CHAPTER VII

ANALYSIS, SUMMARY & CONCLUSION:
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Irrespective of the fact whether Municipal Elections should be direct or indirect, party based or non-party based, politics continues to dominate Municipal affairs and seems certain to go on dominating them for as long as Municipal Institutions exist. So, it is indeed meaningless, pointless and useless to discuss the desirability or otherwise of politics entering into municipal matters. If it is true that politics is the pursuit of power and that group interests must clash, as they cannot but, in the process of Municipal Electoral matters, politics and power struggle become 'indispensable. Afterall, it is inherent in the electoral system itself that candidates, their supporters and their opponents, whether they belong to any party or not should organize themselves into groups or cliques, and this is the right silent climate for the growth of what we understand by the term 'party politics.

A comparative study of the Municipal Election of 1981 and 1987 has clearly revealed that much can be said on both the direct and indirect elections to the post of Municipal Chairman. It has also broughtout the advantages and disadvantages of both the party based and the non-party based Municipal Elections. The traditional debates on these issues are sure to go on forever and nothing can be said as the last word on the subject, as long as conflicting interpretations are possible on all that are human. The imperfection in human nature makes no human institution or system perfect. Through the method of trial and error, the relevance of each system at a given moment is realized and the system is continued or discontinued, depending upon the need of the moment.

This comparative study has also thrown light on the undeniable fact that if people who want to take an active interest in Municipal affairs, must organize themselves into groups in order to be effective and to achieve something, they must have some common interest, ideology or purpose which should bring, and having brought keep, them together. The way in which the interests of a particular castes or a particular community are sought to be promoted in particular Municipalities becomes crystalclear if we look at the social realities that existed in Madanapalli and Punganur. Similarly, now the interests of a particular socially, politically and economically dominant family are safeguarded in almost every Municipal Election is equally clear, if we observe the electoral politics played by
the Pawar family in Srikalahasti. The intra-caste rivalry in the Municipal politics of Tirupati is evident in the factional struggle between the two groups led by P.S. Guruva Reddy and Mabbu Rami Reddy. In a way, the other castes in this pilgrim town from tried to make the best of the bad bargain in their dealings with these two groups by alternately changing their loyalties frequently.

The extent to which people can be loyal to a particular party, notwithstanding all sorts of pressures and temptations was evident in Municipal Elections of both Tirupati and Chittoor. Both the strength and weakness of the congress (I) groups came into lamelight in the Municipal Elections of 1981 and 1987 in Chittoor district. While during normal times the Congress (I) men belonging to different castes and groups would be fighting among themselves overall sorts of things, it was, indeed, a tribute to the Congress (I) that at the time of Elections in 1987 which were fought on party basis the party presented a united picture, despite all the bickerings and misunderstanding among its members before elections. It was this attitude that helped the Congress (I) to score a spectacular victory in the 1987 Municipal Elections which proved a promising prelude to the grand triumph of that party in the 1989 A.P. Assembly elections restoring political power to it after a gap of seven years, during which period the T.D.P ruled the state.

A comparative study of the 1981 and 1987 Municipal Elections in Chittoor district has focused on the truth that political parties are relatively powerful groups and that it is clearly better to be a member of a political party than to stand along as an individual or an independent.

As against the 1981 election, the 1987 election has clearly proved that political parties are indispensable for the successful functioning of democracy, even at the Municipal level. The confidence a political party creates in the citizens and the respect it commands from them were visible in the 1987 elections. Personal differences of opinion were forgotten by the party candidates in 1987, while they, in 1981, fought against each other bitterly for capturing Councillorships and Chairmanships. Thus, party discipline and future prospects created a better atmosphere for the Congress (I) candidates in 1987, unlike in 1981 when there was no political party evincing keen and direct interest in the success of candidates who happened to be its own members. While, in the interest of democracy, the participation of political parties in elections is considered desirable and essential, there is no unanimity on the view that Municipal Elections must be fought
necessarily on party lines. The usual charge is that party politics would vitiate the atmosphere in Municipalities, carrying very little for civic welfare. But, in the context of linkage of politics, it is not always possible, and sometimes, not even desirable to delink local Elections from party politics. Political parties have come to stay and function at all levels and there is no use shouting from house tops against their existence or participation in civic elections.

