An analysis of the events during the course of nineteenth century suggest two important aspects. For the Colonial rulers the century was very crucial as it was a period of consolidation of their rule. In an attempt to achieve an overall supreme position they almost tampered with all the existing social institutions and old economic usages. Extension of colonial hegemonising influence became imperative for the British without which their foundations in India would be challenged. The nineteenth century was equally important for Indians since they began undergoing a thorough change under the colonial rule. During this process various social groups were considerably affected and reaction started building up along with the change. However, the reaction was neither uniform nor common to all social groups. A probe into popular modes of reaction and forms of protest during the nineteenth century brings out the fact that consciousness was scattered in society. The common characteristic of such reaction was an intense quest for a new identity in the colonial society. The centripetal attitude of colonial rulers in centralising their authority and the centrifugal tendency of Indian social groups in trying to get rid of colonial oppressive policies could be seen throughout the century. The emergence of public consciousness and political awakening are viewed from this angle in the present work. An attempt has been made to identify different strands of
consciousness in Andhra and analyse how they were gradually assuming political character by late 19th century. For this, major developments under the colonial rule in the field of economy, education, press, public associations and the issue of self-governance are considered in our analysis. Throughout the delineation of these topics the main focal point is the popular reaction to new policies and growing ideas of protest as expressed by different modes like popular petitions, opinion of the press, public forums and their objectives and resolutions of various public meetings in Andhra on the eve of Ripon's proposals on local self-government.

The Andhra region of the erstwhile Madras Presidency, like other regions in the country, was subject to the changes effected under the colonial rule. The process of consolidation of the British rule was accompanied by the introduction of new policies in economy and society. The new revenue policies, in particular, created a unified market and disturbed the existing land relations. The Ryotwari system in Madras Presidency finally proved to be more exploitative in its working when compared to other revenue settlements. Added to this, attempts at superimposing a more exploitative capitalist economy in the post-1857 period, destruction of indigenous industry, the consequent pressure on agriculture, out-break of famines in a periodic manner etc further worsened the economic conditions in society. Consequent upon all these changes resentment started building up among the peasant and agricultural communities. From the beginning of the nineteenth century there have been numerous
popular petitions which urged the Madras Government for the redressal of various grievances. These petitions truly serve as germinating seeds of popular protest and covered almost every aspect of economic suffering in society. However, in case of poligars and Zamindars the protest took violent form of open rebellion. As already mentioned Narasimha Reddy's revolt in Rayalaseema was the most far reaching one in Andhra province of the Presidency. Almost all such revolts were backed by commoners in the society. By the middle of 19th century the problems of peasants prominently appeared on the agenda of Madras Native Association, a premier public forum in the Presidency which could be considered as the forerunner of later day full fledged political organisations. The Association was successful in establishing branches in the Andhra region at Guntur, Chirala and Sarvepalli and was instrumental in voicing resistance of peasants. Its impact was visible even by the late 19th century. For example, the ryots of Nundial division in Rayalaseema openly protested the introduction of 1871 Towns Act as it proposed new taxes. They threatened to desert their villages to avoid taxation.¹ By the end of 19th century the form of peasant protest attained even more serious dimension. The noteworthy development during the century was to bring into use the modern tool of struggle viz., strike.² In the post-1870 period the

¹ See Chapter IV, p.176.
² The word 'strike' (Samme in Telugu) was used by the contemporary journals to describe the reactions of peasants in Krishna delta region. See for details Purusharthapradayini. January 1872, p.27.
peasants in the Nuzivid Zamindari and Duggirala village (both in the Krishna delta region) went on strike protesting the exploitative measures and heavy incidence of water tax. Apart from these protest measures, educated members from among the mid-peasant castes of Andhra region associated themselves with the founding of various public societies. They formed an important social base of emerging public opinion during the discussions on local self-government scheme. All these developments suggest the growing political awareness particularly among the agricultural sections.

The introduction of new education in India was conceived as a major tool of Western ideological influence. The acquisition of control over vast tracts of the sub-continent greatly enhanced economic exploitation and consequent drain. The immediate problem before the colonial state was the need to give the force and exploitation of their policies the appearance of legality. The means used for this purpose was the introduction of English education. The 'moral and intellectual' improvement of Indians as echoed in the new educational policy was carried through preaching of Western values and religious morals in their educational institutions. Infact, it was categorically stated that "with a view to the moral and intellectual improvement of the people the great primary object is the extension among those who have leisure for advanced study, of the most complete

3 Referred in Chapter IV, pp.176-77.
education in our power." Such extension of 'most complete education' in the hands of colonial rulers was aimed at circumscribing the emerging consciousness among the educated Indians within the orbit of colonial ideology. It has been 'argued that attempts were made by the colonial authorities to relate education to their dominance both as a means of persuasion and as an arm of its coercive apparatus.

