PREFACE
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On the question of the role of the regional parties, a reassessment of present characterisation of those parties must first be made. Basically, the regional parties no longer advocate secession from the Indian Union. Demands to that extent are heard only here and there, when Congress is not attentive to the other genuine grievances of the regional parties. Territorial disputes, river disputes and claims for full-pledged statehood continue to exist but they do not thwart the existence of the Union. Secondly, most of the regional parties have learnt to shun violence in constitutional and other parleys with the Congress. Positively speaking, the bitterness between the pramordialist and other regional forces of the Congress has led to the crystallisation and consolidation of the non-congressial ideology, in both the national and regional scenes. The regional parties have also mastered the number game of the Congress and repay it in its own coin. When regional loyalties play the game and coalitionist strategies, the expectations of the people are more intensely aroused, leading to electoral participation and the stability of the political instrument.
Certainly, the regional parties have awakened the consciousness of the people in their very different states and localities. They have made clear to the Congress about the needs of their groups, ideologically and politically. Finding that secessionism and violence would not pay, they operate now with more efficiency in the parliamentary arenas as the opposition. They are expected to play a leading role amidst the diversity of India in future.

Regional parties are in inevitable development in India and they have a definite influence and impact upon the body politic. In fact, minor parties may be said to condition and modify the major parties, as the habitat of an organism determines its characteristics. The different linguistic states represent not only administrative regions but they stand for different regional nations. Over and above these regional nationalities exist the newly fostered All India nationality. While the regional loyalties are strongly rooted, the All India Nationality is a compromise of these regional loyalties. Whenever India as a whole is threatened by an external element, the whole stands united. However, when there is no such engrossing All India
Concern, the regional loyalties dominate the political scene. It stands to reason that the stability of India depends on the maintenance of the balance between these levels of loyalties.

The twenty six years uninterrupted Congress rule in Andhra Pradesh came to an abrupt end with the emergence of Telugu Desam as the ruling party in the 1983 Assembly Elections. Centralisation of power, weakening of political institutions, the erosion of democratic methods, the raising of the bogey of national disintegration are some of the reasons for the rejection of Congress from the political power scene of the State. N.T.Rama Rao’s less than a year old Telugu Desam became the focus of the anti-Congressism. Decentralisation of power, local action, milieu and culture are some of the issues on which N.T.Rama Rao won the election. The victory of Telugu Desam shows that a regional party devoid of linguistic chauvinism, casteism and separatism has a chance of coming to power, however 'big and old', the so called All India parties may be.

It shows that a regional party which has local roots, identifying itself with local problems can pose a
successful challenge to all India parties. The victory of Telugu Desam party reveals that the regional idiom, regional problems and regional milieu are acceptable to the people not withstanding the propaganda of the ruling all India Party that a regional party is antinational. It also shows that leaders with grit, determination, devotion and singularity of purpose still have a place in politics. They drew a lot of admiration from the common people. The fact that N.T.Rama Rao won both in urban and rural areas with a wide margin of votes attests this, people also seemed to like his manner in which he shunned electoral alliance with the opposition. This determination brought many to his side. N.T.Rama Rao tried to give credibility to his actions which quality the opposition lacked. For instance, the Communist Party of India which initially wanted to have an electoral alliance with Telugu Desam but could not do so as N.T.Rama Rao refused their demand of 60 seats, asked the people to defeat Telugu Desam in a write-up in their Telugu daily Visalandhra on 3 January, 1983 just two days before the poll. Such opportunism cost the opposition a lot. The national question-language, culture, ethos etc. though raised by N.T.Rama Rao in a superficial
manner caught the imagination of the people. Absence of political strength among the local Congress leaders to extract their legitimate dues from the centre was fully exposed by N.T. Rama Rao in his election speeches.

NARASAMURI TARAKA RAMA RAO belongs to the economically and politically powerful Kamma community. Born in 1923 in Nimmakuru village in Krishna district, he studied in SRR college, Vijayawada, and graduated from Andhra Christian College, Guntur in 1947. He gave up his post as Joint Sub-Registrar in 1949 and entered the film world. Within a brief period he rose to stardom his first film being Mana Desam (Our Country) - and so far he has acted in 300 films. In mythological films he consistently played the roles of avatars. He commanded such great reverence among film-going Telugus that his house in Madras virtually became a pilgrim centre. A strict disciplinarian and lastotaller, he is deeply religious. He is a great fund-raiser whenever calamities occur. In 1965 the title of Nataratna was conferred on him and in 1968, the prestigious government award, the Padma Shri.

