CHAPTER-V

Dr. N. Neelam Sanjiva Reddy as Speaker of the Lok Sabha: 1967-1969 and 1977 April to July 1977
(Right Man in Right Post)
The Fourth General Elections of 1967 to the Loksabha and the state's Assemblies witnessed a dramatic turn of events and Indian politics suffered a severe jolt. The political scene in our country became radically transformed as a result of the fourth general elections. The Congress monolith, which for so long had dominated the Indian political landscape, had become badly cracked but not shattered. Mrs. Gandhi was sworn in as Prime Minster for the second time on the morning of March 13, 1967. She announced a 19 member Cabinet. A very surprising omission was Sanjiva Reddy, who had been Minister i/c of Transport, Aviation, Shipping and Tourism in the outgoing cabinet. The Prime Minister showed the list of Ministers to the Congress President before taking it to President Radha Krishnan. Apparently she expressed some difficulties about including Sanjiva Reddy.

A Politician out of office is more dangerous than when inside in it. However within a short time, probably at the persuasion of Kamaraj, Indira Gandhi said that Reddy would be a good candidate for the speakership of the Loksabha. When the time came, to nominate the candidate for the Speakership, she attempted to go back on her word, and indulged in some loud thinking about other possibilities.

Sanjiva Reddy bluntly informed the Prime Minister that he was going to stand for the Speakership with or without her support. Now the combination of forces arrayed within the party for confrontation on the issue of the speaker's
contest. Then, Mrs. Gandhi hastily withdrew her objections to Reddy’s candidature.²

For the first time, the Parliament had also witnessed a very strong opposition after the IV general election. The reduced majority in the Parliament had made congress position quite vulnerable. In such a changed political condition the fourth Loksabha was entrusted with the task of choosing its Speaker for presiding over its deliberations.

Every time since 1947, the opposition was expecting that the Government would consult them regarding the election of Speaker, but it never happened. This time the opposition was of the view that the Government should consult them to enlist their cooperation in the smooth running of business in the Parliament and try for a unanimous election of the Speaker. On the March 15, the Prime Minster met the leaders of the opposition parties but she did not disclose her mind.

On March 16, amidst a chorus of protests from the opposition parties, the congress Parliamentary Party, decided to sponsor Sanjiva Reddy. The opposition which was strong at that time felt offended because the ruling party had not consulted them before announcing its candidate.

Reacting sharply to the unilateral decision of Congress Party, S.N. Dwivedi, the P.S.P. Leader, said that the Congress Party was not establishing a good convention. It would be better if the Congress had agreed to the idea of consensus.

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Despite the fact that there was all-round desire for the unanimous election of the Speaker, the disagreement between the ruling party and the opposition over the choice of the candidate forced the contest for the second time in the history of the Loksabha. The first time this happened was in 1952 when Mavlankar and More were in the field.

Rama Subhagh Singh, Minister for Parliamentary affairs moved the motion proposing the name of Mr. Reddy, as Congress nominee and the Minister of State, K.C. Pant seconded the motion. Madhu Limaye rose on a point of order that the motion should have been made by the leader of the House or by a private member in keeping with the existing practice. But his objection was over-ruled.

Before the election took place, Limaye raised another point of order. He said that the two contestants should be asked to address the House as enumerated in May's Parliamentary Proceedings, so that the Members could judge themselves who was a better candidate.

Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia said that the Speaker occupied a very special position. His election must be held in a manner as would leave no-doubt in the mind of the nation that the members had voted for him according to the dictates of their conscience. He further said that it was a known fact that Mr. Reddy was a party nominee. Now if the voting was open, no Congress member would
vote against Reddy for fear of inviting the wrath of the Party. The stick of party discipline will stifle the expression of free opinion.

Atal Bihari Bajpai (JS) reminded the Treasury Benches of the rift among the Congress Party over the choice of the Speaker. He said:

"It is well known that two names had been put forward for Speaker-ship on behalf of the congress party. That showed that there was a rift and difference of opinion among Congress members over the choice of the Speaker."

Expressing his opinion, P. Ramamurti (CPI-M) said:

"It would be very embarrassing to the members without knowing the candidates. Every member should exercise his vote after understanding the implications and qualifications of the candidates".

The Deputy Prime Minsiter Morarji Desai intervened and urged the members not to cast reflections on the candidates. It was not keeping with the dignity of the Hose and the office which they were to hold. He also said that it would not be a healthy convention for these two candidates to be asked to come and lay their claims before the House. Therefore, the House should not continue the debate, as had already been decided by the Chair.

Speaker pro tem agreed with Morarji Desai and ruled out the suggestion saying the rules of the House did not require the candidate to address the House. He also turned down the opposition’s request for the suspension of rules.
When Speaker pro tem put the first motion proposing Reddy's name to the vote of the House, it was challenged by the Opposition to a division. The members recorded their preference on slips of paper supplied to them by the Loksabha Secretariat. Mr. Reddy was declared elected by 278 votes to 207 by the Speaker pro tem the other motions proposing the name of T. Vishwanatham were not put to vote.