However, the creation of employment opportunities under the British disturbed many traditional callings and motivated people to take to English education. The growth of English education was somewhat rapid after the middle of 19th century. It was during this period various colleges were established in Andhra and the growth of secondary and primary education also showed a satisfactory progress. This is borne out by the literacy rates and proportion of population for every one student both in coastal districts and Rayalaseema region. The growth of education witnessed the emergence of an urban-based middle class which formed the main base of social reform movements and early public forums during the nineteenth century. Apart from the ulterior motives of new education, the educated middle classes in society began to appreciate the liberal values flowing through English education. These educated sections viewed English

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4 For more details see the Minute on Education by Lord Auckland, the Governor General of India in Pub. Dept., No.7, dt.2.3.1841, TNA.

education as an instrument of social change and believed in the patronising and enlightening nature of the British rule. Such 'false consciousness' is evident in the activities of Veeresalingam, Gurajada Appa Rao and Atmuri Lakshminarasimham as in the case of many other intellectuals of 19th century. They unhesitatingly extended their moral support to the British rule.

Another important strand relating to education is religious instruction in the institutions run both by the Madras Government as well as Christian missionary societies. No serious attempts were made to devise a clear cut and definite educational policy in the Presidency till the middle of 19th century. Consequent upon this, a few enlightened Zamindars, educated intellectuals and Christian missionaries entered the field of education. Among these, the missionaries were more active. Religious instruction and proselytisation became the main focal points of their educational endeavours. Large scale conversions and inculcation of Western religious morals among Indians would be conducive to the smooth functioning of colonial administration. With this belief the Government of Madras extended its direct support to the activities of Christian missionaries. These measures invited serious protests from the Andhra region. Almost all sections in the Indian traditional society including educated middle classes voiced their protest against such religious interference. As a retaliatory measure children were withdrawn from missionary institutions. The protest took even more serious turn and culminated in the founding of separate Hindu schools at places like Visakhapatnam, Machilipatnam and Nellore. Though these
protest measures were no match to the educational activities of Christian missionaries, they suggest that the very contents of new education began to serve as a tool of protest.

The establishment of Rate Schools was a significant educational experiment during nineteenth century in Andhra. They were entirely maintained by voluntary contributions. The demand for their establishment came mainly from the emerging mid-peasant castes both in Andhra and Rayalaseema segments of the erstwhile Andhra province in Madras Presidency. Though the requests for these schools simultaneously originated from Cuddapah and 'Godavari districts, the experiment was first initiated in the Godavari delta region. It spread to other parts in due course of time. This experiment symbolised the growing awareness among people towards self-improvement and social development. Furthermore, it throws light on the consciousness emanating from non-Brahman castes which were hitherto lagging behind in the field of education. All these schools were free from the managerial interference of colonial officers except that the schools were subject to periodic inspection of the Government.

The growth of press was facilitated by various developments during the nineteenth century. Development of English education and the consequent rise of educated middle classes, the intense missionary activities and healthy growth of vernacular press in other parts of India such as Bengal and Maharashtra were some of the major factors that influenced the growth of journalism in Andhra. However, the efforts of Telugu people in establishing
the earliest Indian-owned English journals like *The Native Circulator*, *Crescent* and *The Rising Sun* have been successful. These efforts bore fruit with the highly satisfactory progress of *Crescent*, the chief organ of Gajula Lakshminarasu Chetty and his public activities. It became popular within a short span of time and the Government of Madras initiated repressive measures against the journal as it launched an open attack on the policies of the Government, in particular, its support to Christian missionaries. One of the important contributions of the journal was to make use of investigative methods in journalism in trying to garner facts related to public life. On the other hand, the growth and proliferation of Telugu journals was rapid after the middle of the 19th century. Both Andhra and Rayalaseema segments of Andhra province were well represented in the growth of vernacular press. Most of these journals were edited by people from among the ranks of educated sections and, in the initial stages, began to voice specific middle class concerns. However, a significant change came in their tone by late 19th century when various issues of public concern like social reform, intense missionary activities, role of public associations in society etc found a place in their columns. Some of the journals initiated serious attempts in trying to analyse working of the colonial administration in the country. It was argued that a thorough knowledge of Indian society enabled the British to easily penetrate into the Hindu society and firmly establish their
political power. The retention of such power was achieved through religious preaching and conversions. It can be observed that through their attempts like the present the vernacular press tried to explain the tacit connections between the Britishers' knowledge of Indian society, the role of religious propaganda and a smooth functioning of political machinery. This realisation among the vernacular journals in Andhra is significant and throws light on the role of the press in public life.

