Chapter III
Andhra Pradesh: Background

3.1 Introduction
The State of Andhra Pradesh was the first to be formed on a linguistic basis on 1st November 1956. It is the fifth largest state in India, both in area and population. Andhra Pradesh, comprising the three regions of coastal Andhra, Rayalaseema and Telangana, displays vast regional variations in socio-economic and cultural terms. ‘Differences in historical backgrounds – Telangana was part of the princely Hyderabad State and coastal Andhra of the British Presidency – partly account for this’ (Srinivasulu, 2002:1). They used to be administered in different ways – particularly the land revenue system. In coastal Andhra there was Zamindari system, in Rayalaseema there was Ryotwari system and in Telangana there was Jagirdari system. The three regions also differ agro-climatically. While a large tract of land in coastal Andhra is under irrigation projects, Telangana and Rayalaseema are comparatively dry regions with a very small part under irrigation projects. Over a period of time this disparity had caused lot of problem especially in the Telangana region, which had ultimately resulted in movements for separate Telangana state.

3.2. The Telangana struggle of 1969
After the integration of the three regions into the state of Andhra Pradesh, the influx of people from coastal region into the city of Hyderabad created many social tensions. Slowly the discontent spread among the Telangana officials and the unemployed youth who felt that they were exploited by the people of the
Andhra region. The discontent manifested itself when a student of Khammam went on a hunger-strike in January 1969 demanding the implementation of the safeguards for Telangana provided in the Gentlemen's Agreement. Slowly the agitation spread to Hyderabad and other parts of Telangana. In the beginning, the movement demanded the implementation of the safeguards agreed upon earlier, but later it wanted the separation of Telangana from Andhra Pradesh.

The agitation took a new turn when the Congress legislators from Telangana supported the movement. Dr.Chenna Reddy entered the fray and formed the Telangana Praja Samiti to lead the movement. But by November 1969, there was a split in the Praja Samiti when dissident Congress legislators realised that the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was not in favour of separate Telangana. The movement slowly petered out. In September 1971, Brahmananda Reddy, the then Chief Minister, resigned his position to make room for a leader from Telangana to become the Chief Minister. On the 30th of September, 1971, P.V.Narsimha Rao became the Chief Minister. The Telangana Praja Samiti was dissolved and its members rejoined the Congress. Although the economic imbalance among the Andhra and Telangana regions was the cause espoused in the agitation, the conflict arose mainly because of a factional fight within the Congress. Many others joined it as they had real and perceived grievances. (Ram Reddy 1989). Thus the movement which was started by students, hijacked by politicians to serve their agenda was sacrificed by the politicians after their demands were met by the central leadership. But the aspirations of the people of Telangana especially that of the educated remained unfulfilled.
Demand for a separate Telangana state continued after 1969 also although it remained in a dormant state. Scholars and activists continued to raise the issue in various forums. In 2001 a new party ‘Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) was started by K Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR) a dissident\textsuperscript{11} TDP legislator with the main aim being formation of a separate Telangana state. Within a very short period of time the party gained prominence in the Telangana districts and proved a catalyst in the defeat of Telugu Desam Party in the 2004 election by aligning with Congress party. Following the failure of Congress party to keep to its election promise, TRS withdrew support to the government headed by Congress party. The Telangana movement received fresh impetus once again towards the end of 2009, when KCR made a fast unto death resulting in the union cabinet acceding to his demands. The Union Home Minister, Mr. P Chidambaram made a statement in this regard on 9\textsuperscript{th} December 2009. ‘The process of forming the state of Telangana will be initiated. An appropriate resolution will be moved in the state assembly’.

3.3 Political Developments in the state:

The Reddys and Kammas, comprising 6.5\%\textsuperscript{12} and 4.8\% of the State’s population respectively, are the two dominant casted in the state. Although the Reddys are distributed throughout the state, they are dominant in the Telangana and Rayalaseema regions. The Kammas, on the other hand, are traditionally dominant in the coastal districts of Krishna, West Godavari, Guntur and Prakasam; their presence in other regions is marginal. It is the control of these castes over agrarian

\textsuperscript{11} Failing in his wish to become a cabinet minister in the TDP government, KCR came out of TDP and started TRS in 2001.

\textsuperscript{12} Caste-wise population record is not available for the present period. This is from Census, 1921.
resources such as land and water that has been the most important source of their economic and political power. As the major land-owning communities and occupants of important positions in villages, they have traditionally controlled village political life. In the post-Independence period, and especially following the Green Revolution due to the wealth it generated, they expanded their activities into other spheres of the economy, i.e. business, transport, contracts and industry (see Upadhya, 1988 and 1997; Srinivasulu, 2002). They are excellent examples of those castes which M.N. Srinivas has called dominant castes in Indian Society; they are “numerically strongest in the village or local area, and economically and politically exercise a preponderating influence.” (Elliott 1970:133). The most important source of their power is control over land. This base of power is boosted by the appointment of these dominant caste people to positions of power in the village for revenue collection. In Telangana, the village headmen are called Patel and Patwari; in coastal Andhra – Munsab and Karanam. These officials are responsible for maintaining land records, collection of taxes and maintaining law and order in the village.

According to Parthasarathy (1997:42) “Reddi, Kamma, Kapu, Velama and Raju are all agricultural castes. In the middle ages they were soldiers employed by various kings and local chieftains in the Andhra and Deccan areas of south India. They all belong to the sudra category. In modern times however they are considered to be forward castes.” The introduction of irrigation systems in the Krishna and Godavari deltas in 1850’s and improvements in the systems over a period of a hundred years, have mostly benefited these peasant castes and particularly the Kammas and Kapus”.
An important political institution has been ‘factions’, mostly led by members of the dominant castes but including members of other castes, communities and social strata. The concepts of vertical and horizontal political mobilization have played an important part in analyses of the role of caste in state politics. “Elliott (1970:134) views caste solidarity on the horizontal dimension and factional alliance on the vertical. She contrasts the horizontal mobilization of the middle peasant castes in Andhra Pradesh (including the Reddys) with the vertical mobilization of ‘notable’ Reddy and Kamma landlords”.

“Reddi dominance of state politics is the result of local and regional dominance based on vertical mobilization by Reddi notables, not horizontal solidarity, mobilization, or formal organization. The more enterprising and able among them have concerted with others to form factional alliances capable of capturing power at the district and state levels. (Rudolph and Rudolph 1967:83-4)”

The rise to political power of the dominant agricultural castes is striking in Andhra Pradesh much like in states such as Punjab (Jat domination), Maharashtra (Marathas) and Karnataka (Lingayats and Vokkaligas). The political ascendancy of the agriculturally dominant castes of Andhra Pradesh - the Reddys, Kammams and the Velamas, can be traced to the land reforms in the early fifties, particularly the abolition of the ‘Jagirs’ in the erstwhile Hyderabad state and the Zamindari system in coastal Andhra.