Thus, by mustering all its forces, the Congress Party got Sanjiva Reddy elected Speaker of the Loksabha in the face of strong resistance from the opposition groups to his nomination.

There was a continuous demand since 1933 from the opposition that the Speaker must resign for his party membership. But no speaker except Sanjiva Reddy offered resignation in response to the Opposition demand. In the opinion of, M.S. Chawla and K.S. Bhalla:

"Sanjiva Reddy was the first Speaker of the Loksabha since Independence to have publicly and unequivocally resigned his membership of the Congress Party after his election to the Chair. In view of the fact that Speaker Reddy had been the President of All-India Congress Party, Congress Chief Minister of one of the most important States, Cabinet Minster in the Central Government formed by the Congress Party and active politician of high standing; Speaker Reddy's resignation from his party was an act of great courage and vision and as it revived a tradition which had not been followed since 1933 due to certain circumstances, it will be remembered as an important
landmark in the post-independence history of Parliamentary institutions in India".5

When Mrs. Gandhi was felicitating Speaker Reddy, Sri Vasudeva Nair (a Member) raised the question, whether Reddy would resign from the party? On that issue she appealed to the new Speaker:

"... You have been closely connected with one party but the party fully appreciated the role of the speaker and realizes that the Speaker must not be a political person and he must sever his political connections. Contest for the Speaker-ship is not unusual or abnormal, but once chosen, the Speaker belongs to all sections of the House. His Office makes him so. He must naturally win the confidence of all parties and members by his Impartiality and fairness in his decisions and rulings".6

After his election, many Opposition leaders appealed to Speaker Reddy that he should break his political ties with the political party to which he had belonged before being elected to the Office.

Referring to Speaker Reddy's political career, K.Anbazhagan, an Opposition leader, expressed his hope in the following words:

" ...... I wish to remind that the Hon. Speaker ... now occupies a Chair which naturally does not suit his role earlier. Even then, because of his culture, his capacity, his understanding and ability, I hope that he will occupy the
Chair with all the honour and dignity that is expected
Democracy in this country".7

Speaking in the same tone, another Opposition leader said:

"The Prime Minister said that once a person is elected as
Speaker, he is above the party... you were the top leader of
the Congress Party. If immediately on your election all
these things can be forgotten and you can just become
above the party, it will be a miracle. Anyway such a thing
can not happen unless one persists about it and
immediately so adjusts him to the circumstances. I know
you can feel the pulse of the people and you can change".8

N.C. Chatterjee, a Senior Member of the House, also appealed to
Speaker Reddy to resign from the membership of the Congress party and said:

"... I hope that you sir, will also announce that you are
resigning from that party and that there will be no cause
for any grouse by reason of your association with that
party which is very powerful party or of your association
or former association with a very powerful syndicate and
that you will completely sever your connections with the
party".9

If we analyze the statements given by the Ex-Speaker, when they were
demanded by the Opposition parties to resign from the party, it is evident that
resignation to the party membership is a courageous task. When the Opposition demanded, Mavlankar, to resign from his party membership, he replied:

"I can not be out of that great organization – the Indian national Congress- under whose banner I have had the privilege of serving, in one capacity or another for the last forty years. I therefore, continue to be a Congress man .... Though a congressman .... It would be my duty to be impartial and remain above all considerations of party or of political career".10

Similarly Anantasayanam Iyyangar expressed his view:

"It may be that I am not resigning my membership from the party but I shall so conduct myself in this office as to infuse confidence in the minds of all parties and be absolutely impartial and try to raise the standards, conventions and traditions of this House".11

Speaker Hukum Singh also held the same view:

"The Speaker can not sever his connection absolutely from the party. To get himself elected he must have the support of his party"12
But it is only Sanjiva Reddy, who accepted the unanimous demand of the Opposition and resigned his 34 year Congress Party membership and announced:

"My office requires of me to be impartial and judicious in the conduct of my work. I can assure you with all the force at my command that I will try to live up to this requirement and maintain the high traditions set up by my predecessors. As a necessary corollary to this resolve, I resign from my membership of the party to which I had the honour to belong for 34 years. So long as I occupy this Chair, it shall be my endeavour to see that all sections of this House get an honest impression that I do not belong to any party at all".13

Speaker Reddy took the right decision at the proper moment. His decision was in keeping with the high traditions and conventions of the great office. It was hailed and praised by the Press all over the Country.

In its editorial the Hindu (Madras), commending the example set by Speaker Reddy, said:

"Mr. N.S.Reddy has done the right thing in resigning from the Congress Party after his election as Speaker of the new Loksabha. It is to be hoped that the opposition Parties which did not take kindly to Mr. Reddy’s Candidature for
the Speakership, will recognize in his resignation from his party an earnest of his intention to maintain the impartiality and authority of the Chair in conducting the proceedings of the Loksabha”.

