INTRODUCTION
This work deals with the anti-zamindari struggles in Andhra which finally led to the abolition of the Permanent Settlement by the Madras Government immediately after independence. The purpose of this study is to show that not only massive individual and spontaneous discontent but also organised peasant protest movements have been an important ingredient of the history of rural India.

The peasant in recent times has been the subject of much debate. The peasant's world, culture, society and economy continue to provide rich insights into the complexities of historical development. Peasant involvement in national liberation movements and revolutions has raised fascinating questions for social scientists and historians in particular. In India, the problematics of peasants and the Indian national movement has generated rich debate on questions of perceptions, initiative, leadership, mobilization and linkages with Indian national movement. Increasingly there is a recognition that to fully grasp the multi-dimensional nature of the Indian national movement it is essential to undertake regional and micro level studies.

The present study on Anti-Zamindari Struggles in Andhra is an attempt to explore, at the level of the sub-region, the nexus between peasants, Congress and the Communists. Micro regional level studies help in examining with a greater degree of accuracy generalisations and hypothesis posited at the all-India level. It allows us to explore in greater detail the interplay of economical, political, social and cultural factors in the explication of crucial questions such as factors leading to peasant movements, differentiation in peasantry, peasant revolutionary consciousness, every day forms of peasant resistance, peasant perceptions of nationalism and questions of leadership and mobilisation. Not much work has been done on this subject at the sub-regional level. It must be emphasised once again that regional and sub-regional studies are essential to enrich our understanding of the complexities at macro-level.
In geographical terms the area to be examined in this study are the present day coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh viz., East Godavari, West Godavari and Krishna. These were the areas of large Zamindari estates like Munagala, Gangole, Gopulapuram, Challapalli, Pittapuram, Kalipatnam, and Muktyala. Several anti-zamindari movements took place in the first half of the 20th century following the intervention of the Congress and Communists finally leading to the abolition of the Zamindari system. These areas witnessed several peasant movements and were in the forefront of the nationalist agitation in the Andhra region.

**Permanent** Settlement was introduced in the first decades of 19th century. During the mid-19th century there was the construction of Godavari and Krishna anicuts and also the introduction of railways. In this region one sees the development of fairly large scale commercialisation of agriculture. Following these developments, the peasants in the Zamindari areas were caught in the vicious circle of land alienation and exploitation. They started organizing themselves against the exploiters. Peasant struggles against the Zamindars of Munagala, Kalipatnam, Gopulapuram, Challapalli etc., provide a fertile ground for study.

The questions that this study attempts to address in this context are; what did irrigation, railways and commercialisation imply for the peasants? What was the complex socio-economic transformation that occurred either in terms of land alienation or various other forms of exploitation following the introduction of permanent settlement? What was the nature of peasant differentiation in this region? What was the impact of depression on the peasants? What was the interaction between peasants, Congress and the Communists? What were the methods of mobilization adopted by the peasant leaders to channelise the anger, and resentment of the peasants into action.

Peasant participation in the freedom struggle raises further interesting questions for examination. What hopes and aspirations were raised by the peasantry and how far were they successful in
achieving them through their struggle? Were there any substantial differences between Congress nationalism and grass roots vision of New India or was the hegemony of Gandhian nationalism as complete as it appeared in Kheda and Bardoli? What was their strength and weakness? Infact, in our framework of reference the significant question is not whether the peasants supported the Congress, but why they did so? Was it on account of their adherence to some abstract conception of Indian nationhood or was it the hope that their choice would have a crucial bearing on their own social and economic situation? How does one understand the inability of the Communists to consolidate their peasant basis?

It has generally been assumed, that the peasantry was attracted to nationalism because it saw in it a panacea for its own problems, a belief in the nation and a sense of well being in elation to it. Here again one should be cautious while studying the nature of peasant movements in India. It has sometimes been argued that all the peasant movements represented a nationalist force aimed at overthrowing the colonial power. In a country where the overwhelming section of people constituted peasantry, any movement which came into conflict with the predominantly colonial structure of government could be seen as a challenge to colonialism. No doubt national slogans and symbols were used in the movements but the question that needs a closer examination is how were these perceived by the peasants.

At the crux of this problem is the extent to which the participants at the grass roots level were fighting for local grievances and the extent to which they were becoming aware of the larger social unit and identifying with a national, anti-imperialist party, or was it simply that as nationalism filtered down it became identified with basic economic and social grievances? Another crucial aspect that is examined in this study is whether there was any difference in the nature of Congress and Communist participation in the anti-zamindari struggles.
This is not a study of any particular movement pertaining to one zamindari, but an examination of a series of interlinked campaigns, agitations and struggles.


The first chapter deals with the social, economical and political conditions of the peasantry in the Zamindari areas. It studies the introduction of the permanent settlement and its adverse effects on peasant society and economy. It exposes the exploitative principles that were embedded in the permanent settlement and deals with various issues like rent, debt, arrears and suits, irrigation conditions and other injustices inflicted upon the peasantry. This chapter also studies the impact of the depression on the lives of the Zamindari peasant. The depression in the Andhra region during the years 1929-36 coincided with the general depression in the western economy. Andhra by this time was largely monetised both due to the revenue policies of the government and the changes brought in the cropping pattern. The depression had a disturbing effect on rural society. The steep decline in the prices of agricultural produce left the peasantry with no profits to make. The burden of rural indebtedness multiplied, aggravating the living conditions of the peasant mass. Land alienations became frequent and rampant, and the tenants lost their lands to the Zamindars.

These had serious implications for the village situation. The worsening economic situation manifested itself in the growing consciousness of the peasantry. This economic context informs the discussion of greater clarity the interplay of economical, political, social and cultural factors in the succeeding chapters.