This broke the power of the traditional elite, especially the Muslim feudal aristocracy associated with the rule of Nizam. The prestige of the predominantly Brahmin urban elite, was simultaneously undermined by strong anti-Brahmin sentiments. Starting from the 1960’s there was a decline in Brahmin legislators in the state assembly as it dwindled to less than 2% by 1980’s. Reddy’s have maintained their position from the first general election (25%) till 1980’s (22%), whereas a steady growth could be seen in Kamma legislators – 11.3% to 16.3%.
The urban middle class started playing a smaller role in the political arena while the introduction of democratic politics opened up opportunities for the rural upper middle class of medium landowners who realised the importance of political office for the maintenance of their prestige and economic interests.

Widely spread out throughout the state, and wielding adequate economic power, the Reddys entered the Congress Party during the initial decades and strengthened their hold within the organisation. The Kammas, traditional rivals of the Reddys - built their economic power through commercial expansion, and by the 1970s, were looking for political opportunities to match their economic strength. The strategy of the Congress Party national leadership, in the 1970s, to shift the Party’s support base, from the dominant social castes to the Scheduled Castes, led to caste realignments in regional politics. The Party’s preferential policies to Harijans alienated the backward classes, and in the midst of political instability, the Kammas discovered an opportunity to fill the power vacuum. This eventually led to the rise of Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and a Kamma Chief Minister, in 1983.

The Reddy and Kammas trace their origins to a class of feudal chiefs under various kings. “There are several legends which trace the origin of the three major peasant castes in Andhra to an undivided group of Kapus living under the Kakatiya king Pratap Rudra who ruled in the thirteenth century” (Elliot 1970:138). The claims of common ancestry are also supported by the borrowing of names among the castes, many Kammas have surnames containing ’Reddy’, while one sub caste of Reddy calls itself Chaudhury, a surname often associated with the
Kammas. “Reddys and Kammas are the largest high status castes in their respective areas of dominance, each forming about 10 percent of the population. The next single largest castes are the Malas\textsuperscript{13} and the Madigas who form 10 and 5 percent of the state population respectively” (ibid:149). The rural elite in any one area belongs to the same caste.

The proportion of Reddys, Kammas and Velamas in the total population is difficult to estimate since the Census does not report on caste. It is estimated variously at between 15 to 17 percent of the state population to up to 25 percent. This depends on whether the Kapus, smaller peasants, are included in the classification since many of them started calling themselves Reddy after they attained some affluence. Given this, the proportion of these castes in the Panchayat Raj system in the 1960s and 70s is a good reflection of their dominance in the electoral politics of the state. In 1970, among the Panchayat Samiti\textsuperscript{14} presidents, 80 percent belonged to these three castes and the forward castes of Brahmins and Vaishyas. At the Legislative assembly, a peak was reached in 1962 when 43 percent of the constituencies were represented by members from the Reddy, Kamma and the Velama castes while another 13 percent came from the Brahmin and Vaishya communities (Bernstorff & Gray, 1998).

In 1971, the Congress party made a concerted effort to restructure the leadership of Andhra Pradesh in two respects, to give a greater say to politicians from the Telangana region, which was hitherto dominated by politicians from Andhra, and to reduce the power of the dominant landowning castes and break the factions.

\textsuperscript{13} These are scheduled castes (Malas and Madigas). While Malas are predominantly to be found in the Coastal Andhra districts Madigas form a majority of the SC population in Telanaga districts.

\textsuperscript{14} Panchayat Samiti is the intermediary body between District and Village in the Panchayat Raj system. It consists of all the Sarpanchs of the Village panchayats in its designated area and the chairperson is elected from among the members. Before the advent of mandal parishad system, some of the Panchayat Samiti Chairpersons enjoyed more clout than the MLAs in Andhra Pradesh.
which had played a crucial role in the recent political history of the state. Among other measures the candidates for the assembly elections were selected so as to give the ‘weaker sections’ more representation. While this had a strong psychological impact among the Backward Castes, minorities and Harijans, it also led to a heightening of caste antagonism with factional leaders from the dominant castes combining efforts to resist the challenges from below (ibid.).

3.3.1. The emergence of TDP:
The emergence of TDP brought a radical change in the politics of Andhra Pradesh. Unlike the other regional parties in Punjab, Kashmir and Tamilnadu, TDP did not emerge out of any movement or struggle. There was a political vacuum in the state of Andhra Pradesh due to absence of a viable alternative to Congress party and NTR encashed this opportunity through his charisma and cleverly spelt out policies aimed at appeasing the agrarian class and the poorer sections of the society. He was also critical of the Congress culture of changing chief ministers frequently and questioned the imposition from above, thereby using the slogan of ‘restoration of Telugu self-respect’. The first victory of the TDP in 1983 under N.T. Rama Rao was therefore based on a platform of Telugu nationalist pride and anti-Congressism that sought to unite all sections of people in the state. A number of populist slogans were used, and later implemented - the Rs. 2/kg rice scheme for the poor being a prime example.

The first TDP government in the state carried out a path breaking measure of decentralisation. It abolished the 330 Panchayat Samitis in the state and replaced

---

15 Pamphlets, cassettes, posters and films were all used to propagate Telugu pride. Songs of the patriot Gurajada Appa Rao and plays and other works of Kandukuri Veerasalingam and Alluri Sitarama Raju were used to tell the people that the party is committed to social reform of Telugu society. These reformers of Andhra Pradesh had advocated equal rights to women, abolition of dowry and equality of all humans.
them by 1104 Mandal Praja Parishads, i.e. roughly three to four mandal parishads for every erstwhile panchayat samiti. This was done with the avowed aim of taking the administration to the grassroots. At the same time, the State Government also placed tight administrative control over decentralisation by institutionalising the controversial Zilla Pranalika Abhivrudhi Sameeksha Mandali (ZPASM), with the express function of reviewing the development activities undertaken by the Zilla Praja Parishad (ZPP). A minister nominated by the Chief Minister chairs this body, and its members were the ZPP chairperson, the District Collector (who is also Member Secretary), all the legislators from the district and some expert members nominated by the State Government.

Despite public protest against the foisting of such a non-elected body over an elected one, pressure from the legislators and ministers of the TDP ensured that the powers of the ZPASM were not diluted. This body was a precursor to the District Development and Review Committee that continues to exist in the post-1994 Panchayat Raj institutional frame. This combination of measures of decentralisation and administrative control has been the leitmotif of TDP. Of late, there is a ray of hope with the civil society’s continuous pressure. The state government has agreed to remove this and constitute a District Planning Committee with due representation to the local body members and with more powers.