The emergence of non-Brahman consciousness is yet another important development during the 19th century. It was facilitated by the changes effected under the new colonial policies and the consequent spread of public consciousness in Andhra. Added to this, the completion of major irrigational projects on Godavari and Krishna rivers favoured the growth of non-Brahman consciousness in the society during the course of nineteenth century. Under the Ryotwari system tiller's right to land was recognised in principle. It had a direct bearing on Brahmin land holders who most often remained absentee landlords. Furthermore, the patronage of local ruling chiefs to Brahmins was gradually on the wane as the colonial state clipped the wings of local rulers and divested them of their discretionary powers in revenue and political matters. Amidst these changes some of the Brahmin landholders from districts like Nellore began

addressing memorials both to the Madras Governor as well as the Governor General of India pleading for retention of their privileges on land or protection from encroachments by other peasant castes. On the other hand, even the rulers of Zamindari estates in coastal Andhra began facing acute problems in revenue matters. The increasing demand of 'peshcush' coupled with lavish expenditure in zamindaries led some of these Zamindars to adopt repressive measures like collection of sist from ryots much in advance. In places like Godavari we have a few instances where the local Zamindars forcibly occupied the lands of Brahmins. In Bobbili Zamindari the people belonging to ruling family began to claim a superior status over Brahmins and the Venkatagiri Zamindar, Gopalakrishna Yachendra, even published a book disputing the monopoly of Brahmins over Hindu traditions. All these evidences suggest that the privileged position of Brahmins was given a big jolt in the course of events during the 19th century.

Coupled with changes in land relations, the introduction of English education was significant for the emerging non-Brahman castes. The new education was equally accessible to all vis-a-vis the traditional education which was under the control of Brahmins. Moreover, job opportunities were thrown open to all English-educated people irrespective of religion and caste. Under these conditions non-Brahmans were also eager in deriving

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7 This tendency was witnessed even during the early decades of 19th century. In the present case details are given in Chapter IV, pp.182-83.
benefits out of these opportunities. Such eagerness and urge towards social improvement is visibly reflected by the Rate School experiment which increasingly associated mid-peasant castes from among the non-Brahman sections of society.

By the middle of nineteenth century Godavari anicut was completed and Krishna anicut was nearing completion. These irrigational projects brought vast tracts of land under cultivation and resulted in the general prosperity of the delta region. The favourable economic conditions favoured the rise of non-Brahman peasant castes and they gradually began to replace Brahmans from their earlier privileges on land. The growth of economic prowess and creation of equal opportunities under the changed social set-up cleared the way for the growth of non-Brahman consciousness. After the mid 19th century educated members among the upper non-Brahman castes began to claim equal share on par with Brahmans in education, employment and local bodies like Local Fund Boards and Municipalities.

However, the emergence of non-Brahman consciousness did not assume the shape of exclusive caste identity during the nineteenth century. This is attested by a few significant aspects of non-Brahman consciousness. The pervasive influence of social reform campaign in the second half of nineteenth century played an important role and under its impact narrow caste divisions were submerged in the main stream of social reform. Many of the influential members from among non-Brahman castes like Atmuri Lakshminarasimham, Pyda Ramakrishnaiah, the Rajah of
Pithapuram, Chilambu Adinarayanappa Naidu and D. Venkatarami Reddy (Proprietor of Sri Sarada, monthly journal in Telugu) extended their unflinching support to reform activities such as condemnation of child marriages, support for widow marriages and women's education. Even the caste associations in early 20th century initially concentrated on internal reforms under the impact of vigorous social reform campaign by people like Veeresalingam. A few contemporary autobiographies bring out the fact that social life in Andhra during the nineteenth century was not sectarian in its approach towards public concerns and did not attain narrow caste identities. On the other hand, there was no interference of colonial state in this field unlike in the early 20th century when it extended an implicit support to Justice Party organised on the social basis on non-Brahmans in Madras Presidency including the Andhra region. Above all, non-Brahmans were seen fairly in large numbers in the early public associations, library movement and the series of public meetings organised on the eve of the announcement local self-government scheme. These evidences provide enough proof to the non-sectarian attitude of non-Brahman consciousness.