While shooting a film in a village near Hyderabad Rama Rao was thrown out of a bullock cart and run over. He
survived and the accident became a turning point convincing him that his life was spared because he had a mission to fulfil in life. He decided to enter politics after his Bhaskarpurthi (60th birth day). For 9 months he travelled the length and breadth of Andhra Pradesh on 1738 model van on which he also slept and which he also used as a platform to address public meetings and street corner gatherings. He launched Telugu Desam on 24 March 1982. The theme of saving the self respect of Telugu was the party’s main plank. For, in the words of N.T.Rama Rani: “We have a minister for fish, another for poultry and a third for prawns. We have become a laughing stock in the country. The Congress has 250 members in the house but look at the way they have formed 250 groups, each demanding a post. The people are vexed with this situation. We had lost our self respect and identity and I thought I would go out and tell whoever wanted to listen to me that we are mismanaging this state, that we should behave with dignity so that people in other parts of the country show us the respect due to us.” (The Hindu, 9th January 1983).

The parties that have come to power in Andhra Pradesh have different political background. For the second time in
Indian politics a cinema star entered politics in Andhra Pradesh and within a short period a few months, captured power. Swinging popular feelings is one thing, but governance without any previous training or experience as well as without political skill and ideology is quite a different matter. When voted to form government a party that is not rooted in an ideology will tend to depend on the bureaucracy and be surrounded by sycophants. Excessive dependence on the bureaucracy and the police may create a situation where the end result of their actions will be unhelpful to the people in spite of the party leaders' intentions to do good for the people. For instance, in its election manifesto, Telugu Desam Party pledged that in all circumstances and in all matters it will abide by democratic values and traditions. But within three months of his coming to power the Chief Minister, N.T.Rama Rao admitted in the interview that the police might have been violating the citizens' democratic rights. However, he went on to defend the actions of the police saying it was a law and order problem and that it was not in his hands. This raises an important question: What are the political implications of a phenomenon such as the Telugu Desam Movement converting itself into a political party within
months of its inception and being swept to power? This needs further study on the basis of its origin, political victory and subsequent performance.

The 1983 Assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh have given a new turn to Indian politics. The results have demonstrated that Andhra Pradesh is no more the citadel of the Congress party.

Since the formation of the state in 1956, the Congress had hardly faced any serious challenge. The emergence of a regional party in Telugu Desam and its climb to political power warrant a review of the Congress party's functioning in Andhra Pradesh since independence.

Besides the above factors, the most telling impact on the party has been the personalised approaches to the politics of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. The Congress party evolved a political culture reflecting Mrs. Indira Gandhi's authoritarianism. She did not allow leaders character to rise. In her calculations, it appears, Dr.Chenna Reddy can be more dangerous than N.T.Rama Rao of Telugu Desam Party. This explains the fact that no Congress Chief Minister in Andhra Pradesh continued in office for a period
coterminous with that of the Legislative Assembly.

The emergence of Telugu Desam in Andhra Pradesh and capture of power raise a number of issues in the electoral politics of the Indian polity. A number of states like Tamil Nadu, Jammu and Kashmir, West Bengal and Tripura have been ruled by non-Congress governments for more than 9 years and the North-East states have a number of recognised regional political parties. Andhra Pradesh has been the bastion of the Congress Party since independence, playing a major role in the Congress politics at the centre. Andhra Pradesh is the largest state which has had uninterrupted Congress rule since 1947. What are the factors contributing to the Congress debacle in Andhra Pradesh? In the context the following hypotheses are sought to be verified:

1. Causes for the decline of Congress (I) rule in Andhra Pradesh

2. Causes for the rise of Telugu Desam Party in Andhra Pradesh.

3. How a regional party, that is, Telugu Desam party, is
serving better the people of Andhra Pradesh when compared
to the Congress (I), which is a national party, and which
has ruled Andhra Pradesh for the last 35 years.