The TDP had also took some bold measures aimed at altering the administrative set up at the village level by replacing the hereditary Patel-Patwari system and replacing them with Village Administrative Officers. The motive behind this
move was two pronged. One to streamline the administrative set up at the village level and two, to strengthen its base in the rural areas. It gained both its objectives as the abolition of the system led to the development of a strong base in the rural areas through the support it gained from OBCs and other weaker sections in the grass root level. The TDP was able to sustain itself as a major political force in Andhra Pradesh politics due to the support it gained from diverse communities although the core support had been the OBCs and the upper caste Kammas. Over the years, it had developed a very strong cadre in all parts of the state and to maintain its strength and keep its cadre happy, TDP had been in the forefront in introducing campaign based development policies both during the time of NTR and Chandrababu Naidu who followed him. There were also accusations that, the various development programmes which were initiated during the regime of Chandrababu Naidu were mainly created to accommodate the followers of TDP.

The 73rd amendment act which came into existence in 1994, had resulted in the introduction of reservations in panchayats at all three levels resulting in drastic changes in the village leadership. The following section gives an institutional framework of the panchayats and the natural resources management programmes – watersheds, Joint/Community Forest Management and Water Users Associations, all of which came into existence around the same time in the 1990s.

3.4. Panchayat Raj:

The word panchayat is a traditional one, referring to five elders (panch) in a village who mediated in conflicts and spoke on behalf of all the residents of a
village in pre-modern times. This term has been retained for use by all rural local
governments. The village panchayat has a long history in India. The role of these
panchayats was mainly to settle disputes in rural India. The earliest form of
panchayats with strong resemblance to today’s elected system were the village
councils (Sabha and Ur\(^{16}\)) of Cholas who ruled in the South India in two phases
during fourth to twelfth centuries.

The need for decentralisation was recognised quite early in India, though the logic
and the schemes of decentralisation that followed depended upon the ideologies
and requirements of the prevailing regimes. The colonial requirements had
institutionalised district administration and District Collector as the effective unit
of decentralised administration in the last quarter of the 18\(^{th}\) century. By the time
the rule of the Crown was formalised in the middle of the 19\(^{th}\) century, the need
for more effective forms of local administration was emphasised by Ripon’s
Resolution of 1882 and more comprehensively by the Royal Commission on
Decentralisation in 1909. It needs to be emphasised that these schemes of
decentralisation were clearly administrative, governed by the requirements of the
centralised colonial state. (Jha and Mathur 1999:15-16)

The principle of Panchayat raj with a reference to Mahatma Gandhi and the
exalted tradition formed the basis for decentralisation and democratisation of
power at the village level in India after Independence. Article 40 of the Indian
Constitution, in accordance with the Gandhian heritage, advised the government
to take steps to organise village panchayats and to endow them with such powers

\(^{16}\) Sabha and Ur were the village assemblies. While Sabha is to be found in the Brahmin
Agraharas, Ur is to be found in the non-Brahmin villages.
and authority which would enable them ‘to function as units of self-government’. But the reality in the Indian countryside is very different and there indeed were some scholars who argued against the Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the constituent assembly itself the prominent among them being Dr. Ambedkar who drafted the Indian constitution in 1948. He cast doubts upon the whole role to be played by the village -

I hold that these village republics have been the ruination of India. I am, therefore, surprised that those who condemn provincialism and communalism should come forward as champions of village. What is the village but a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness, and communalism? (Constituent Assembly Vol.VII:39).

When Ambedkar made this statement against village self-government while introducing the draft constitution in the constituent assembly it roused the ire and anger of many members of the first parliament who regarded his disdain towards the local bodies as blasphemy of the ‘soul of India’. But he also had some supporters and a member from Bengal, Manmohan Das illustrates the argument, “I think the local influential classes will absorb to themselves all the power and privilege that will be given to the Panchayat system and they will utilise it for their selfish motives. The system will enable the village zamindars, the taluqdar, the mahajans and the money-lending class to rob, to exploit the less cultured, the less educated, poorer classes of the village” (AVARD 1962:35 in Lieten and Srivastava, 1999:19)

These words proved to be prophetic as the rich and dominant classes had made gram panchayats their new fiefdoms/jagirs and in most cases it was a single family/person which/who ruled with complete control over the village affairs. As pointed out by Rajni Kothari pointed out that, “village councils are nothing but
catchy slogans and false promises: they have enabled the rulers to contain the forces of revolt and resistance and prevent public discontent and turmoil from getting organised" (1989:15). Over the years, the Panchayat raj system had seen several changes, with each state enacting its own system. All through the years, till the 73rd Amendment was made, they remained bastions of rural elite and a means in perpetuating their control over the rural landscape. In the next section we trace the evolution of Panchayat raj system in Andhra Pradesh.

3.4.1. Panchayat raj in Andhra Pradesh

The development of Panchayat Raj in the post-independence period in the state saw two parallel processes. The entire state was brought under unified legislation in stages and Panchayat Raj Institutions were created. At the same time, there was also a process of strengthening of administration at the district level with supervisory powers over Panchayat institutions. Sporadic outbursts of popular discontent with the political-bureaucratic system, like the Naxalite and Telangana movements, led to the appointment of Commissions to strengthen the process of decentralisation. While these Commissions strongly recommended steps to weaken the administrative stranglehold over Panchayat institutions, it has been repeatedly seen that the recommendations were either not acted upon, or nullified in later periods by newer orders.

Following the recommendations of various commissions, Andhra Pradesh has witnessed a series of modifications to the structure and process of Panchayat Raj
through the years with significant changes in 1964\textsuperscript{17}, 1976\textsuperscript{18}, 1986 and 1994. In each of these administrative reform situations, there has been interplay of forces affecting the balance of power and control, between the bureaucracy, local government and the state political elite. In the history of Panchayat Raj legislation in the state, the 1986 Act provided for greater decentralisation by creating a larger number of smaller mandals (sub-district administrative units). The Andhra Pradesh Mandala Praja Parishads (MPP), Zilla Praja Parishads (ZPP) and Zilla Pranalika Abhivrudhi Sameeksha Act, 1986 abolished 330 panchayat samitis and created 1104 mandal praja parishads in their place. The Mandal Praja Parishad was created for a group of villages with a population of thirty-five to fifty thousand. Along with the creation of MPPs the state government had also undertook a series of measures like establishing Primary Health Centre, Junior College and Police station in each of the mandal head quarters. The next change in the Panchayat Raj was in 1994 after the 73\textsuperscript{rd} Constitutional Amendment Act in 1993.