The second chapter deals with the methods and ideas of peasant mobilization. Formation of peasant associations, using of
press and publications, public meetings, conducting peasant schools, organising, peasant days, weeks, marches and performing hero-worship were the important methods used in trying to influence the peasant population. A special focus on this subject has become necessary because it was these methods which gave a coherent political expression to all the scattered spontaneous expression of peasant dissent, and made them aware of their exploitation within the Zamindari and colonial system. Politically, the peasant became more mature and conscious than before.

The third chapter deals with the Congress attitude towards peasant problems while it was in power (1937-1939) in the Madras Presidency. A study of its rule shows that the Congress policy towards peasantry was not a revolutionary concept and that it was only interested in bolstering its image among the peasant mass by a few reformative and populist measures.

The fourth chapter deals with the description of a) peasant movements against Zamindars in the area under study during the first Congress Ministry (1937-39), b) the rivalry and activities of Communists and N.G. Ranga among the peasantry, c) the Provincial elections (1946) and coming of Congress to power in the Madras Presidency and d) the eruption of peasant struggles once again during the Congress regime finally leading to the abolition of the Zamindari system. This description revolves around questions like 1) why were there anti-zamindari struggles only during Congress rule while the peasants remained subdued during the inter-ministry period, 2) how and why did the Communists gain control over peasant associations out-smarting Ranga during the war period following the resignation of the Congress ministry in 1939, which logically leads to another interesting question of 3) the reason behind Congress success in the 1946 Provincial elections despite Communist hold over a vast mass of peasantry and 4) another wave of anti-zamindari struggles, sometimes violent, under the umbrella of the Communist party during the Congress regime.
INTRODUCTION

The first serious and systematic studies of agrarian relations and problems occurred over a century ago when British administrators, bent upon better understanding, or perhaps simply justifying revenue policies in British India, began to explore the development of land relations, revenues, tenure and related matters of that part. These studies were published as bureaucratic reports and minutes, as personal memoirs or as in Madras, as parts of the first district manuals in the late 19th century. Following the cue, several Indian authors wrote in similar lines, which gave little insight regarding the socio-economic condition of peasantry. However, as soon as peasantry started getting mobilised organised and began struggling they made economists, politicians, sociologists and historians to wake up. Consequently, in the recent past historical researches have thrown light on the long and consistent struggles of the peasantry. In this regard the hypothesis of Barrington Moore, that "Indian peasant movements were relatively rare and completely ineffective" and related this apparent passivity to the peculiarity of Indian social system, particularly to the caste system can be discarded completely. Barrington Moore Jr. Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the making of the Modern World, Hammondsworth, 1977, p.315.

REFERENCES

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4. James C. Scott in his work 'The Moral Economy of the Peasant' and Samuel I Popkin in his work, 'The Rational Peasant' highlights interesting views regarding peasant actions. By moral economy Scott presumes that the peasant, rather than seeking to maximise the well-being of themselves and their families, commit themselves to a moral economy predicated on two principles, that seems firmly embedded in both the social pattern and injunctions of peasant life; the norms of reciprocity and the right to subsistence and avoids taking risk. On the other hand, Popkin argues that rational action, that is, of the individual who is forever calculating how, in a given situation in which one thinks of oneself to improve ones own well being, or at least to maintain the standard of living one currently enjoys. Charles F. Keyes, 'Peasant Strategies in Asian Societies; Moral and Economic Approaches', Journal of Asian Studies, vol. XLII, no.4, August.
1983, p.56. A critical analysis of these views have been given by David Hardiman in his article 'The Bhils and Shahukars of Eastern Gujarat', Ranajit Guha (ed), Subaltern Studies, vol.5, Delhi, 1987, pp.44-50.

5. Karl Marx, took for granted the idiocy of rural life and described peasants as sack of potatoes, Esther Kingston Mann, Lenin and the Problems of Marxist Peasant Revolution, New York, OUP, 1983, P.3 and 13. Describing the peasant revolt in France in 1848, he said that they were •clumsily cunning, knavishly naive, doltishly sublime', Marx Selected Works, vol.1, Moscow, 1969, p.276. Although Marx was right in postulating isolation as the main factor inhibiting peasant organisation in the past, he did not foresee the possibility that, in the modern world, peasant isolation could be ended under the impact of forces such as population pressure, the revolution of communication education and modern organisation. It was Engels who, more than Marx, understood the revolutionary potential of the peasantry and wrote on the peasant war in Germany. Lenin believed that peasant was 'to serve as surrogate', in a revolution. See John W. Lewis and Kathleen J. Hardford, Peasant Rebellion and Communist Revolution in Asia, Stanford, 1974, p.230. Quite contrary to this, Eric Stokes opined that 'while cities go up in revolt, it is the country side that makes or breaks revolution. Eric Stokes, Peasant and the Raj, Delhi, p.266. 'The urban elite would remain intellectual without peasant support', declared Sunil Sen, in his Peasant Movements in India - Mid 19th and 20th Centuries, Calcutta, 1982, p.240. Mao's view was that the cities were dominated by the forces of foreign imperialism and infected by alien forces of foreign imperialism and land infected by alien social and ideological influences and were the strongholds of the bourgeoisie who were seen as the agents or potential allies of imperialism. John W. Lewis and Kathleen J. Hardford, Op.Cit.p.243.

6. The ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups, according to Jim Scott, are foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, polfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage and so forth. He says that this is what much of the peasantry does between revolts to defend its interest as best as it can. Jim Scott, 'Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance', in Journal of Peasant Studies, vol.10, no.2, January, 1986, p.6.