Well established political parties have a distinct advantage overall and sundry ad-hoc combinations which arise and fall every now and then. Moreover, since men have to combine not only to fight but also to plan for the future, it is probably better that they come together on the basis of political beliefs than on any other basis. For, the obvious non-political basis for such combination would be caste or religion, and therefore political combinations are infinitely healthier politics today casts its shadow well-nigh every sphere of individual as well as social life, and Municipalities are no exceptions to this fact. As the concept of the welfare state grows more and more, politics must yield influence on our life's. The various promises made by political parties and candidates at the time of elections are, therefore, sought to be fulfilled to the maximum extent possible, keeping in view the larger interests of both the party and the community in the long run.

As against the 1981 election, the 1987 election evoke a lot of political interest in the citizens. If the citizens do not take active part in enforcing accountability on the part of the elected representatives, the officials may become irresponsible and democratic Government, will only become a shadow without substance. A recognition of this fact imposes upon all citizens the obligation to participate in democratic politics.

A comparative study of the 1981 and 1987 elections has exposed the deficiency of the former in the matter of political education for the citizens, whereas, in 1987, on account of participation by political parties in Municipal Elections, enlightened politics was ensured. If a citizen does not participate in politics in modern times, he is exposed to the exercise of power by persons over whom he has no direct control. Politics is, after all what the citizens make it.

Eventhough, in 1981 theoretically speaking, political parties did not participate in Municipal Election, still in practice, parties atleast indirectly, propagated,
canvassed, campaigned and even provided financial help to their supporters for fighting the Municipal Elections. In a parliamentary democracy such things are unavoidable. A representative democracy cannot function without political parties, even in the case of elections to local bodies.

Both the 1981 and 1987 Municipal Elections in Chittoor district clearly showed that the ability to pay for election campaign was an important consideration in the matter of candidature. It was also a painful fact that political parties, as in the case of 1987 municipal elections, picked their candidates on the basis of their caste rather than on the basis of their individual eminence or public service record. But this was only a reflection of what happens at higher levels in elections. Whatever party leaders may say in public, the ugly truth is that casteism is fed, fond and encouraged by political parties because of their anxiety to exploit caste for their electoral advantage.

The 1987 Municipal Election in Chittoor district plainly showed the biggest advantage in fighting an election as a party candidate over an unattached opponent. This was unlike the situation in 1981 when the candidates who stood as independents were deprived of a whole band of party workers to campaign for their success. In 1981, independents had to work hard to earn each vote, whereas in 1987, party candidates banked upon solid party votes.

The role of a political party in Urban politics is to choose the candidates and try to get them elected. Interest groups or pressure groups rarely engage directly in the electoral function, rather their concerned is to influence public policy through contact. They tend to build on specific aspects or issues of public policy. This distinction permits a functional contrast between those two types of political institutions, while political parties pull different interests together, the interest groups make it possible for group values to be formulated and expressed.

The above facts came into limelight during the elections under review. In 1981, political parties had only indirect role to play in the selection of candidates or in the election campaign.

By and large, more than the strength or the weakness of political parties had little to do with the success or defeat of individual candidates overall independents in the Municipal Elections of 1981. Under these circumstances, the
personnel popularity, influence and financial resources of the candidates alone dictated the whole process of Municipal Elections, occasionally influenced only either by political parties or interest groups.

As against the 1981 elections, in 1987 elections political parties participated directly in the Municipal Elections. Eventhough a section of people in this country opinions that political parties should not take part in the elections of local bodies and prominent thinkers like Mahatma Gandhi, M.N. Ray and Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Narayan have been pleading for partyless democracy at the grassroots level, on the ground that the local bodies should be free from political strife, since local problems do not necessarily involve party politics, the 1987 Municipal Elections in Chittoor district clearly underlined the most effective role played by political parties in elections in all phases election of candidates, election campaign, poll alliances etc. While all political parties took interest in capturing power, sometimes they do not set up candidates officially but still propagate, canvass, campaign and even provide financial help to their supporters.