3.4.2. The 1994 Act
Following the enactment of 73\textsuperscript{rd} Constitution Amendment each state government had enacted Panchayat Raj legislation as Panchayats fall under the state list. Accordingly government of Andhra Pradesh introduced a Panchayat Raj Act in 1994. The Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act, 1994 provided for reservations in all the three tiers of the panchayat (village, mandal, district). Posts of chairpersons and Members of all the three tiers are reserved for Scheduled Castes and

\textsuperscript{17} One seat was reserved for women if the total strength of panchayat members was 7 or less, and two seats if the total was eight or more. One seat was reserved either for the SCs or the STs. (Haragopal and Sudarshanam, 2000:48)

\textsuperscript{18} The 1976 Amendment provided for direct election of Sarpanch by all the voters of the Panchayat. It also included reduction in the voting age from 21 to 18 years.
Scheduled Tribes in proportion to their population, for Other Backward Classes (34 percent) and for women (one third of the total seats).

The Act has provided for the constitution of a Gram Sabha comprising all registered voters of villages in the Gram Panchayat. Elections are to be held every five years for all the three tiers. Members of the Gram Panchayat are directly elected from Gram Panchayat territorial constituencies (ward), each of population of around 360 and the Sarpanch of the Gram Panchayat is also directly elected. Gram Panchayats consist of 15 to 21 members depending on population of the panchayat. Gram Panchayat elections are supposed to be on non-party basis and party symbols are not allotted. The term of office of the Gram Panchayat is five years. The Gram Panchayat members elect an Upa (Deputy) Sarpanch from among themselves. A very important provision of the Act which resulted in several court cases was the two child norm. The Act provided for disqualification of persons who had more than two children from standing for election to any Panchayat position.

In the case of Mandal Praja Parishad (MPP) members are directly elected from Mandal Parishad Territorial Constituencies (MPTC) comprising a population of 3000-4000, and the Mandal Parishad President is elected indirectly from among the directly elected members of MPTCs based on the reservation for the post (if any). Members of Zilla Praja Parishads (ZPP) are also directly elected from Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituencies (ZPTC), one from each revenue mandal. The ZP President was also indirectly elected from among the ZPTC members. The district collector was a member of all the standing committees of the Zilla
Parishad and substituted the chairperson in his absence. (S)he was empowered to write to the Government to suspend any of the resolutions of the ZPP. The government retained the power to suspend or remove any member of the PRIs including the president of the MPP and the chairperson of the ZPP.

The 1994 Panchayat Raj Act has been managed such that the system of “checks and balances” ensured that the powers stayed with the bureaucracy with avenues for potential political influence in the middle and higher levels (down to the district), but power were never transferred to PRIs in the real sense. Control over budgets and financial flows is retained at the state capital and any planning initiative at the district requires the local political representative (MLA, MP) and the District Collector for final approval. The maximum leeway provided to PRIs is a cursory consultative role. There has been a mutation of the concept of `local self-government’ whenever legislations or central guidelines have been operationalised. For instance, of the 29 subjects in the Eleventh Schedule, only three items – education, social and farm forestry, fuel and fodder plantations – have been transferred fully with budget powers to the local government. Another 8 subjects have been partially addressed with no transfer of budgetary powers and mostly review, survey, monitoring or beneficiary selection powers being transferred.

The Act lists the functions of all three tiers and taxation powers of Gram Panchayats. It provided for the establishment of a State Finance Commission to work out suitable formulae for devolution of resources to PRIs from State revenues, and for the establishment of a State Election Commission for the
conduct of elections to PRIs. The tendency towards bureaucratic domination is also visible in the 1994 legislation and its working. The Act vests considerable powers in the State Government to supersede Panchayat resolutions and even to unilaterally dissolve Panchayat bodies. Elections to Panchayat bodies have been allowed to fall overdue and have been postponed by the Government under various pretexts. The State Government has only partially accepted the State Finance Commission’s recommendations to devolve financial resources to Panchayat institutions and has been a slow mover in the devolution of powers to the PRI institutions that was mandated by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment.

Though Gram Panchayats have been given taxation powers in principle, the State Government is yet to evolve rules and guidelines for operation. Gram Panchayats on their part do not utilise their taxation powers effectively. The result is that the bulk of the working financial resources with these institutions are in the form of tied grants from the State and Central Governments. Own resources form an even smaller proportion of the resources of Mandal and Zilla Parishads. In the day-to-day administration and execution of development programmes, the staff of line departments continues to report to administrative officials like the District Collector at district level. In turn, they report to the Commissioners of Rural development in the State capital. Barring the notified panchayats, Gram Panchayats have limited staff to aid in administration and development. The planning process is yet to be decentralised fully.

While the formation of committees under the Gram Panchayat as provided for in the 1994 Act has not occurred due to lack of facilitating guidelines, a number of
other institutions have been formed at the initiative of the state government. These include Self Help Groups (SHGs), Village Education Committees, School Education Committees, Panchayat Education Committees, Mothers’ Committees, Chief Minister’s Empowerment of Youth (CMEY) Groups, Vana Samrakshana Samitis, Water Users’ Associations, Watershed Committees, Adarana Yojana Groups and Habitation Committees. These groups are provided with funds directly from the programmes through the executive hierarchy – Mandal Development Officer. It has been argued that the involvement of PRIs and funding to them remains undiminished since PRI members and office-bearers are part of these committees. On the contrary it has also been argued that these were deliberate measures to weaken PRIs and strengthen the political base of the Chief Minister.

3.4.3. Campaign based programmes of TDP and Congress
A controversial measure undertaken by the TDP government of Chandrababu Naidu was the Janmabhoomi (JB) programme which was launched in the year 1997. The programme follows the footsteps of an earlier program ‘Prajala Vadakku Palana’ (taking the administration to the doorstep) initiated by N.T. Rama Rao. The programme involved holding Gram Sabha meetings every quarter with all the important mandal-level functionaries in attendance and identifying the needs of people and taking care of them through Gram Sabhas. Every round of Janmabhoomi Gramsabha began with a personal letter from Chief Minister, Chandrababu Naidu to the people of Andhra Pradesh being read aloud.
The Janmabhoomi programme guidelines spoke of rejuvenation of PRIs through the programme. However, opinions differed about this objective of the programme. Critics pointed out that the programme utilised funds that could have been devolved to PRIs, the other view was that the constitution of numerous Committees or stakeholder groups built up social capital, which would eventually be transformed into political capital in the PRIs. There has been little systematic examination of the Committees to test the truth of this latter assertion.