The establishment of various public associations throughout the coastal districts and Rayalaseema region during the second half of nineteenth century symbolises successful culmination of public awareness in society. These associations had specific social, economic, literary, moral and intellectual objectives on their agenda. Some of them reflected national concerns such as acquisition of knowledge of contemporary happenings in other
parts of the country. These associations endeavoured to take issues of public concern to the grass-roots level. This is attested by the fact that most of these associations were located in small rural towns throughout Andhra. Infact, the contributory role of these associations later strengthened the hands of a national body like Indian National Congress.

The announcement of Local Self-Government scheme opened a new chapter in the history of emerging public consciousness. It can be seen that different strands of consciousness in society which have been noticed earlier joined the mainstream struggle now. The announcement of the scheme was followed by a series of public meetings at various places where people demanded control over local institutions which was hitherto denied by the colonial state. These public meetings provided linkages between different and scattered strands of consciousness in Andhra. An analysis of these public meetings, their social base and the resolutions adopted help us establish the fact of the beginning of the process of the growth of political consciousness that ultimately manifested in the founding of a national organisation like Indian National Congress.

All these public meetings were multi-class in their nature. People belonging to all social groups participated in them. The meeting at Vizianagaram was attended by people of all professions and an analysis of the social base of signatories to the memorandum suggest that they were drawn from all sections of Hindu society. Similar was the case with public meetings at
places like Bimilipatnam and Ongole. This suggests that the emergence of a multi-class approach to a public cause, especially in the colonial background, had a beginning during the nineteenth century.

Most of these public meetings were organised in semi-urbanised towns like Bimilipatnam, Bapatla, Repalle and 'Ponnur. This suggests the participation of semi-urban people in the contemporary public movements. Moreover, meetings at places like Visakhapatnam, Guntur, Bapatla, Ponnur, Machilipatnam, Ongole and Cuddapah were largely attended by peasants of the respective localities. The rural base of popular movements that was created earlier by the Madras Native Association was further strengthened during this period.

A significant development during this period was the beginning of the participation of students and unemployed youth in the public life. For example they were present during the meetings at places like Vizianagaram and Bimilipatnam where people voiced specific political demands concerning local self-government. It may be noted that the entry of students into activities of social nature was witnessed during the reform campaign of Veeresalingam. Infact, his endeavours in this regard drew their main strength from student community at places like Rajahmundry. But, their entry into political sphere is an important development of the nineteenth century. It may be noted that it was at Rajahmundry where more than hundred students were rusticated form the Government Arts College for their

Most of the resolutions adopted during these public and Local Board meetings reflect a popular urge for autonomy in local affairs free from colonial influence. Barring a few resolutions of a few Local Boards at places like Rajahmundry and Anantapur, majority of the resolutions of both public meetings as well as Local Boards unanimously favoured the immediate introduction of local self-government. They demanded that the Local Boards should be free from the influence of colonial officials like the district collector. They further resolved that local issues like irrigation, revenue collections, water disputes and religious matters should be left to the discretion of Local Boards. These Boards should comprise elected representatives of people and there should be very few nominations from the Government. Apart from these, they put forward elaborate proposals on voting rights. The Bapatla meeting had on its agenda the proposal of universal franchise, but it did not consider it as necessary for the time being.\footnote{Referred in Chapter VI, pp.268-70.} The public meeting at Cuddapah resolved that all those who were paying fifty paise per month to the local
Municipality should be given voting rights. This proposal, if carried into effect, would bring most of the eligible residents of certain age group into the ambit of voting system. Evidence like this from Rayalaseema dispels doubts that it was backward in the sphere of public awareness. It has been already mentioned that Rayalaseema region was well represented in terms of literacy rates and public associations. The meeting at Repalle demanded that all people who were paying a nominal amount of tax and who attained the age of twenty should be made eligible for voting.

It may be recalled that even the Constitution of independent India fixed the voting age at 21 and it was reduced to 18 only in the recent past. The meeting at Chicacole went a step further and demanded that the presiding officer also should be elected by people. These comprehensive proposals on civil rights can be said to be the most important legacy of popular movements during the nineteenth century. These regional aspirations and resolutions on people's rights provided the necessary prelude to the struggle of Moderate leaders of the National Movement who laid emphasis on civil rights. The foregoing analysis testifies our assumption that the emergence of political consciousness was fairly witnessed in the Andhra region during the nineteenth century.

10 Ibid., pp.279-80.

11 Ibid., p.271.