In this connection it is fitting and proper that the role of political parties in raising the tone off Municipal politics in Chittoor district should be noted.

a. Both the congress (I) and the Telugu Desam parties tried to develop comprehensive civic programmes on the basis of enquiries into the needs of urban people, although the elections speeches of their leaders did not always reflect this tendency. More often than not, leaders of political parties campaigned as if they were participating in the election campaign relating to the State Assembly or Lok Sabha. Both their criticism and their counter criticisms were a familiar stuff to the people of the municipalities. Only National and State problems were touched by the politicians and little or nothing was said by them about the civic problems. But this was some what compensated by the local candidates of the political parties who in their door to door campaign referred to the problems of the towns and promised to solve them.

b. Political parties in 1981 as already stated above, did not have any significant role in this selection of candidates in that non party based election, whereas in 1987 elections candidates were selected for Municipal Elections by political parties with requisite care and promoted highly successful Municipal candidates to
candidatures for higher public officers in order to make Municipal offices attractive to persons of ability and integrity.

While in 1981 political parties had virtually no control over their own party men contesting as independents, in 1987 municipal Elections political parties exercised overall control over their members in the Municipal Politics at all levels and in all phases by formulating a code of conduct for their guidance in the day to day matters eventhough there were still a few cases of indiscipline among the members belonging to the Congress (I). In this respect, it should be noted that discipline was somewhat better in the case of TDP candidates, partly because of NTR’s personality and partly because of the influence of caste on TDP is Municipal Politics.

Both the 1981 and 1987 Municipal Elections in Chittoor district focused on the need for a general agreement among all the elected Municipal Councillors in regard to making joint efforts to implement non controversial civic programmes. Sometimes even the most urgent and essential requirements of the towns like roads, drinking water, street lights, sanitation etc; could not be satisfactorily fulfilled by the Municipal Councils on account of their narrow and the self centered Municipal Politics.

e. Both the 1981 and 1987 Municipal Elections the Chittoor district pointed to the absolute necessity for a comprehensive programme of leadership training for elected representatives so that they could develop into responsible, knowledgeable and effective Councillors.

f. Unlike in 1981 Municipal Elections when there were no reservations for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the Municipal Councils of Chittoor district for the post of Chairmanship. In 1987, Chittoor Municipality was reserved for SC and Srikalahasti was reserved for ST. Eventhough this did not materially alter the power equation locally, it was however the starting point of the political advancement of the weaker sections.

g. The experience gained in the matter of the functioning of the Chairman of the Municipal Council both in 1981 and 1987 showed that his position should be strengthened by increasing his legal powers, by developing the prestige of the office by careful selection of the occupant of this office and by trying the experiment of the direct Election to the office, as a strong Chairman would resist the pulls
and pressures of the Councillors for gaining favours from Municipal Administration and would also guide the Municipal Administration in an effective manner. The specific cases of Tirupati, Srikalahasti and Chittoor Municipal Chairmanships could be mentioned in this connection. Dominant castes and wealthy, influential and popular individuals played very significant roles quite often in the politics relative to the highest Municipal political office.

h. The absence of worthmentioning local citizens associations was noticeable during the period 1981-87 in the Municipalities of Chittoor district that was why the view point of different sections were not placed before the Municipal Councils so that these were considered while policies and programmes were being formulated.

i. It was seen that the public spirited member of the educated elite and a responsible local press did not exercise a general vigilance over the working of Municipal Government in Chittoor District. Hence, not much was done to expose the baneful influence of casteism on decisions and programmes.

An unfortunate feature of fighting Municipal Elections in 1981 was on caste lines and personality lines. But in 1987, elections were fought on party lines which was undoubtedly a better prospect for democracy.

Factional politics were bitter in 1981 Municipal Elections in Chittoor District, thereby paving the way for much more bitterness in the future elections, even if they were going to be conducted on party lines. Thus, despite the Congress (I) contesting the Municipal Elections as a responsible political party, it could not always control the factional politics and personality clashes among its rank and file, although one should hasten to add that, by and large, party discipline and party interest brought about a patch up among the Congress(I)men in 1987, without disastrous consequences to the larger interests of the party. But it should not be forgotten that the frequent conflicts among the influential Congress (I) leaders often created embarrassing and ugly situations for the image of the party. This happened both in 1981 non party based elections and 1987 party based elections in Chittoor District.

