CHAPTER - VII

ANALYSIS, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION
Kurnool though located in the drought-prone area of Rayalaseema, is second to none of the districts of Andhra Pradesh because of its rich historical background, the nature's endowment of vast mineral resources, extensive black cotton tracts and dense forests. Traces of Paleolithic age, microlithic culture and remains of the Neolithic age were brought to light.

The district has the distinction of having remained and flourished sway of great dynasties like the Mauryas, the Satavahanas, Pallavas, the Nalas, the Chalukyas of Badami, the Rashtrakutas and the Chalukyas of Kalyani.

During Medieval period the Yadavas, the Kakatiyas, the Reddies of Kondaveedu, rulers of Vijayanagar, the Bahamani sultans, Adilshahis of Bijapur, the Golconda Nawabs, rule of all these were witnessed by the district. Literary activity was at its zenith between the 15th and the 17th centuries A.D. Of the eight poets known as "Ashtadiggaajas" of Krishnadevaraya's Court two were born-natives of this district. They were Allasani Peddana and Pingali Surana.

The Moghuls, Asafjahis and the Marathas ruled the district. Later, for many years a family of Chiefs known as the Nawabs of Kurnool ruled Kurnool and the surroundings as their jagir.
The Kurnool District figures quite prominently in the contribution it made to liberation from the British imperialist rule under the leadership of Narasimha Reddy. The Home Rule movement gave rise to state of activity in the district. The district showed again its political awareness on the eve of the visit of the Simon Commission in 1928. The Brahmin elites played a notable part in the Quit India Movement launched by Gandhiji in 1942. The movement took a violent turn and finally normalcy returned only after independence.

The abolition of the Zamindari system brought a revolutionary change in the class structure of the district. The Zamindars and the former rulers also have largely disappeared as a class and they tended to take to other professions and trades. The loosening of the caste system with its rigid notions of high and low has also greatly added to the transformation of a feudal and ascriptive society into a more egalitarian structure. The elite Reddis joined hands with the Brahmin intellectuals in sharing power at a time when power meant perquisition jobs, permit and contracts. Even election from the village to the state level rotated around money. With money it is become easy to capture positions of advantage. This was the elite democracy of Reddy class in the society.
The Kurnool district holds out considerable attraction to immigrants owing to its important irrigation projects Kurnool-Cuddapah canal, the Tungabhadra High level Canal and the existence of mineral resources. Migration of people has been in evidence in Kurnool, Nandyal, Allagadda and Kolakuntla. Many of the labour class of Kurnool town are migrated from Mahaboobnagar district (They are named as 'Molakaseemavallu' and are known for their sincerity and hardwork).

In 1953, just to allay the fears of the Rayalaseema legislators Tanguturi Prakasam agreed to have Kurnool as the capital of Andhra state. Critics alleged that it was the outcome of an agreement between Prakasam and Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy, the then President of the A.P.C.C. Whatever may be an agreement was the good fortune of the district that Kurnool became the capital town and gained significance in the political field. Kurnool remained the capital of the Andhra state from the first of October, 1953 to the First November, 1956. It had already been constituted into a municipality in 1866 A.D. and was declared as a city according to the census of 1961 and it became a 'B' Class city from 1986 onwards.

In the very First General Elections, the Kurnool district won only one seat for Congress and the other had
gone to an independent. The same followed the second, and the Third General Elections whereas in the Fourth General elections the other seat went to the Swatantra party. The district faced the mid-term elections for the first time in 1955. As far as the Assembly elections are concerned the Indian National Congress was able to win majority of seats, but the rest of these seats were won by mostly independents.

And in the Fourth General Elections the Congress party could win only six out of fifteen Assembly seats. From this one can conclude that Independents were equally powerful. It was the personality of an independent candidate that made him secure the seat and nothing else. Besides, caste and money played a vital role. Independents who won and contested from this district were mostly the elites from the Brahmin and the Reddy community.

The special credit of the Kurnool district lies in choosing a Scheduled Caste member, Damodaram Sanjeevaiah of Kodumur (SC Constituency) as the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. He was the first S.C. Chief Minister in India. This so happened because the first Chief Minister of the Andhra Pradesh, Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy went to the centre to become the AICC President. D. Sanjeevaiah became the Second Chief Minister just because of the factional politics among the Reddis. The credit of choosing a woman
minister (Masu Begum) and reating a deputy Chief Minister's post for the first time (K.V. Ranga Reddy) went to D. Sanjeevalah alone.