4. To estimate the trends and future of Telugu Desam Party
in Andhra Pradesh.

METHODOLOGY:

The study is based on primary and secondary sources. A
thorough and systematic examination of the documents and
the material available shows the role of regional parties
in India, particularly the role of Telugu Desam Party in
Andhra Pradesh. The information on the subject has been
collected from periodicals, newspapers, papers of the Dept.
of Information and Public Relations, Hyderabad and the
material available at the Telugu Desam Party office at
Gandipet, Himayat Nagar, Hyderabad. The books available in
Sri Venkateswara University Library, Tirupati, are also
referred to.

The speeches and writings of N.T. Rama Rao have
been thoroughly studied and analysed systematically. The
progress of and the achievements made by the Telugu Desam
Government through their policies and programmes have been projected. A State's position is estimated by the policies and programmes and the administration of the political executive, that is, the Chief Minister. As a film actor for 25 years and Telugu Desam Party Chief Minister for 5 years, his mighty contribution to the state of Andhra Pradesh has been thoroughly studied.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The importance of such study is obvious in the context of the emergence of regional parties and capturing of power at the state level in India. At the time of independence, the role of regional parties was almost negligible but in the recent times their role has increased and ultimately they have become a challenge to the single dominant National party, which is ruling the country, not only at the centre but also in a majority of States. At present many of the States are ruled by regional political parties. Now in this thesis a thorough and systematic study is made on the role of the Telugu Desam Party in capturing the State administration, after defeating the Congress (I), which had been ruling Andhra Pradesh since independence.
PLAN OF STUDY: This thesis is divided into seven Chapters.

Chapter I, which is an introductory chapter deals with the role of the regional parties in the Indian context. Regional parties are those which generally and exclusively operate within a limited geographical area of a state, or which represent primordial loyalties. That is, in respect of the narrowly defined interests, regional parties stand in sharp contrast to the broad ranging diverse concerns of national parties. Duverger classifies regional parties as minor parties, minority minded and are of two distinct types. They are personality minority parties and permanent minority parties. Duverger dismisses the personality parties as the clique of the legislators and condemns the permanent minority parties as deviationists. But it is interesting to note that both personality parties and permanent minority parties have freely proliferated in India.

Chapter II deals with a Socioc. Economic and political profile of Andhra Pradesh. The land of the Telugu people has a glorious cultural heritage and its greatness and prosperity were renowned over the centuries not only within
India but in the countries abroad also. The Telugu land witnessed the rise of many empires which provided the State efficient administration and promoted arts and sciences.

The formation of Andhra Pradesh on November 1, 1956 fulfilled the long cherished desire of the Telugu people to have a State of their own. Andhra Pradesh also paved the way for the reorganisation of the Indian State on linguistic basis.

Andhra Pradesh is the fifth largest State in the country spread over 2,03,100 sq.kms. Over six crore people living in 23 districts of the State are now on the threshold of a bright future.

The State of Andhra Pradesh sprawls across a greater part of the Deccan plateau, sloping down to embrace the quiet waters of the Bay of Bengal. The state is bounded on the north by Orissa, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, on the East by the Bay of Bengal, on the West by Karnataka and Maharashtra and on the South by Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Owing to its geographical position, the State forms a major link between northern and southern states.
Chapter III traces the causes for the Decline of the National party in Andhra Pradesh. Ever since its inception Andhra Pradesh has witnessed the dominance of a single political party, the Congress party, which has ruled the state for nearly twenty-six years uninterrupted. As the single-party dominance continued and the opposition parties failed to evolve a distinct ideological orientation, the politics in Andhra Pradesh was dominated by intraparty conflicts in the ruling party—the Congress and the opposition parties were reduced to a second fiddle. The role of the opposition parties in the State politics was minimal as compared to the all-pervading role played by the Congress. The factional politics of the Congress dominated the political scene of the state. All the political activity in the State and even the steel plant agitation, Tumkur agitation and Andhra agitation were initially started by the Congress dissident leaders. The opposition parties could carry on the agitations as long as the Congress functional leaders worked against their rivals and once the differences were sorted out they conveniently gave up the struggle and rushed for political patronage.
Chapter IV dealt with the Emergence of Telugu Desam Party. The Emergence of Telugu Desam Party in Andhra Pradesh and capture of power raised a number of issues in the electoral politics of the Indian polity. Andhra Pradesh has been the bastion of the Congress party since independence Andhra Pradesh is the largest state which has had uninterrupted Congress rule since Independence.

