisation in the State. On the floor of the Assembly and even outside the CPM had consistently put up the role of constructive opposition and agitations for the welfare of peasants, agricultural
labour, industrial labour, students, youth, women and poorer sections of the people. The Party has enhanced its total membership to 20 lakhs which demonstrates its strength of the Party cadre. Besides, it has had brought to the notice of the Government about the welfare of S.C., S.T., Minorities and women. The atrocities of Harijanas, Girijans, and exploitation of poorer sections were some of the issues which the Party highlighted quite frequently. It recalled quite often its great sacrifices and even held massive public meetings at Hyderabad when a sea of humanity not only participated but rendered voluntary contribution for the construction of two massive memorial buildings after late P. Sundarayya and Makineni Basava Punnayya. It is undeniable that the party had a strong base in Andhra Pradesh and held a good image in the past Andhra Pradesh history. Although it got weakened in the third and fourth decades of independent India, yet it has once again picked up from 80's for its consistent approach on several public issues and issues concerning the poor and have-nots. In this respect, the CPM seems to objectively consider the policies of the Party and put up a posture pro-poor,
pro-weak, pro-exploited and bring all such matters to the notice of the Government for the speedy redressal of such matters to the notice of the Government for the speedy redressal of such issues apart from economic development.

BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY

The Bharatiya Janata Party when compared to other Non-Congress Parties did not seem to have a strong political base in the state of Andhra Pradesh in general and Guntur district in particular. With a meagre cadre, less following and feeble leadership, the Party has been perennially striving hard to penetrate deep into the State of Andhra Pradesh ever since 1955, but could not make any deep impact. However, it could surface the State Legislative Assembly for the first time in 1967 and the

21. Interview of District Party leaders.
credit mainly goes to factional leaders of Congress party to accord it some support. Since then it continued to maintain its tally of three seats until 1983. However, in 1985 following an alliance with the TDP, the party made a good performance and obtained a total of eight seats all over the State although the popular vote has considerably come down. In 1984 the party won a Lok Sabha seat-Hanamkonda and in 1991 it could get one Lok Sabha seat-Secunderabad. The electoral performance of the Party in the course of last five decades indicates poor performance and feeble political support. In the case of Guntur, although a few leaders worth the name continued to carry the flag of the BJP on their shoulders quite vociferously, they could not make any impact in the mobilisation of popular support in its favour. Although its party leader Jupudi Yagnanarayana, an octogenarian leading Practitioner who held the position of Presidency of its fore-runner Bharatiya Jan Sangh sometime back and the Vice Presidency of the State Jan Sangh, Later, his son Jupudi Ranga Raju held the Presidency of the BJP Unit of Guntur District, yet their performance in the activisation
of the party has been of limited success. In the course of last three years since 1994, the party took up the cause of social objectives and social justice to certain segments of the people and attempted to increase the social awareness, consciousness and awakening as against the Congress party as well as other non-Congress secular parties. The party also made similar efforts to put up a great deal of agitation against the attempts of Karnataka Government in raising Alamatti Dam to the detriment of irrigation interests of Andhra Pradesh. The party leaders claimed credit for its frequent meetings in Guntur district in matters concerning public problems, issue of Swadeshi, involvement of Congress party leaders, both at national and State level, in several alleged corrupt deals. It also claims credit for making a siege of the Collectorate at Guntur during July, 1997 demanding land pattas, as well as house site pattas to landless, homeless weaker sections of Lemallepadu village. Added to it, quite frequently the party made attempts to educate general public and