"The real core power of the state Congress party has always been with the political leaders at the district level, just as the power and strength of the Central leadership lay with the political leaders in the states in post-Nehru India".¹

In general factionalism, specially in the Kurnool District during the 1975-85 which constitutes the decisive period, led to confusing and unstable alliances among the party leaders. Factionalism rotates round the personalities who would be always keen to grab power and position. Flexibility, ruthlessness and betrayal are the common characteristics of factional politics. They are highly informal and transitory. The flexible character of factions easily permit the adjustment of alliances in response to the changing times and power structure.

Indian society is both plural and federal. So also is the polity because society and politics now interact in India as intensely as they should be in a vigorous democracy.

After the start of the decade (1975-85) India was caught in the biggest political cleavage in its modern political history. Today it stands on the threshold of a new political consensus. It was a decade that revolved around the personality of one person, Indira Gandhi whether she was in power or out of it. If the political stage belonged to Indira Gandhi she won it by her unmatched political skills and with her unique contributions of holding the country together through crisis after crisis and giving it a voice in the world. She exploited the darkness of the emergency very shrewdly from its very start. She moulded her party, cast a long shadow over the Janta regime, chose her son as per political heir and through the catastrophe of her assassination, enabled power to pass to the younger generation.

Each decade exhibits its own distinctive political temper in India. The back-breaking struggle and sacrifice of the decade of independence in 1940s, the challenge of nation-making in the 1950s, the wars, famines and rising uncertainties of the 1960s were followed by a flush of hope and brilliance in the early 1970s. The period of
brilliance was short loved and yielded quickly to turmoil and confusion. Yet in spite of it all, there has not been anything quite like the last decade that is 80's.

During the decisive decade 1975-85 the slightest slick of the hand over imaginary kaleidoscope produced political patterns never before beheld in India. The first non-Congress government in power in the centre and the first premature collapse of a government in the centre. Politics had turned away and resulted in the rise of regional parties. It was the younger aspirants that saw themselves blocked most in this fashion, and so cast their politics in the regional mould. For this reason many new parties were started in the past decade and had been triggered by the young and crystallised into regional identities.

Not only in India but elsewhere too the youth pressure had split open socio-political formations which had appeared to be quiet well set for the future.

Regional or local parties are an indispensable part of political evolution. The tensions they breed within a formation can be resolved for general and mutual benefit only through horizontal and vertical coalitions representing the fluidity of feudalism.
Since 1977 when the ill-starred Janata combine snatched the reigns of power, the political reproduction process started in its ranks had progressed to almost ludicrous lengths, especially after 1980 elections. Paradoxically, the political climate had never been better for the opposition. The Andhra Pradesh electorate was disillusioned and commenced the search of a national alternative to the ruling party. As they couldn't find it at the national level, people chose it at the regional level.

General elections during the 1975-85 decade were in touch with the soul of India experiencing the greatness of a democracy suddenly coming alive. The flavour of the campaign was different from election to election and must rank as the greatest shows on the earth. The catchy songs, the ingenious slogans, the high-tech video rathas (chariots), the imaginative graffiti and scores of other new gimmicked all add up to make India not only the world's largest democracy but also the most boisterous one.

Particularly, 1983 was the year when the electorate for the first time showed that is support could not be taken for granted. The Telugu Desam regional party's victory was stupendous and it got an overwhelming majority in the legislature.
In 1983 N.T. Rama Rao's political party, the Telugu Desam party swept the polls on the single point campaign that is restore the 'Telugu Honour'. Quick changes of Chief Ministers at the dictates of Delhi Durbar and humiliation of the state Congress leaders by upstart nominees of the centre had given greater thrust to N.T. Rama Rao's campaign and gained for him a big majority in the State assembly. Unfortunately, the success went to N.T. Rama Rao's head and he took it as his personal achievement.

The 1983 elections must be viewed as fresh instances of the influence of the public desire for better politics on electoral outcomes. This desire had become widespread and it was likely to persist till it was accommodated in an adequate measure by political parties and leaders.

Even the most seasonal of poll forecasters failed to predict the cataclysm of the Congress-I. The Telugu Desam Party, a 9 month old party, swept the poll with 70% of seats it contested and reduced the strength of the Congress-I to one-third of its previous position. N.T. Rama Rao had started on a promising note with a small cabinet emphasising the values of austerity and economy in Governmental expenditure, punctuality and quick decisions. Reduction in the number of state
corporations, anti-corruption drive against higher officials, restrictions in employments in the interest of efficacy and economy passing a resolution on abolition of the legislative council, reducing the retirement age of the employees, ban on capitation fee in educational institutions, introduction of Telugu as the official language in administration signing of Telugu Ganga agreement with Tamil Nadu Government etc., all these were undertaken solemnly within a few months. N.T. Rama Rao was given to many superstitious notions. Soon after assuming power N.T. Rama Rao hogged the media attention for giving publicity not so much to his political statesmanship but to the silly changes in his attire and ceremonial based on his personal ludicrous superstitions.