The introduction of reservations in the Municipal Chairmanship Election resulted in the gradual decline of political power, authority and influence of dominant individuals, as evident in the case of the Pawar family in Srikalahasti.
The lack of reservation in 1981 enabled the Pawar family to continue to enjoy its established local position. Contrary to this situation, in 1987 the allotment of Sri Kalahasti Municipal Chairmanship to ST dealt a severe blow to the power and prestige of the Pawar family.

The 1981 and 1987 Municipal Elections in Madanapalle presented a picture of glaring contrast in that while in 1981 caste loyalties were pronounced, without reference to political parties, in 1987 party loyalties became full of ridicule when politicians had no inhibition to use both caste and party according to their convenience. On the whole, however, the upper hand of caste over party was crystal clear, even in 1987 elections.

Similarly, communal loyalty asserted itself in Punganur in 1987 Municipal Chairmanship Elections, a TDP Muslim candidate could easily capture it the clear cross voting resorted to by the Congress (I) Muslim voters who in the normal circumstances would have solidly voted for their own party candidate. (In this connection it should miss one's attention that the majority of the Municipal Councillors were Congress (I) men only).

The one striking common feature both in 1981 and 1987 Municipal Elections was the bitter factionalism witnessed at the inter party as well as intraparty levels, in the Congress (I) and Telugu Desam parties. Obviously the remedy seems to lie either in holding direct election to the post of Vice-Chairman or in abolishing the post itself. It was really funny and paradoxical that for a virtually powerless post like the Municipal Vice-Chairmanship their should so much bitter struggle among politicians. To the argument that in the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman would have to discourage his duties it might be replied that there would be no such need if a panel of senior Councillors was prepared for this purpose, as per section 51 of 1965 A.P. Municipal Act.

The one painfully noticeable feature of both 1981 and 1987 Municipal Elections was the undue and unwarranted involvement of the ex-officio members of the Municipalities, the local MPs and MLAs, who vitiated the whole atmosphere in Municipal Councils which were prevented from giving a good administration to the people on account of such unhealthy political interference. In the larger interest of the civic welfare, this should be minimized if it cannot been altogether eliminated.
Both in 1981 and 1987 Municipal Elections there was too much talk indulged in by the Municipal Councillors on all and sundry topics serving no purpose whatsoever from the point of view of the people welfare. Precious time of the Municipal Councillors was miserably wasted. On the lines of the proceedings in the parliament and the assemblies, there should be time limit even for the Municipal Councillors during the debates in the Council meetings.

Both in 1981 and 1987, the elected Municipal Councillors, whether they were non partymen or partymen, showed a tendency to promote their own on their parties interest, rather than the welfare of the urban areas entrusted to them. The district Collector, being a head of the district administration and local bodies, should use his legal powers to restrain the Municipal Councillors from misusing the opportunities given to them by the system of Local Self-Government. It is the abundant duty of the District Collector to see that Local Self-Governing Institutions have actually served as the nurseries of democracy.

Before 1981, the Osmania University in Andhra Pradesh conducted co-ordination classes for the mutual benefit of the Municipal Chairman and the Municipal Commissionars. Unfortunately this was done away with in the later years for some reason or other. If these classes are revived, there will be immense benefit for both the Chairman and the Commissioner, enabling them to make joint efforts for an effective, purposeful and successful Municipal Administration for the good of the people.