The entry of N.T.Rama Rao in the State politics provided an alternative N.T.Rama Rao with 35 years film career behind him is a house-hold name in the Andhra Pradesh. Using an amazing display of quiet determination and singularity of purpose, he used cliches like 'atma gouravam' (self respect) and dharma yuddham and Kurukshetram (epic war of Mahabharata) to convey his message to the people. He seriously believed that he was the saviour to 'rescue' the people from the congress murda. For instance one of N.T.Rama Rao cut-outs says Telugu Desam Pilistondi leev, Kadallraa (Telugu Desam is calling; arise; join us).

In the 1983 poll, winning a clear two thirds majority, Telugu Desam routed not only the Congress but also the
opposition parties like the Janata, Bharathiya Janata Party, Lok Dal and course of the Communist Party of India and Communist Party of India (Marxist). The voting pattern shows that the Telugu Desam note was a vote against all the so-called all India parties.

Chapter V deals with N.T.Rama Rao’s life and achievements as party leader and administrator. T. Rama Rao was born on May 20, 1923 in Lakshmeshwar Choudary and Venkataramamma, in Nimmakuru village. He belongs to the economically and politically powerful Yadama community, and he studied in S.R.K College, Vijayawada and graduated from AC College, Durtur in 1947. He joined as Joint Sub-registrar in 1949 and entered the film world. Within a short period he rose to stardom his first film being Mana Desam.

In mythological films he consistently played the godly roles. When Rama Rao turned 60 years he was a hero of over 500 films by this time he had almost decided to retire from films and there was a lingering thought in him to enter politics and serve the people of Andhra Pradesh. He is not only the leader of the Telugu Desam party but also an eminent administrator.
Chapter VI deals with Telugu Desam Party's policies and programmes and its welfare measures.

15-POINT PROGRAMME:

N.T.Rama Rao's 15-point programme is for the all-round development of the Andhra Pradesh. The 15-point programme has been designed to suit the requirements of people and is aimed at giving a practical shape to the new dimension given to plan priorities beginning with the annual plan for 1983-84. The programme has been acclaimed as New Deal for the weaker sections and a comprehensive charter of action in key areas of development.

MANDAL PANCHAYATS

With the introduction of democratic decentralisation, panchayat Raj was first introduced in the Andhra Pradesh in the year 1959. It was three tier system consisting of Zilla Parishad at District level, Panchayat Samithi at Taluk level and Grama Panchayat at Village level. Now in the view of the reorganisation of this act and in view of enforcement of Mandal Praja Parishad, Zilla Praja Parishad and Zilla Abhivrudhi Mandals Samsekhla Mandals Act 1986,
the Panchayat Samithis and Zilla Parishads are replaced by Mandal Praja Parishads and Zilla Parishads.

Comprehensive enactment was made through Andhra Pradesh Gram Panchayat Act, covering the entire Andhra Pradesh for the first time, under the Act, a village or village with a minimum population of 1000 were constituted as gram Panchayats. Subsequently this rule has been amended and a village with a minimum population of 300 also is constituted as a panchayat taking the distance in between the two villages as the criterion.

OTHER POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES:

1) Telugu Vasara Pradana Vidhanam: Under this Janata cloth Bi home, green card holders are supplied with handloom saree and a dhoti at half the price, Government meeting the difference payable to the Andhra Pradesh Handloom Weavers Cooperative Society.

2) Telugu Ashrava Pathakam

3) Telugu Vyavasaya Karmika Sadara Sanskaranam

4) Telugu Gramika Swaika Nickshaw Pathakam, etr
Chapter VII, which is the concluding chapter, deals with the future of Telugu Desam Party and the trends in the policies and programmes of N.T. Rama Rao, the present Chief Minister. Nothing is more unpredictable than politics. However, it can be safely said that, having achieved a miracle by unseating the Congress (I) rule from their seemingly impregnable fortress, he is sincerely trying to do something. Most of the measures he has taken so far have been welcomed all round. His critics say he is going too fast. His well-wishers feel there is no need for such speed and fear that his haste may prove to be his undoing.