22. Eenadu, Telugu daily July 10, 1997
mobilise them against hike in prices, raising prices of petroleum products, hike in bus fares, enhanced prices of cooking gas, etc. The party leaders of this district have put up considerable hue and cry at the Chief Minister for his refusal to render political support to the BJP Government constituted under the leadership of Atal Behari Vajpaye during 1996. Ever since the BJP parted company with the TDP after 1991, it made consistent attack on the ruling party of the State, both the Congress until 1994, and the TDP since then on various counts. In its party organ it made a scathing attack on the leadership of Chandra Babu Naidu the State Chief Minister, pointing out various shortcomings of the State Government. The Party greatly concentrated criticising on issues such as low voltage power supply and consequent effects on transformers, loss of crops, grant of measure agriculture loans, division of State Electricity Board in three units, namely, production, distribution and network apart form privatisation, massive loans from international financial Institutions, contemplated moves of the State Government for closure of several public undertakings on the aliby
of its non-viable economic position, closure of Allwyn Auto and Republic Forge and few others, giving a good by to the welfare measures like Rs.2/- a Kg. Rice programme, lifting of prohibition, under-hand dealings in tenders of several projects, hike in power tariff and abnormal rise in taxation, perennial over-draft of the State with bleak financial position and frequent instructions to Treasuries for stopping payment of Bills except salaries, liquor smuggling by its leaders, lack of effective vigilance on several departments and consequent topsy-turvy functioning of the State Government, ill functioning of Intermediate Board and leakage of question papers significantly of EAMCET examinations, lapses in A.P.P.S.C and so on. It also vehemently criticised the ineffective administration and consequent atrocities on tribal, weaker sections, and women and even increasing Naxalite activity all over the Telangana, region in general and more particularly the areas falling within the North Telangana. It mounted attack on the State Minister Kodela Siva Prasada Rao for his several acts which include misuse of food grains voluntarily contributed for distribution for the cyclone
affected poorer sections. It criticised the Telugu Desam party which successfully attempted to hushup the case.

Besides it also mounted attack on the TDP govt. for its under-hand dealings in regard to purchase of power through an Agreement with BPL. Added to the above, it highlighted on under-hand land dealings making huge sums of money in areas such as Begumpet. In this process, the party made use of several issues which could provide sufficient ammunition for criticising the ruling party in the State. The leaders of Guntur similarly left no issue untouched in making resentment against the ruling party in the State and thereby galvanise public opinion against the Government.

All India Congress (I) :

The Party despite experiencing curvilinear political fortunes since 1983 has been a strong force in the District. Its several prominent leaders in the District include Chebrolu Hanumaiah, Rayapati Srinivas,
Rayapati Sambasiva Rao, Singam Basava Punnaiah, S. Benjamin, Chukka Peter Paul, Kasu Krishna Reddy, N.V.L. Rao, etc. Although the party was greatly eclipsed in the Assembly Elections of 1983, yet the party leadership is regarded as a strong force to be reckoned with. The researcher has attempted to contact a few party leaders and even ascertained their increasing political activities in the course of three-year duration from 1994 onwards in matters of public importance, problems of the people, more particularly of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Weaker Sections, women and minorities, etc. Besides, effort has been made to probe into some of the issues on which the Party leadership made frequent representations and at times taking recourse to agitational postures for the ventilation of grievances concerning different segments of the people.

By and large, the party greatly highlighted on the issues of declining law and order, providing succour to the cyclone and drought affected people, atrocities on poorer sections, women, weaker sections of the people,
privatisation of Electricity Board, its division into three Units, protected water supply, resentment against hike in water charges, problems of businessmen, subsidy to small farmers affected by cyclone to a tune of Rs. 2500 per family, free supply of seeds, subsidy on fertilisers, waiver of interest on loans, regularisation of water supply connections and matters concerning power shortage and other local issues.