However the Janmabhoomi programme brought the administration to the villager every quarter (and also ensured the conduct of the Gram Sabha four times a year), provided space for discussion, gave an avenue for venting people's grievances and provided the opportunity to highlight bottlenecks (technical or financial). But it also succeeded in preventing any federation of villages to the next higher level of government on planning initiatives. The building of political support using development programmes was in fact an old political strategy.

YS Rajasekhar Reddy (YSR) who was leader of the opposition Congress party during the TDP rule was in the forefront while criticising the various welfare programs initiated by TDP. Following the reverses suffered in the assembly and parliamentary elections, he tread the path of late NTR in making populist promises like free power to agriculture, restoration of Rs.2/- a Kg. rice scheme during the 2004 elections. After coming to power in 2004, he scrapped most of the schemes of TDP regime and introduced his own welfare schemes. Gone were the accusations of undermining the powers and funds of Gram Panchayats. While he was extremely critical of the Janmabhoomi program of TDP, he introduced a
similar program, Rajeev Pallebata in rural areas and Rajiv Nagarabata in urban areas.

Some of the prominent welfare schemes of YSR regime are – Free power to farmers, Rs.2/- Kg. rice scheme, Pavala (twenty five paise) vaddi (interest) scheme for DWCRA groups, Indiramma housing scheme, Land re-distribution to the landless, Pasukranthi scheme (distribution of milch animals) and the crowning glory among all – ‘Rajiv Arogyasree’ scheme which provides medical support to the tune of Rs. 2 lakh to all the white (BPL) card holders in the state which was extended to eighty per cent of the state population from August 2008. Although there were several accusations regarding the scheme, it had clearly caught the imagination of people throughout the state. While Janmabhoomi program despite its critics was the most successful of the TDP schemes in terms of impact factor, ‘Rajeev Arogyasree’ had greater impact during the 2004-09 Congress regime of YSR.

While many of the promises made by the Congress party led by YSR in the election manifesto were implemented, they could only partially implement the distribution of powers to Panchayat raj institutions. Transfer of power happened in only nine branches out of a total of twenty nine items listed in the Eleventh schedule of the constitution. They are as follows-

- Agriculture, Agricultural expansion
- Animal Husbandry, Dairy, Poultry
- Fisheries
- Rural Development
- Safe drinking water supply and Sanitation
- Primary education, School education
- Health, Primary Health Centres and Family welfare
- Social welfare
- Backward classes welfare

This is a better situation for panchayats in the state compared to the earlier regime.

3.5. Natural Resources Management in Andhra Pradesh:
As mentioned earlier we will be looking at forest management, watershed management and irrigation management (tank management) in the present study when we say Natural Resources Management (NRM). Inscriptional sources found on temple walls dating back to the eleventh to fourteenth centuries (starting from the Chalukya-Cholas and Kakatiyas) clearly indicate the involvement of temples in agriculture, irrigation, taxation and land reclamation that followed the expansion of cultivation. The mostly caste-dominated and mentorised village assemblies continued undisturbed even in the period of the highly centralised Vijayanagar Empire (1336-1565). Krishna Deva Raya, king of the Vijayanagara Empire, wrote in the sixteenth century literary classic ‘Amuktamalyada’ of the necessity for a well-defined policy towards agricultural and forest regions and its relevance for political stability.

Construction of tanks was initiated mostly by kings or philanthropic individuals. Resources were raised both locally and from state grants for their maintenance and repair. The village assembly organised actual repair or maintenance work by engaging labourers for desilting, organising labour contributions from farmers and allotting watch-and-ward duties to fishermen (Vani, 1991). Natural resource
management existed at local levels in pre-colonial Andhra and Nizam’s Hyderabad, but was governed by social rules (mostly caste) and the benevolence of richer households, chieftains, and overlords.

A series of legislations had been passed which affected the forest and water resources after the incorporation of Nizam’s Hyderabad state into Independent India in 1948, and subsequent reorganisation of the state into Andhra Pradesh in 1956, but for the present study we shall take a look at the NRM policy in India from the late 1980s onwards. In parallel with attempts at reform in the PRI systems, a similar initiative can be seen in the case of NRM bodies where the process of decentralisation preceded the PRIs by a couple of years. JFM was the first of these initiatives which was followed by watershed management and water users associations.

3.5.1. The JFM:
The first national policy breakthrough occurred when the National Forest Policy was passed in 1988. It proclaimed that forests are not to be commercially exploited for industrial policies, but they are to conserve soil and the environment, and meet the subsistence requirements of the local people. The policy gave a higher priority to environmental stability than to earning revenue. To translate the new policy objectives into practice, the Ministry of Environment and Forests issued a National Joint Forest Management (JFM) resolution in June 1990, supporting the rights and responsibilities of forest communities in the management of public forests. Over the next six years, virtually all of India’s states passed similar guidelines. JFM allows governments to collaborate with communities in managing forestland; mainly degraded government forestland.
The joint or collaborative element may vary, with communities having more or less decision making authority relative to government and other interests (Sarin 1999).

3.5.2. Joint Forest Management in Andhra Pradesh

In Andhra Pradesh, the first government order on JFM was issued in 1992 and the Forest Department began implementation in the same year. However, there was little implementation until the initiation of the World Bank aided AP forestry programme. The initial order was modified in 1993, giving more decision making power to the people and reducing the unilateral powers of the forest officers. It also provides for formation of Vana Samrakshana Samithi (VSS) by taking a cluster of villages, a village, or village hamlet, situated on the fringes of a forest. JFM involves the State delegating responsibility over some tasks to NGOs and voluntary associations and to locally created Joint Forest Management Committees.

VSS should have at least 50 percent of the landless households as members, two members representing each household, one of them being a woman. This is to ensure that women, who are the greatest users of forests and suffer most as a result of forest degradation, are not excluded. Every VSS has a Managing Committee (MC) whose are elected by the VSS general body and comprise the president of the Gram Panchayat and six to ten elected representatives from the VSS, of which at least one third must be women. Membership to schedule caste and schedule tribe households is compulsory so that no users are excluded (in principle) from the benefits derived from forests.
3.5.3. Process of VSS Formation

The Government Order on JFM (G.O.MS. No. 173 of December 1996) requires a general body meeting to be held in the hamlet/village/village cluster selected, to be attended by all the adults with a minimum quorum of 50 percent. The meeting is to be addressed by an officer not below the rank of Range Officer, who is to explain the concept of JFM. A VSS is to be formed through this process with every member of household being represented by a man and a woman. The GO provides for all SC/ST adults in the hamlet/village/cluster to automatically become members of the VSS. The GO mandates the formation of a Management Committee with a two-year term. The Committee is to have as its members, 10 to 15 elected representatives (all tribals in ITDA areas, reservation of 1/3 seats for SC/ST in other areas), of which at least 30 percent should be women. The Forest Section Officer will act as Member-Secretary of the VSS. Importantly the GO stipulates that after two years, efforts will be made to identify a literate person from the VSS who is able to maintain minutes, to discharge the functions of the Member-Secretary.