N.T. Rama Rao came back with a massive victory in the Assembly mid-term elections in 1985 after N. Bhaskar Rao episode, just to uphold value based politics and to strengthen democratic principles. He criticised the office of the Governor as that of a 'Spy of the ruling party' or an 'agent of the centre'. Also he stood for strong states and described the centre as a 'conceptual myth'.
From the beginning N.T. Rama Rao was concerned with consolidating opposition unity and he had an idea of starting even 'Bharata Desam' with the help of all opposition parties at the National level. Later he was able to unite the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Janata Party, CPI & CPM as 'National Front' during 1989 elections, and became the Chairman of the National Front. This was the party which won the elections in the centre and formed the government. But soon, because of personal grudges and lack of unity among the National Front leaders, India within 2 years had to face mid-term elections. The people realised that the Congress-I was the only party which can give a stable rule for 5 years. Therefore, they opted for the Congress-I. P.V. Narasimha Rao from Nandyal Parliamentary segment of Kurnool district was elected as the leader of Congress-I in the parliament with the massive support of the people. Kurnool district enjoys a unique place in the political history of India. It is the only district in India which had the good fortune of electing and representing two Chief Ministers (D.Sanjeeva Reddy, first SC Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, and Kotla Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy, a President-Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy and a Prime Minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao.
The truth is that India is too large in size and population, too federal in political configuration and too strongly pillared on institutions immune to political upheavals to disintegrate into pieces merely because of a change of Government. Political parties conspire in the erosion of institutions to suit the political dictates of the day. The fact is that India had been no less or no more unstable than at any time. Since 1952 when first elections were staged, it is infinitely more mature, more immune to political manipulation and more resilient to political change.

Even in its most vulnerable phase the insecurity and infighting within the government and parties right from 1975 till date did not lead to any great instability as far as the community was concerned. It did not only survive, but emerged much stronger in its democratic credentials. The choice before the electorate has never been more difficult or more ambiguous.

After 1975, multiplicity of parties became a feature in India, which was responsible for creating confusion
among the illiterate voters. They really found it difficult to distinguish between the relative merits and demerits of the principles, policies and programmes presented before them by representatives of the large number of parties. All the political parties were wooing the youth vote and it was easy to see why it was so important in the 1985 assembly elections. One conclusion came out clearly that youth of the Kurnool district participated enthusiastically in the elections. They had taken a considered decision and it was abundantly clear that no political party could take them for granted. This was evident between the age group of 18-22 years when the youth exercised their franchise for the first time in the elections to the Assembly and to the parliament.

The district didn't have any impact of the emergency. Amidst the Janata wave in 1977, the Congress was led in to the state by the then Chief Minister Jalagam Vengala Rao who had won all the 42 seats for the Lok Sabha except one in the state from where Ex-President Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy contested and won on the Janata party ticket. This was Nandyal Constituency of Kurnool district which attracted normal attention for its speciality. Personal image fought a hard battle with caste and money as background against the onslaught of political image at Nandyal, the cradle of the congress since decades. The Congress
tally of 41 Lok Sabha seats had come as a big boost to the party at the national level. But it was dislodged from power by the Janata party in 1977.

In 1980s a great deal of anger and dissatisfaction with the administration, was felt both by citizens and the journalist fraternity. Emphasis was more on the style of functioning and on diversions than on concrete programmes. The state had the dubious distinction of having been ruled by Chief Ministers appointed regularly by the High command for a long time.

The telugu psyche was wounded by the Congress-I High Commands with its frequent change of the Chief Ministers. Fourth time Kotla Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy of Kurnool district, a Lok Sabha Member was picked up by Mrs. Indira Gandhi to lead the state. But he was labelled as "unsuccessful Chief Minister". He was specially selected by the then Prime Minister with the confidence that he would be able to face and arrest the progress of the newly born regional party, Telugu Desam Party started by the Telugu matinee idol Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao. He had convincingly decimated the once powerful popularity of Mrs. Indira Gandhi into a rich electoral harvest.
Examining the pulse of the conditions the Congress party senior member, the Ex-minister, a M.L.A., from Dhone Constituency, joined the Telugu Desam party followed by many others and won.