One of the notable features of the Congress (I) concerns with perennial factionalism within the State in general and Guntur district in particular. The factional contours at the level of the State has invariably percolated to the district converging on different leaders in terms of loyalty to the state level leadership, caste configurations, and past political rivalry as well as other local factors. Therefore, with a change in factional colour at the level of the State invariably had its after effects in all the districts including Guntur. As is known, Guntur was under the predominant hold of Chebrolu Hanumaiah, a tobacco business magnet, and a
strong and powerful Congress political leader for over two and half decades. He was even considered as a close confidant of the former most powerful Congress Chief Minister, Kasu Brahmanda Reddy. However, in a short span of seven years, Rayapati Sambasiva Rao, another tobacco business magnet and industrialist has come up as a counter-point to the former. Though both the leaders belong to Kamma caste, yet they tend to be at loggerheads in matters of business as well as Congress party politics in the District. Md. Jani, another Congress leader is placed as arch rival to Lingamsetti Eswara Rao, a former M.L.A. coming from the dominant Kapu caste. Singam Basava Punnaiah, former M.P. hailing from Kapu caste and a staunch follower of Kotla Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy, is opposed to Alapati Dharma Rao, a Kamma from Tenali Assembly segment of the Guntur district. In a way the factions at the State level placed in a triangular way-Kotla Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy, N. Janardhan Reddy and Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy have percolated to Guntur district also. Despite the fact the party leaders put up a kind of unified effort and profess unity among Congress
ranks, unfortunately such rifts among the leaders are well-known to the general public. The signs of their simmering factional war had come to light on the eve of P.C.C. Elections and A.I.C.C. elections also. Even recently on the issue of allotment of party banner in the Lok Sabha elections of 1998 there was considerable hue and cry from several quarters. Nadendla Bhaskara Rao, former Chief Minister, hailing from Tenali, aspired the Party banner from Tenali, while K. Rosaiah was an aspirant from Narasaraopet and ultimately succeeded. Kasu Venkata Krishna Reddy former M.P. from Narasaraopet had the support of Dr.Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy for the seat but eventually failed in his attempt to secure the party banner. As is known, Guntur district is dominated by the agricultural Kulak Kamma caste. The Kapu caste substantially maintains a great deal of influence and keeps at a distance with the Kamma elite. The two dominant castes-Kamma and Kapu have categorically indicated that they would not hesitate even to stage a rebellion and sabotage in case justice is not done to them in the allotment of party banner. It appears that the party has been able to overcome
such factional warfare and bring about a kind of unity among the leaders in making a concerted attempt on several issues apart from the party position at P.C.C. and A.I.C.C. as well as the allotment of party banner in the Lok Sabha elections.

All such efforts have cumulatively contributed for making the party a strong force as against the ruling T.D.P. and the B.J.P. on a psychological move of coming to power at the Centre.

It is pointed by certain Congress leaders that despite the party is not placed in power both at the Centre as well as the State its leaders have made immense efforts to provide protected water supply to Tadikonda at a cost of Rs. 2.75 crores, provide drinking water supply to Harichandrapuram, Vaddemanu, Anantavaram, Nendlu and Tadikonda, Similarly another project in this context has been granted for Sattenapalli for extension of protected water supply at a cost of Rs. 34.51 crores. The third

project concerning protected water supply relates to Ganapavaram on a similar plane. The last in the series concerns with series of developmental works in Sattenapalli Assembly segment, providing facilities to as many as 32 villages at a cost of rs. 10 crores. The Congress Party Lok Sabha representative from Guntur claims credit for his immense efforts in securing sanction for Cancer Unit at a cost of Rs. 4 crores in the Government Hospital, Guntur. Similarly proposals for modernising Cardiac Centre at a cost of Rs. 10 crores and a Special Building at a cost of Rs. 4.59 crores have been put forward to the Union Government for requisite financial assistance for the District. In addition to the above, the Party claims credit for making Guntur as a Railway Division and for laying down double line and provide electrification of Nadikudi Railway line. A survey in this context has already been initiated by the Union Government. Following the formation of exclusive Railway Division it is estimated that there is additional scope for recruitment 12,000 employees also. The District leaders have made representations to the Union Government Railway Ministry
and other Ministries for a comprehensive developmental activity for the District. Similarly the party circles expect that the State Government would volunteer to allocate 50% of the grants for allround development of the district. Apart from the above, there are few more schemes which have been formulated and efforts are under way for their sanction from the State Government\textsuperscript{24}. These schemes include Bopudi irrigation scheme at a cost of Rs.246.65 lakhs, providing irrigation facilities for around 3300 acres of land in areas such as Murikipui Ramachandrapuram Boppudi and Tatapudi. Another scheme is estimated at a cost of Rs. 350 lakhs providing irrigation facilities to 1700 acres of land in Ganapavaram and Nadendla. The third irrigation scheme has an out of Rs.845 lakhs providing irrigation facility to a tune of 3,460 acres of land among village such as Karampudi, Petapanigundla and Julakallu. The District Congress President claims credit for making representation to the Union Government to render financial assistance to large number of Cardiac patients of which 40 applications are reported to have been

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
considered favourably and financial assistance of 6.6 lakhs have been sanctioned. In this process efforts of several Congress elite for the allround development of the district has been greatly commended which is likely to bring about enormous developmental activity of the district in the days to come.