Elections are to be held under the supervision of the Range Officer. The Committee has to elect a Chairperson whose term is that of the Management Committee. The process actually followed is explained below: The Range Officer and his assistants meet with the villagers, discuss the procedures and benefits of the programme, and request the Sarpanch and the Panchayat to organise a Gram Sabha. The Gram Sabha organised is utilised by the Forest Department officers to explain the salient features of the programme, the rules for programme implementation and for the formation of the Van Samrakshana Samiti. The members of the VSS are selected from each household in the village that is
dependent on the forest for livelihood. After this, the process is to arrive at a consensus during this village meeting on persons to be elected to the VSS Management Committee members and the Chairperson of the VSS. The officers make it clear that the preference would be for a woman, SC or ST member as Chairperson and, if possible, literate. Also, a third of the management committee has to be from the same category (women, SC and ST).

In the year 2002 Government of Andhra Pradesh came out with another government order (GO) converting the JFM into Community Forest Management (CFM). The GO stipulated that there will be 15 members in the VSS of which 7 are men and 8 of them will be women. Another important change in CFM is that either the Chairman or Vice Chairman must be a woman. In order to have more transparency cheque power is extended to Vice Chairman also in CFM. Thus while there used to be lot of interference of the bureaucracy in JFM, it was reduced and the role of community was increased in CFM.

A micro plan will be prepared by the VSS in mutual consultation between the Forest Department and VSS. This document will contain the current status of forest and the treatment it needs to regenerate degraded forest and all issues connected with forest management. The plan will be approved by the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) having jurisdiction over the VSS area. The VSS is entitled to get all income from harvested produce obtained from the forest as per the approved microplan. The VSS is entitled to 50% of fines collected and 50% of net revenue from beedi leaf apart from the Non Timber Forest Products (NTFP) in the VSS area. Initially, during 1994 and 1995, there was much mutual mistrust, but
gradually there appears to be more acceptance of JFM/CFM programme, which may be due to benefit flows as the degraded forests in many places are getting regenerated and employment is being provided locally. Some of the special features of the AP government’s JFM orders worth mentioning are the 100% rights given to people over the forest produce unlike in many other states, 50% compulsory enrolment of women in the general body, involvement of NGOs in strengthening the VSS and transparency in VSS operation by channelling the funds through Joint Account System.

3.5.4. Watershed management:

In order to combat the frequent recurrence of drought in the State, Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) was introduced during the year 1975, as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) with matching state share of 50:50. Integrated Wasteland Development Programme (IWDP) was introduced during 1991 with 100 percent central assistance. The Department of Panchayat Raj and Rural Development implemented both programmes.

The 1995 Guidelines of Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) following the Hanumantha Rao Committee Report’s recommendations have prescribed an approach integrating pre-existing sectoral programmes. The state Government undertook watershed development on a massive scale since 1997 on the basis of these Guidelines with ambitious targets. A massive programme for development of all the degraded lands in Andhra Pradesh in 10 years was launched during 1997. The 10 Year Action Plan for development included wastelands, degraded lands and degraded reserve forests. It was envisaged to develop 10 million
hectares of degraded lands and wastelands, with an outlay of about Rs. 40000 million from 1997 to 2007 at the rate of 1 million hectares every year. Andhra Pradesh accounted for over 24 percent of the 10,000 DPAP watershed development projects launched in the country during 1995-2001.

The Department of Panchayat Raj and Rural Development is the nodal department at the state level implementing watershed development through the Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP), Desert Development Programme (DDP), Integrated Watershed Development Programme (IWDP) and Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS). The department has two divisions namely; Panchayat Raj and Rural Development- each headed by an independent Commissioner. Watershed Development is a subject under the direct supervision of the Commissioner, Rural Development (RD). A State Watershed Programme Implementation and Review Committee (SWPIRC), to ensure coordination among various government departments like agriculture, horticulture etc., university and research institutes, voluntary agencies and training institutes has been constituted. This is the principal coordinating body at the supra-departmental level. A provision has been made for a regular organisational set-up in the office of the Commissioner RD, to effectively supervise, coordinate and monitor the implementation of the DPAP/DDP in the districts. It comprises representatives from the Departments of Soil Conservation, Forests, Minor Irrigation and Remote Sensing.

A special post for watershed development has been created at the district level, in the name of the Project Director (PD), DPAP or DDP, depending on the district concerned. This is a special institutional innovation peculiar to Andhra Pradesh,
and exists in the 12 DPAP/DDP districts in the state. At the district-level, funds are routed through the office of PDs who in turn are assisted by Multi Disciplinary Teams (MDTs) drawn from line departments. There can be one or more MDTs in the DRDA depending upon the number of watershed projects being taken up in the district. The Zila Parishad and Mandal Parishads have not been provided any position at these levels, not even in the state- and district-level advisory committees. At the sub-district level, there are the Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs) that are entrusted with the task of planning, coordinating, supervising, and formulating watershed projects in selected villages. The PIAs can be drawn from line departments such as Agriculture, Forestry etc., voluntary organisations and NGOs, as well as agricultural universities and research and training institutes. Finally at the district level, there is the District Watershed Development Advisory Committee that is under the chairmanship of the Project Director. This comprises the PD-DPAP, 3-4 members from the Multi Disciplinary Teams (MDTs) of the DRDA, 5-6 representatives of PIAs and voluntary organisations implementing watershed projects and 1-2 members from research and training institutes in the district.

3.5.4.1. Guidelines:
The Hanumantha Rao Committee suggested ways to refocus DPAP and DDP, and recommended a participatory approach. The guidelines drafted subsequently (MoRD 1994) laid great emphasis on local participation suggesting that restoration of ecological balance in the village would be maintained through ‘sustained community action for maintenance of assets created and further development of the natural resources in the watershed’. Local participation was also to be ensured through the use of ‘simple, easy, and affordable’ technological
solutions and user groups and panchayats in a position to willingly take over the 
operation and maintenance of assets at the end of projects. They should then make 
suitable administrative and financial provisions for their maintenance and further 
development. Participation can be operationalised through self-help groups and 
Watershed Committees - WCs (with adequate representation of SCs, STs and 
women). Funds are to be channelled directly to the village, with villagers working 
hand-in-hand with an independent PIA that could either be a government agency, 
non-government organisation or even a corporate sector entity. A strong effort is 
suggested to move away from a physical target focus that characterises most 
government programmes (MoRAE, GoI, 1994).

