PREFACE

In recent times the study of urban Government and Politics became popular in almost all the advanced countries. Such a study provides a correct understanding of political behaviour and furnishes proper clues to improve the local democracy. Further, it has practical utility in so far as it seeks to assess the capacity of local political parties to manage local institutions.

Of late, Indian interest has been steadily growing in the academic and research pursuits to analyse and understand politics and electoral process at the district level as the first vital step to comprehend the wider political implications in the regional, state and national settings. However, to understand how the party copes with its environment one must see how the party functions at the local level. The capacity of the state and national party units to work rests ultimately on the performance of leaders the constituent units who actually deal with the public in their day-to-day activities. If the local units under their control are unable to win electoral support, and, at a minimal level, resolve internal organisations can survive. In a fundamental sense, therefore, party building involves the creation and successful performance of the party at the constituency level. When we speak of parties we mean organisations at the local level. When a district is chosen for study, one is concerned, not with the performance of local government or the nature of community power, but with how the local units of the party win electoral support, resolve internal disputes, and are related to the larger state and national party organisations to which they belong. In order to explore how the party leadership adapts to different types of environments, the district organisation has been selected as the local unit, since there are some general factors at work as a result of actions of the national and state governments which affect all districts.

In the present day context of research in social sciences, the studies at micro-level are gaining increasing significance and, viewed in this context, the present study becomes quite relevant. The attempt to study party politics at the district level helps in understanding the political process at the state and national levels. In particular, a study-in-depth of the electoral politics vis-a-vis the party organisation is more welcome to understand the various mechanism at work in the process of realization of democratic ideals.

Politics manifests itself in an institutional field. The institution of municipal government has traditionally been the arena of urban politics in India. Municipal councils in the bigger cities have more powers and resources. As such they have attracted local leadership and the political parties to hold the reigns of municipal power and decide upon the services and patronage. In the medium size and small size cities and towns the municipal bodies have a limited range of functions, yet competition to gain political power has induced the political parties often to win local elections and use this opportunity to expand their local political base. The urban political areas has never seen a
closed shop. Links have been established from among local, regional and central areas through common leadership and the influence of state parties.

The district of Chittoor occupies a unique place in the politics of Rayalaseema and Andhra Pradesh. On the one side geographically it is situated on the borders of Tamil Nadu and on the other it has got borders with the coastal Andhra District of Nellore. So, naturally and interestingly it combines the traits of both Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, reflecting the cultures of both the states.

From the point of view of caste composition, Chittoor comprises a large number of Reddys like the other Rayalaseema districts and the coastal district of Nellore. Chittoor has also got a sizeable number of Kammas, in certain segments, like the coastal districts of Guntur, Prakasam, Krishna, East and West Godavari as well as its sister Rayalaseema District, Anantapur. The Tamil population and the Tamil Telugu population should also be considered as contributing to the peculiar political style of Chittoor District.

The role of Chittoor District in Freedom Struggle was most prominent. Veteran Politicians and National figures like M. Anantaseyanam Aliyanga, who adored both the positions of Bihar Governor and Lok Sabha Speaker. Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy, who a former of Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh before his elevation to Indians presidency, sought election once from one of the constitutions to the State Assembly from Chittoor Districts. The former President of Andhra Pradesh Chamber of Municipal Chairman, P.S. Guruva Reddy also hailed from this District.

Thus, politically and socially, Chittoor provides a very fertile ground for the study of power Politics particularly at the local level. A comparative study of the 1981 and 1987 municipal elections is taken up by this researcher with a view to comprehend the deeper political implications for the state, in the light of the most powerful and effective role played by N. Chandrababu Naidu, son-in-law of the Telugu Desam Party founder, N.T. Rama Rao, who brought about a big political change in Andhra Pradesh in 1983 after breaking the Congress(I) monopoly.

The 1981 and 1987 Municipal elections proved significant in the sense that while the former elections were the forerunner for the Congress(I) debacle of 1983, the latter elections proved a prelude to the Telugu Desam disastrous defeat of 1999.

In a nut-shell the larger political implications of the Municipal Elections of 1981 and 1987 prompted this researcher to take up a comparative study of both the elections.

In the study of these two elections in Chittoor District, formidable difficulties were placed by this researcher. First of all, no permanent records were maintained by the Municipalities which could not provide even the names of all the candidates in the first instance, until the Director of Municipal Administration directly intervened to instruct the Municipalities to provide the required data to this researcher. It was with immense difficulty and after long persuasion both at personal and official
levels this researcher could at last succeed in obtaining the minimum statistical data needed for a comparative study of the 1981 and 1987 Municipal elections. One wished that the future researchers would not experience this kind of difficulty in obtaining data from Municipalities.

This research was mainly conducted on the basis of interviews with several knowledgeable persons, in view of the fact that no literature exists so far on this area in this part of the State. Much of the material collected from a few local journals were in Telugu only, which has to be translated into English.

The chapterisation of this thesis is as follows:


Chapter II explains the importance of Local Self-Government.

Chapter III presents the historical background of Urban Government in India and Urban Government in Andhra Pradesh.

Chapter IV comprises a profile of Chittoor district its Land, People, Society, Economy, Culture, Languages and Religion.

Chapter V introduces the Urban Political elites of Chittoor district and their contribution to political development.

Chapter VI covers the Municipal Council Elections of 1981 and 1987 in Chittoor District, with focus on contrast between them in their respective issues, manifestations of political parties, selection of candidates and election campaign polling pattern and results.

Chapter VII is the Summary and Conclusion of the thesis with the emphasis on the contrast in the features and political consequences of 1981 and 1987 Municipal Elections.

Though it was originally planned to include the impact of the 1981 and 1987 Municipal Council Elections on the policy formation and implementation of Municipal Councils in Chittoor District, the idea could not be carried out for reasons beyond the control of this researcher, the most important among them being the loss of the relevant Municipal Council Records due to some reason or the other.

The terms “Reddi” and “Reddy” are interchangeably used in this thesis. Both mean the same - the name of one of the socio-politico-economic dominant castes in Andhra Pradesh.