The distortions that crept into the identification photo system introduced in 1987 by providing the possibility of several maneuvers and manipulations must be wiped out if there is to be a genuine and free polling in Municipal Elections. It is the responsibility of the elected representatives at the State level to take the necessary steps, in consultation with elected Municipal Councillors, for setting right the anomaly of the provincialised Municipal Employers not receiving their salaries directly from state Government, as much of the Municipal income is presently spent on the salaries themselves. Just as the panchayathiraj employees are getting their pay directly from the state Government, so also the Municipal Employees should be in a position to feel secure in their jobs by getting their salaries directly from the State Exchequer. This would enable all the Municipal Employees to spend the municipal income on the welfare of the people in municipalities.
The wishes and wicked influence of politicians on the issue of unauthorized constructions in the Municipal areas must be put an end to by appointing advisory committees in this regard and complain fully with their suggestions. The existence of factionalism in political parties and the absence of public spiritedness and social consciousness among the elected Councillors both in 1981 and 1987 in Chittoor district stood in the way of a sound Municipal Administration capable of ensuring the overall civic welfare of the citizens under the jurisdiction. The lack of service instinct among the Municipal Councillors failed to infuse the spirit of service among the Municipal employees. Of course, the ultimate losers were the people in the urban areas only.

If a true democratic civilization is to be nurtured in towns and cities, Municipal Self-Governing Institutions must emerge as models for democracy at higher level. All Government is education, but the best education is self education which is Self Government.

Unless and until Municipal Elections are held fairly and freely. One cannot hope for an exemplary Self Government in Municipalities. Political parties should impose on themselves a code of conduct before, and after elections. In view of the fact that territorially the Local Self Governing Institutions in towns have only a limited area under their control, it should not be difficult to practice ethics in the conduct of elections as well as in the implementation of the election promises.

Educated people have got an onerous responsibility to cooperate with the Municipalities in every respect to make Self Government and democracy a reality. The dream of welfare state will have to be realized first through the Local Self Governing Institutions only. Here again the Municipalities have got a clear edge over the Panchayath Institutions in the rural areas on account of several advantages they are enjoying over the latter. In the sphere of culture, financial position and educational opportunities the Municipalities clearly stand on a better footing than their sister Local Self-Governing units in the illiterate, poor and less cultured villages. It is for the citizens of the urban areas to make the best use of the various facilities available to them for not only developing their own personalities but also contributing to the National Democratic system itself in the long run.
The district of Chittoor, with its politically developed Municipal towns, is a matter of exiting study for any social researcher. Both during the freedom struggle and after independence towns like Tirupati, Madanapalli and Sri Kalahasti contributed immeasurably to democratic culture. In the political development of Rayalaseema, Chittoor district occupies a unique place with its commendable restraint in political conduct as against the emotional out burst witnessed in some of the other districts in Andhra Pradesh. Being very close to Tamilnadu and its capital city Madras, Chittoor district has been very much influenced by the patriotic Tamil leaders during the freedom struggle and even after the attainment of independence. The formation of a separate Andhra State did not materially alter the close links between Chittoor and Tamil Nadu, eventhough politically several changes were made after separation from Tamilnadu have forced Chittoor district to adopt newstyles in politics and administration. But still, the politicians of Chittoor district are easily identifiable among their counterparts in other districts by virtue of their imitations both in dress and address profoundly influenced by a South Indian culture in general and Tamil culture in particular. However peripheral it may be, the regional political parties of Tamilnadu, the DMK and AIADMK, played their own humble role at the marginal level in the Municipal Elections of Chittoor and Tirupati in 1987.

That even at the microlevel like Municipal Politics in a district the hereditary element has come to stay abundantly and formally established in the various Municipalities studied in this thesis. The following examples would prove the varascity of the above statement.

In Sri Kalahasti, for instance, the Pawar family has undoubtedly established a hereditary rule before the advent of TDP rule and the allotment of the Municipal Chairmanship to ST’s.

Similarly at Tirupati the veteran politician of the yesteryears, the late Poola Venkatamuni Chetty had chosen his own son, V. Munirathnam, as his political heir and the latter has been Municipal Chairman of this pilgrim town since 1987, highlighting the numerical importance of the Balija caste in Tirupati Local Politics.

The case of Madanapalli was no difficult Ex-municipal Chairman, the Late Ratakonda Reddeppa Naidu was automatically succeeded by his own son
Ratakonda Rajasekhar, ensuring there by not only the continuance of his family rule but also the domination of the Kanuma caste in Madanapalli Municipal Politics since 1987.

In the light of the above evidence it can be concluded that as in the Parliamentary and Assembly elections in Chittor District, Caste, Money, Factional Politics and Hereditary played a vital role even in 1981 and 1987 Municipal Council elections of Chittoor District.