TELUGU DESAM PARTY:

The Telugu Desam Party owing to innumerable shortcomings of the Congress Party has made a come back with a vengeance to political power in 1994. It has secured a significant electoral victory with an enhanced political support as compared to 1983, and 1985. The party's thrust on populist measures as well as charismatic influence of NTR coupled with his spouse Lakshmi Parvathi were in a measure responsible for such a preponderant victory in 1994. However, very soon there erupted differences within the family and thereby the party was split and bulk of the members rallied round Chandrababu Naidu, the next in command who incidentally happened to be kin of NTR. Naidu
assumed political leadership by the end of August, 1995 and consolidated his position while reiterating his commitment to the policies formulated by the TDP. Though the faction led by NTR had a minimal strength with the passage of time bulk of it M.L.As., Mandal Presidents, Z.P. Chairmen, and leaders of other local bodies have all joined the group led by Chandrababu Naidu. Thus the party led by Naidu assumed political legitimacy in the State.

In the course of over two and half years, the ruling party bestowed attention on the vigorous implementation of policies espoused by late NTR so as to put up and project that it was an authentic TDP in the State. However, such policies having been drain on the economy and burden on the State exchequer gradually the Chief Minister made a shift from the populist programmes to developmental activity. Thus he had enhanced the price of subsidised rice, lifted partially the Prohibition and even resorted to hike in taxation, power tariff, Bus charges, etc. To some extent it had provided a great deal of resentment. The ruling party later contemplated measures of greater
economic development by way of loans from International financial Institutions like the World Bank and I.M.F. for developmental activity. Besides, a massive Computer Technology Development has also been formulated to place the State on the map of INFO-TECH. The Chief Minister had also introduced a few programmes like Shramdan which is known as voluntary rendering of services for rural development, such as repairs to tanks, laying of roads, construction of public buildings, improvement of canals, drainage facility and so on. Added to it he had also launched Janma Bhoomi programme through which the State Government had provided 70% of the cost of the project and 30% by way of involvement of general public. In this process commendable developmental activity has been under way in four phases of Janma Bhoomi programme. In a way the Chief Minister Naidu has enormously acquired the image of developing the State, and earned enough credibility even at the all India plane.

It is not out of place to mention that the Party in view of all such activities has been able to get continued...
support from the masses which was evident through the by-elections in the State and even in the Lok Sabha elections of 1996. Consequent to Lok Sabha elections of 1996 when no party was in a position to form stable Government at the Centre, the Chief Minister Naidu made vigorous efforts for a Conclave of regional parties such as T.D.P., D.M.K. and T.M.C. of Tamil Nadu and A.G.P. for rendering support along with Left parties to Janata Dal, in the formation of non-Congress United Front Government of secular parties. In this process, he was quite successful and even acquired the position of Convenor of the United Front Steering Committee. Thus Naidu developed a significant clout in the functioning of U.F. Government at the Centre in the course of 1996-97, stretching over a period of 18 months. In view of pivotal role at the U.F. Politics he could successfully secure enough funds from the Union Government for various developmental activities of the State. It is maintained that an amount of Rs.636.3 crores have been provided for irrigation in three

phases, 100 crores for Panchayat raj activity in two phases and 150 crores for road development in two phases, besides in the context of calamity relief under unforeseen circumstances, such as drought, cyclone, etc., the Central Government has provided 21 crores in 1996, 142 crores in 1997, Rs.52.70 crores for meeting the situation of devastation in the Districts of Godavari, 1.36 crores as Special Relief fund, 6 crores for road repairs affected in cyclone, Rs.1.25 lakhs to provide relief measures to self-employed such as Potters, Blacksmiths, carpenters, weavers, fishermen, etc. The Chief Minister has played his cards well at all India level and being a participant of C.M.S. conference, he could successfully plead for enhancement of share of the States in Central resources which is now enhanced of 29%, and the State has obtained a total of Rs.519 crores. Even in matters like housing development, the Central Government through HUDCO has provided Rs.233.64 crores and sanctioned as many as 40 small projects with an outlay of rs.392.3 crores in 1996. In the areas of rural development, the State Government secured Rs. 166 crores from the Union Government. Apart
from the above the Union Government has also rendered substantial financial assistance in areas like fertilisers, drip irrigation, well sinking, exports, Red sanders, modernisation of State Police, location of all India Urdu University, educational advancement, Ramanada Thirtha Organisation, Mahila Dairy and Family Courts. It may be added that even in matters like Railway, Health, and Medical Facilities, Technological and Engineering Courses and Information Technology, the United Front Government has extended commendable help to the State Government.