The DPAP had carried out an evaluation of prospective watersheds for selection, 
and prioritisation of watersheds for development was done in the initial stages to 
avoid conflicts over selection. The parameters adopted for selection of villages for 
the watershed programme in the State, are:

- Priority ranking given by the State Remote Sensing Applications Centre, 
  taking into account rainfall, evapo-transpiration and sedimentation rate
- SC and ST population
- Percentage of literates
- Percentage of agricultural labourers to total workers
- Drinking water scarcity
- Quality of drinking water
- Availability of active DWCRA/Self Help Groups
- Status of groundwater.
- Availability of active NGOs
- Contiguity with existing watersheds
- Livestock population
- Community mobilisation

Weightages for these criteria are to be worked out; but community mobilisation is to have at least 30 percent weightage. The last three criteria in the list provide enough leeway to select a watershed for development and not be tied down by technical considerations. There are reportedly disputes over selection and the District Watershed Advisory Committee (or the DPAP Governing Body as it is referred to by officers) has a dominant role in actual selection of watersheds. This body is chaired by the District Collector, and has as its members, the PD DPAP, all MLAs, and MPs of the district, and 3 ZPTC members. In forest fringe villages, watershed development has been undertaken with the Van Samrakshana Samitis (VSS). Watershed Development in forest fringe areas is undertaken with either DPAP or JFM funds. With the popularisation of watershed development and the funds allotted, the demand for watershed projects has increased especially after the first two years. This was the main cause of disputes regarding allocation of watersheds as political influence played a crucial role in the allocation of watersheds which is evident in the study area too where some of the villages got multiple watersheds despite lack of coordination in forming a committee on many a time and resulting in the cancellation of the allocated watershed.
3.5.4.2. Watershed Formation:
The village representatives are informed of the need to organise a Gram Sabha (GS) for initiating the programme in the village. The Gram Sabha organised is utilised by the MDT, PIA and Watershed Development Team (WDT) members to explain the salient features of the programme, the rules for programme implementation and for the formation of the Watershed Committee. Initially a watershed association comprising of all the stakeholders will be formed in the Gram Sabha which elects the President of the Watershed Association. This will be followed by another meeting wherein the watershed association was divided into User Groups and Self-help Groups. Then the Watershed association would elect the Chairman and Secretary of the Watershed Committee. The other Committee members are then elected. The guidelines stipulate the unanimous election of the office bearers and the watershed committee.

The MDT/PIA/WDT members along with the villagers then visit the watershed area to discuss possible activities and the work entailed. The WDT/PIA members prepare the action plans for the watershed, which is indicated to the Committee and submitted to the MDT. The Watershed Committee members are then provided training on management aspects of the programme, accounts, measurement books and payments. Women’s groups are formed usually in to the second or third month of the programme. The role of the community rapidly diminishes after the formation of the Watershed Committee. The Watershed Development Plan is prepared almost entirely by the WDT and the PIA, with little participation of the community. Since the process of institution-building is short-circuited, both in terms of time required, and the institutional stages to be gone through (User Groups and SHGs first, followed by Watershed Association and Committee), the
Watershed Committees have not become institutions that articulate local demands to line departments.

There are no linkages envisaged by the programme managers between the watershed institutions (limited to WCs in actuality) and the PRI institutions. The WC is expected to function under the supervision and advice of the PIA/WDT, expected to report progress to the WDT/PIA and involve all members of the Watershed Association. The WC is expected to meet regularly for planning works and for reviewing outcomes. In practice, while meetings are recorded in minute books, an important question is whether these actually take place. While the Panchayat plays a role in the formation of the watershed institutions by providing the forum (for its formation), there is no institutional linkage\(^{19}\) envisaged or expected in the process. In actual terms, since the formation of the committee is driven by the Sarpanch or the dominant members of the Gram Sabha, an overlap exists between the two in terms of dominant elites or political groupings.

**3.5.5. Tank Irrigation in Andhra Pradesh:**

Water harvesting systems have traditionally been built in many areas of Andhra Pradesh, to store runoff and some of these structures date back to several centuries. The most common water harvesting system is that of tanks and these were common in all regions except in the Eastern Tribal region. At present, more than 70,000 tanks of various sizes are reported in the state, and these irrigate about 602,780 hectares (ha) (GoAP, 2000). More than half of these tanks are reported to be in need of repairs.

\(^{19}\) There is a change in the guidelines in 2003 with the introduction of ‘Hariyali’ watershed scheme. Watersheds implemented after that year are functioning under the control of gram panchayat.
Tank irrigation in Andhra Pradesh dates back about a millennium and kings, landlords and merchants, whoever wanted a share of the produce, would build tanks. Large-scale tank irrigation in the Telangana area is reported during the second half of the Twelfth Century even though large tanks existed in neighbouring Karnataka for a long time prior to that. Temples were given a share of the lands irrigated by tanks in many cases (Talbot, 2001). The person, who invested on tanks, was given concessions in terms of land or compensated by the beneficiaries by other means. Management of these tanks seems to have been restricted to water distribution and repairs. The necessity for de-silting would not have arisen since catchment areas were not intensively used.

At present, tanks and ponds have lost their earlier importance as irrigation sources due to siltation, breaches, encroachments on catchments and tank bed areas. Most parts of the catchment area of the upper watershed tanks were either forests or grazing lands. In the case of chain tanks downstream, the upper tanks prevented silt from flowing down. Cultivation of the catchments without land development seems to have contributed towards increasing siltation. In the past, maintenance was limited to maintenance of bunds and use of silt for various activities like brick and pottery, as manure for the fields etc. Since cyclonic storms and related intense rainfall phenomena affect most parts of the state, consequent damages to tanks are common. If such events occur during the late monsoon period, the damages to tanks can be significant. Repair of damage can often take beyond a year due to financial and logistical constraints.
Decay of tank irrigation is indicated by reduction in tank-irrigated area from a maximum of 1.258 million hectares (mha) in 1967-68 to about 0.7 mha during the mid 1990s. During the same period, the area irrigated by wells increased from 0.45 mha to about 1.6 mha. While the government had taken over the management of surface irrigation works, farmers’ involvement in repair was non-existent. During the pre-Independence period, large landowners and Jagirdars had some stakes in maintaining the tanks in their areas due to additional taxes they could get from irrigated lands. With fragmentation of land holdings, the individual stakes in managing tanks have reduced significantly. Abolition of Jagirdari system led to discontinuation of stakes for the Jagirdars in managing the tanks while individual farmers in the command areas could not afford to maintain the tanks due to the high costs involved.