K.E. Krishna Murthy, the backward caste leader and a faction leader from Kurnool district had been allotted the important Major and Medium Irrigation portfolio as a reward by Telugu Desam Party. Later K.E. Krishnamurthy worked vigorously for the defeat of the Ex-Chief Minister, K. Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy during the Loksabha elections. Personal image fought a hard battle against the onslaught of political changes in Kurnool. Even the flow of sympathy wave that followed the assassination of Indira Gandhi could not help K.Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy to win. He had also taken the help of Rajiv Gandhi but failed. Critically speaking Kurnool had been obviously neglected and the Union Government could not provide any important development project. This neglect must have adversely effected the chances of success of K.Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy.

E. Ayyapu Reddy, Ex-Minister of Congress cabinet and now the Telugu Desam party Lok Sabha member from Kurnool who defeated the stalwart K.Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy has judiciously built up in the Muslim vote bank by opening a Law College, a Women's college and marriage hall for the Muslim minority in Kurnool. Moreover, the Telugu
Desam Party and its ally, the CPI (M) had provided ticket to two Muslim candidates in the district.

However more than the party work in the constituency E. Ayyapu Reddy's singular service as the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee drew the Government's attention to the ineffectiveness of the audit system. Yet he was defeated by K. Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy in the subsequent Lok Sabha elections. Later he resigned from the primary membership of Telugu Desam Party and joined Congress (I) in 1989.

K. Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy is a stalwart of the Kurnool Congress party. He contested in the Lok Sabha elections representing the district five times. He was defeated only once by the Telugu Desam Party candidate. He has a lot of support in the villages and does not have any factions. He always gets berth in the Union cabinet is having command over the politics of Kurnool and works for the development of his constituency. He is able to win the vote bank of various sections irrespective of caste, creed, educational standards and economic levels.

The victory of the Telugu Desam Party reveals that a regional idiom, a regional language, regional problems, and regional milieu are acceptable to the people. The
fact was that N.T. Rama Rao won both in urban and rural areas with a wide margin and captured emotional aesthetic antenna of the electorate. A regional party devoid of linguistic chauvinism, casteism and separatism had a chance of coming to power after the 26 year uninterrupted Congress rule in Andhra Pradesh.

Later N.T. Rama Rao's individualistic style of functioning, caste alignments, family members domination took the shape of a cyclonic wave against N.T. Rama Rao. However, the installation of Telugu Desam Party government in Andhra Pradesh was both a promise and a warning. It was a promise in the sense it made an eloquent protest against the illegitimate central encroachments on regional autonomy and an ardent will to map out a new route to development. It was a warning in the sense that an excess of localism might ultimately be disruptive of India's national unity.

Caste always played a predominant role in regional politics. Caste as a status-group determining the hierarchical interactions and inter-relationships in the post independence era, had been transformed into a political group to articulate the social, political and economic interests. So, increasingly the caste affiliation of
the position seekers became important at the time of election. The caste group numerically dominant in a particular constituency or a combination of caste groups had considerable influence on the election outcome. The Kurnool municipality for nearly 15 years was dominated by muslim minority community. At present it is a reserved municipality of Scheduled castes. Some time back For loksabha and for the assembly elections, however the minority community became important because of its numerical strength in the areas.

Right from 1952 General elections in Kurnool district the selection of Congress candidate did not affect the fortunes of victory. For the first time in 1983 and 1985 Assembly elections and 1984 Lok Sabha elections, the Congress party swept out because of wave-like reaction of Telugu Desam party, when no caste, faction or communal factor worked. The trend at present moved towards backward classes also. One of the most important achievements of the Telugu Desam party had been that it could strike a balance between various caste groups with emphasis on Backward classes, in the district. There was a refreshing departure from the position of the Congress-I which relied heavily on upper castes, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and minorities.
Women too always played a silent role during the 1975-85 period elections. They preferred the Congress-I because of Indira Gandhi. Later women voters flocked enmass behind N.T. Rama Rao's saffron banner and as a result of his myirical schemes and programmes meant specially for them were introduced and because women were given an equal share in parental property by law.

In India no political party is an exception to factionalism. In all parties faction is the real unit of political action. The dominant party - The Congress in Andhra Pradesh is characterised by factional politics both with its negative and positive aspects. Its success rested upon the ability of the factional net work to contain caste and regional conflicts.

