PREFACE

Electoral Politics in a participatory democracy assume great significance since it is regarded as an index of popular consciousness. Emphasis on the political development of a system enable one to provide the basis for prediction as well as description and explanation. The processes of political change are extremely complex and depend upon a large number of interacting factors.

The Congress party which united the socio-economic forces of the Society on its drive for independence struggle, soon lost the mass character during the period 1975-85, due to factionalism, personal rivalries and communal cleavage. Political development in the states witnessed the emergence of new style of politics namely regionalism, fragmentation of party system, high incidence of communal articulation and agitatational type of politics.

Charisma has always played an important role in Indian politics. Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Jaya Prakash Narayan and Rajiv Gandhi had attracted the Indian voters with their charisma. Of late the charisma factor is creating waves in the states too. Since 1983 Andhra Pradesh too has joined charismatic politics. N.T. Rama Rao had been a telugu cine hero for three decades, entered politics by bringing into existence the Telugu Desam party. Within nine months of the creation, the new
party came to power with a landslide victory by defeating the Congress party. As against national swing in favour of the ruling Congress party, there was a complete swing in favour of Telugu Desam party in Andhra Pradesh during 1984 Loksabha elections. The prominent national parties have been reduced to insignificance in Loksabha and a purely regional party the Telugu Desam Party has become the main opposition party in the Lok Sabha. Therefore it has become quite clear that some regionalism is permissible under nationalism.

Caste, class and pressure groups were not important determinants of voting behaviour. The leaders of the party were the main targets of the voters. The elections during the decade 1975-85 also indicated that it was not enough for a party to have vote support and what was equally important was the mobilisation of the voters. Credibility of the leader, and the capacity of the leader was the main issue in this election. It is also true that the voting was for the party rather than for individuals.

A district is chosen as the primary unit of study and analysis of party politics in relation to electoral process. Politicians and political institutions, in fact, organise activities only in terms of district coverage. The thesis is an attempt to throw light on
the changing political conditions of Andhra Pradesh with a special reference to Kurnool district.

The inter-caste factions are the unique and striking feature of Kurnool district politics. The intensive intra-caste factions in Kurnool district may perhaps be attributed to the fact that the predominant community-economically and socially and hence, politically - in Kurnool district are Reddis. Factions with less degree can be observed even among backward classes and scheduled castes.

This work totally concerned with the study of three elections (1978, 1983 and 1985) to the Assembly, Three elections (1977, 1979, 1984) to the Lok Sabha, two major splits in Telugu Desam party and change of government eight times in the state level during the period of study that is 1975-85.

The study confined to the examination of the party politics and general elections in a specific area and during a particular period:

Chapter-I Introduction deals with the conceptual framework, Chapter-II explains the trend of parties, alignments and elections in Andhra Pradesh during 1975-85; Chapter-III deals with Andhra Pradesh and Telugu Desam Party; Chapter-IV presents a profile of Kurnool district; Chapter-V intro-
duction of political elites of Kurnool district; Chapter-VI highlights the electoral politics of Kurnool district and Chapter-VII sums up the inferences drawn from this thesis.

The Annexures included at the end of the study attempt to furnish the information relevant to the theme of this thesis.