With government taking over tanks, the responsibility of managing the tanks shifted away from the farmers totally. After Independence, tank irrigation was brought under the state government’s purview. The state government took up minor and major irrigation works and later small tanks with command area of less than 100 acres were brought under Panchayat Raj Engineering Department (PRED). Tanks with command areas larger than 100 acre are maintained by the Minor Irrigation Division under Irrigation and Command Area Development rechristened as Command Area Development Authority (CADA). While these two departments are in charge of tank irrigation, Village Panchayats are excluded from managing water resources of even smaller tanks. The investments required for either building or maintaining the tanks are large and Panchayats’ incomes are insufficient to take up these activities. At the same time with limited resources
available, the PRED and CADA is unable to take up effective preventive maintenance as indicated by nearly two third of the tanks in need of repair. In interior parts of the state with low rainfall, the tank irrigation potential has already been utilised fully and any more additional storage capacity building is likely to be at the cost of earlier/ downstream tank users. This is especially true in the case of low rainfall zones of Rayalaseema and parts of Southern Telangana region. It is reported that many of the new water harvesting structures fail to fill during the years of less than normal rainfall.

The Andhra Pradesh government has not devolved minor irrigation to Panchayats even though minor irrigation, water management and watershed development fall under Panchayats as per the 11th Schedule. This further curtails the possibility of decentralised management. The Andhra Pradesh Farmers Management of Irrigation Systems Act (APFMISA), 1997 has transferred tanks with command areas larger than 100 acre to the minor irrigation division. Smaller tanks, which are amenable to village level management, are still under the Panchayat Raj Engineering Department (PRED).

The 1997 Act provided for the formation of Water Users’ Associations (WUA) in tanks having a command area of 100 acres and above and in canal distributaries. The Act stipulates that all water users who are landholders in the water users area will be members. While this act includes most of the direct stakeholders in case of large-scale canal systems, other users like fishermen are excluded from the membership of WUAs. The Act contains provisions relating to different types of irrigation schemes, tiers of farmers’ organisations, elections, functions of farmers
organisations, resources, and penalty for offences. This act also allows part of the water tax to be transferred back to the local organisations so that these groups take up the Organisation and Management (O&M). About 50 percent of the water tax is the share of the WUAs, Distributary Committee, Project Committee, and the Gram Panchayat. The history of irrigation in the State after independence indicates over-emphasis on creating new potential with little or no attention to Organisation and Management of existing systems, especially the smaller ones.

3.5.6. WUA Formation:

The structure of the WUAs depends on the size of the irrigation system. In case of minor irrigation system (less than 2000 hectares) it is a single-tier organisation. Thus, in a minor irrigation project there is only a WUA, and the distributary committee and project committee are absent which are to be found in larger irrigation systems. The number of Territorial Constituency members varies from place to place depending upon the size of the ayacut. The area of each WUA is split into four to ten territorial constituencies, depending on the extent of command area under a WUA to ensure fair representation of all upstream and downstream farmers in the Managing Committee of the WUA. Membership in the WUAs is for all the farmers coming under its jurisdiction. It will have a general body, which would be meeting before every crop season and at the end of it to review the availability of water and its distribution. There are two kinds of members – members with voting rights and those without. All those farmers, who own land, those who cultivate the land, which is falling under ayacut, are taken as members with voting rights.
Elections will be held once every five years. The first body was elected in June 1997 when elections were held all over the state to elect representatives to WUAs. During the first elections an incentive of Rs.50,000/- was declared for the WUAs where the body was elected unanimously. This had resulted in several bodies getting elected without opposition. The second elections were supposed to be held in the year 2002 but were not held till 2004 and an amendment was made to the Act with regard to the constitution of the WUA. It was decided by the government to have a permanent body where members will be elected every two years in a revolving manner for a period of six years. At the time of introduction of this plan in 2004, it was decided that the first and second batch of retirees are to be decided by lottery after two and four years respectively. One of the most significant features of the APFMIS Act is the provision of ‘recall’ of elected representatives. This is a unique feature of the WUA act as it provides the members the right to remove an elected member. A notice signed by 1/3 members is required for the issue to be taken up for discussion in the general body. A general body meeting would be convened within seven days to approve recall motion by a simple majority and a notification would be issued recalling the elected member.

For undertaking various works and managing the affairs of the WUAs several committees are formed. Each committee is headed by a T.C member and consists of 4-6 farmers with voting rights. Apart from this there is the Management Committee which consists of the President and the T.C members. It looks after the activities of the WUA from the top and supervises the work done by various committees. In the case of WUAs of tanks there are four sub-committees. They are -
1. Works Sub-Committee
2. Finance and Resources Sub-Committee
3. Water Management Sub-Committee

The most important change to take place after the implementation of the 1997 act was that the management of irrigation systems was transferred to the farmers and the role of irrigation department changed from that of a ‘doer’ to that of a ‘facilitator’. Some of the other changes brought about by the Act were – distribution of water, maintenance works, power to resolve disputes, ability to decide on crops and cropping patterns depending on the availability of water and most importantly social audit of the activities undertaken by WUAs.

3.6. Conclusion:
Starting from the early 1990s the last decade and half has been largely dominated by efforts to promote people’s participation in development. Although there had been several programmes promoted by governments since Independence starting with the Community development programme in 1952, the basic aim of these programmes had gone unrealised due to the non-partisan attitude showed by the people. One of the major reasons had been the lack of awareness. Efforts by government to promote democratic decentralisation by including the locals in development planning and implementation of programmes through Panchayat raj system proved to be futile due to several reasons. Elite capture of these bodies and the lack of political will on the part of the government made them totally redundant from the perceived nature of their formation. In effect, they became
tools in the hands of the rural elite in carrying out their political objectives and perpetuating their control over the village affairs (Robinson 1988).

Starting with the JFM policy in 1992 and followed by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, Watershed Guidelines, and Water Users Associations, a new opportunity was created for the people to overcome the decades old domination of the bureaucracy and the elite in controlling the Gram Panchayats and the NRM bodies. The role of donor agencies is significant in this paradigm shift. This was particularly true in the case of Andhra Pradesh as the World Bank was instrumental in pushing through the APFMIS Act in 1997 and also rejuvenating the JFM programme by giving its backing to it in 1993. Andhra Pradesh stood at the forefront in the reform process by becoming one of the first states to implement these programmes as it received adequate support from the donor agencies and the full backing of the Chief Minister of the time, Chandrababu Naidu. But there remained certain problems. Some of the pitfalls of the reforms had been the lack of proper community organisation and awareness programmes which if undertaken properly would have resulted in greater participation of people in the programmes. The age old problem of elite control of positions of power at the village level is another tricky issue. An important change had been the introduction of reservations for SCs, STs, OBCs, and Women in panchayat bodies and the legislations which made women and SCs part of the NRM bodies.

In the next chapter details of the area of study were dealt in detail and it also gives a background of the field area.