As part of development activity as indicated earlier, Guntur district has also considerably attained allround development in the course of last two and half years.

It is a fact that the TDP has consolidated its position greatly under the leadership of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, yet it is immensely marked on certain factions all over the State in almost all the districts. Guntur is not different in this phenomenon. The divisions in Guntur are marked by caste configurations and the role
of certain leaders in the apportionment of political patronage and positions to the leaders from lower levels. In this context, mention is made of Dr. K. Siva Prasada Rao as against Dr. M. Peda Rattaiah. The latter is quite senior and a noted figure in the district with enormous good image. Another faction coverages in between Yadlapati Venkata Rao, Chairman of Zilla Parishad as against the General Secretary and a member of the U.F. Steering Committee, Lal Jan Basha. The third faction revolves round Dr. M.S.S. Koteswara Rao, former Minister from Mangalagiri as against Goli Veeranjaneyulu, Chairman of Mangalagiri Municipality. Similarly Muppalaneni Seshagiri Rao, a legislator and an industrialist is placed at loggerhead with Dr. Ummareddy Venkateswarlu, Union Minister from the Bapatla Lok Sabha Constituency. The last in the series concerns with film actress T. Sarada Lok Sabha member from Tenali as against Simhadri Satyanarayana, the Endowments Minister of the State. In this respect a reference may even be made to a few other leaders like Dr. Ravi Ravindranath Chowdary from Tenali and Dr. Rajendra Prasad of Vemur Assembly Segment who continue
to thrive on faction politics in the district. In a way the tussle converges in terms of intracaste rivalry on the one hand, and different caste segments on the other. The former concerns with certain leaders among Kamma caste, while the latter relates to a tussle in between Kamma, V.S. Kapu and weaver. Therefore the party do not seem to present a rosy picture of total solidarity. Such incidence of dissidence have come to light quite often when the question of distribution of spoils concerning the Chairmanship of Market committees, filling up of certain nominated positions, etc. had surfaced. Despite such continued dissidence the Chief Minister has been making efforts time and again to resolve such dissidence and make the party to put up a united perspective as against the Congress making machinations and even highlight series of charges.

From the aforesaid exhaustive discussion of political activities in Guntur District by different political parties in the course of last three years 1994-97, it is evident that except for the ruling party, Telugu desam and
The Congress and to some extent the two Left parties, the other parties are totally non-existent. The BJP and the Janata Party not only at the level of the State, but also in Guntur District present a dismal trend. Although both the two parties continue to thrive on All India level and in the other parts of the country, more particularly northern India, their presence in the State of Andhra Pradesh as well as Guntur District is marked by insignificance. The premier Congress at the All India level and the TDP within the State of Andhra Pradesh are quite paramount and continue to vie for power with each other. Although the Congress party was routed in the Assembly elections 1994. But it has made an impressive performance in 1996 Lok Sabha elections as it still maintains around 40% electoral support, while the Telugu Desam party maintains 37.7% aggregate valid votes. While its friendly opposition left parties have put up 5.2% average vote. In other words, Congress with 40% aggregate popular support maintains an edge over the TDP and its friendly Opposition two Left parties. Significant to mention that in the course of last three years, these parties have undertaken
different political activities in the District. The Congress party still being a force in the State as well as the District has been able to bring about several developmental activities, the TDP also claims credit by enormously using its good offices at the United Front Government at the Centre until the end of 1997 succeeded in securing large sums of grants for various activities of development of the State. Besides the Chief Minister even claims credit for several innovative schemes. The two Left parties in the district despite being friendly with the ruling party attempted to maintain their distinct political identity. They have not hesitated to make frontal attack on the ruling party for several lapses and the avowed policies of privatisation and even antipeople's policies such as undoing populist measures, curtailing subsidies, and increased taxation apart from rise in power tariff. Thus the Left parties have quite often raised issues of public welfare and strenuously worked for the cause of development of the poor, needy and the deserving. It is pointed out by political observers that Telugu Desam being placed in ruling power at the level of the State is
always a target of general public criticism on various counts. It is understandable that for several shortcomings the public aim guns at the ruling party in the State. Therefore the TDP is reported to be placed in an disadvantageous position, although it has to its credit substantial development as claimed by the Chief Minister through various innovative programme. Guntur district thus exhibits a great deal of political activity and commendable role of different political parties.

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