Myron Weiner says that "Indian leader-followers factions are durable and stable because their members belong to tightly knit face to face groups closed to outsider" was the naked truth of Kurnool factional politics during 1975-85.

A faction in the Indian context is defined as "group with an articulated set of goals, operating within a larger organisation but not created by or with the approval
of the parent body". Further "it is generally characterised by a uniformity of goals and basic values and usually has sufficient permanence to allow members to develop a sense of identification with the faction" \(^2\) and the groups often bear the name of their leaders.

However, it is likely that the factional factor plays a lesser role in the Lok Sabha elections than in the Assembly polls, despite the fact that simultaneously polls are being held. The voters in the Kurnool constituency have been taking the note of the individual reputation and personal record of the candidates for the parliament seat but they are "intelligent enough" to take sides with particular candidate for the Assembly seats.

In the faction-ridden constituencies of the district, the groupism was generated by the arrack business. The tension between the groups have been severe during the auctions of arrack shops. And they plan to take revenge against each other during the election time. Factions are also due to geographical conditions. Black soil which facilitates agriculture only for six months. And the rest of six months people have lot of leisure time and therefore they involve in factional politics.

Faction leaders of the Kurnool district maintain their own security guards. These security guards are
considered as part of the family. Expenditure towards maintenance of security guards ranges from Rs. 15,000/- to 20,000/- per month. During recent years it has become a mark of dignity to a leader to maintain his own security.

Thirteen segments of the district are divided into two factions. Since 30 years factions became routine and people in the village always face great to identify themselves with one or the other leader. This is so because faction leaders behave as if they are the real law holders and also law protectors.

Therefore along with factional leaders even common people think that it is their right to take revenge against the opposite group. They believe in the doctrine of "Nail for Nail and tooth for tooth".

The leaders never come out from their house without security guards. Even the family members do not know the whereabouts of the leaders. The life of the most of the political leaders start with factions and end with factions.

If the leaders could not secure the tickets of prominent parties, they do not hesitate to contest as Independents. The factional politics are mainly among the Reddy community. Therefore, we find more intra-caste groupism
in sub-regional parties. Particularly Allagadda, a notorious faction-ridden segment of the Kurnool District is a special case. The candidate who wins the seat once will not be given a the second chance to win by the electorate. The main reason for this is the leaders after the election will not stay in the constituency. Instead they prefer staying in Hyderabad. Therefore the people are not having any chance of taking their grievances to their representatives. The elected leaders prefer to stay elsewhere for their own safety. All the Rayalaseema legislators of Andhra Pradesh are given security round the clock which clearly reflect the adversity boon of factionalism. Persons with criminal records are themselves turning politicians, fired by an ambition to gain the responsibility and status of a people's representative. Police firing starts right from the day of filing of nominations.

Inspite of precautionary measures taken by the Election Commission, disturbances, clashes, bomb throwing and rigging were common. It shows entrenchment of cankerous elements in the body politic and electoral system. That muscle power and money power have been playing a havoc with the democratic edifice by making a mockery of the poll process is an open secret. The most visible symptoms of this disease are the spread of the gun culture.
'Storm ahead' there could be no better word summing up the election scenario than this. People must be warned of 'criminalisation and communalisation' of elections. Not only election but everything around has been criminalised and communalised. Man moore or less seems to have lost his identity. He is known by his caste, creed and region only. Politicians and their politics are mainly responsible for the state of affairs.

The Kurnool district never faced any serious challenge regarding communal politics, except once in Adoni segment of Kurnool district. But soon it was rectified and never repeated again anywhere so far.

During the recent elections of 1989 the strategy of accommodating the defectors from the Telugu Desam party paid dividends to the Congress-I in the assembly elections. But factions became more severe and thrust was given to the caste factor. The backward class and upper caste factions are quite strong though the factions tend to be above caste configurations.

By an overall assessment of the working of political system during 1975-85, one can safely say that inspite of general illiteracy and poverty, the masses showed a strong common-sense and political wisdom in electing their representatives. It was true that certain political
controversies led to sharp confrontations among the various politics groupps. This was understandable in a district like Kurnool, because of its vastness, long history, factionalism, casteism and many diverse interests. But we cannot ignore the fact that a broad consensus has now emerged in many aspects of Kurnool democracy.

It would be extremely corrupt practice to appeal to the electors to vote or not to vote for any person on the ground of his religion, race, caste, community, language, faction or group. Political parties will therefore, have to adopt certain conventions and norms to ensure that the fundamental rights of freedom of speech, expression and assembly guaranteed by the constitution are exercised properly.