In his inaugural address at the Presiding Officers’ Conference held in October 1967, Speaker Reddy explained as to why it was absolutely essential for the Speakers to resign from their political parties after their election to the Chair. He said:

"The acceptance of the office of Speaker was for me a difficult choice but once the decision was made, I came to the conclusion that if I were to do justice to my new sphere of duties, I had not only to be impartial and just in the conduct of work as required of my office, but what was more difficult was to convince the House of being so. In the circumstances in which I was placed, I mean the din and noise of a busy political life I was eager to convince all sections of the House that I would live up to the requirements of my office and maintain the high traditions set up by my predecessors. It was in this context that I immediately decided to resign my membership of the Congress Party to which I had the honour to belong for over three decades. You will realize how difficult it must
have been for me to abruptly sever my connections with a political party after having been associated with it for so long, but there was no alternative. I am firmly of the view that a Speaker should belong to no party or rather he should belong to all parties”15.

Referring to the political situation immediately after independence, Speaker Reddy added:

“....there was absolutely no opposition party worth mentioning at all. Therefore, whether the Speaker who was presiding over the House at the time resigned from the congress Party or not made no difference, because there was no obligation on his part to create confidence in the opposition parties”.

Explaining further the political changes that had taken place in the nature of the Loksabha and State Assemblies after the fourth General Elections, he pointed out:

“Every Assembly has an effective opposition. The strength of the opposition is about 40% in some states and 49% in some other States. In Parliament also, if the opposition stages a walk out, you will find that nearly half of the Chamber would be completely vacant because about 45% to 47% of the members belong to the Opposition in
the Parliament. So, to-day the obligation and the responsibility on the part of the Speaker is to create confidence among almost half the membership of the House”.

In his address he also emphasized the fact that these changes also considerably altered the role and the position of the Speaker in the House. He said:

“...to-day the circumstances have changed. It is no use taking the same position as was taken by either Speaker Ayyangar or Mavalankar when there was absolutely no opposition and it was all a one-party affair mostly and there was no need to satisfy the opposition or to keep up a balance. I feel that the circumstances have changed so radically to-day and the Speaker sitting in the Chair to-day will have to create that confidence not only in the party which has put him up as the Speaker, but in the whole House. We can consider ourselves successful only when we create that confidence in the opposition parties more than in the party which has put us in office, because the ruling party needs no protection, the ruling party needs not much of a protection, they are in a majority and their resolutions are carried. It is only when we create that
feeling of confidence that problems can be discussed on the floor of the House in the proper manner and it is only then that democracy can function more effectively”.

Dealing with the doubts of certain Presiding officers who raised the question, “suppose we are not allowed to go uncontested, at the next elections, what would happen”, Speaker Reddy observed:

“... I think that this is a question which need not be considered at this stage, for this simple reason that if we Presiding Officers create that confidence in all parties and all sections of the House, I think we can carry them with us....”

“The tradition that Speaker is a non-party man or a person who belongs to all parties in the sense that he does not belong to any one political party, I think is a good tradition which has been built up in all democratic countries like England, Australia or elsewhere”.

“... If any of you is in any difficulty and you begin to think of the coming elections, saying ‘what will happen to us? Then naturally we shall not be able to take a decision correctly. The moment we begin to think of ourselves and of what would happen to us at the next elections after four and half years, we shall not be able to take the correct decision. Whether the decision is correct or not is the point
to be considered and not what will happen to us after four and half years. If I am not allowed to be elected by the parties, what does it matter? Heavens are not going to fall, so why should we change a correct decision? After all, it could never be expected that the same person may be the Speaker or Chairman or any body else. Therefore, I would say that while discussing this problem, all of you may consider and judge the issue on its merits and the need of the hour”.

Apart from resigning the membership of the party, Speaker Reddy went even to the extent of refusing the invitation of Messrs. K. Brahmanand Reddy, K.Kamaraj and S.Nijalingappa to attend the All India Congress Committee Session at Hyderabad in order to maintain the traditions of the Speakership.16

Praising the Speaker Reddy for taking such a bold action, D.N.Banerjee also remarked:

“In the ‘Dear Reader’ column of Swaraja (p.30) of 20th January, 1968, Rajaji observed, ‘I tender my warm and respectful congratulations to Shri Sanjiva Reddy for declining to accept the invitation to join the AICC at Hyderabad. He has rightly maintained the principles and traditions that govern the office of Speaker... Mr. Sanjiva Reddy had said that, ‘he refused to attend the AICC to
maintain the traditions of the Speakership’ He also said, ‘I am a non-party man and do not belong to the Congress now’. “Mr. Sanjiva Reddy has set an example for all our Speakers, particularly when Speakers in some States in India appear to have by their conduct in recent months brought discredit to their sacred Office by partisanship”.17

Sanjiva Reddy was amply rewarded for his act of faith in the form of willing cooperation from all sections of the House in the discharge of his duties. Describing the outstanding qualities of a Speaker in the following words, he once observed:

“The outstanding qualities of a Speaker are his detachment from any party affiliations, independence and impartiality. Once a Speaker is appointed, he divests himself of his party character both within and without House. It is well known that within walls of the House the Speaker’s authority is supreme. But it is equally well to remember that this authority is based on his absolute and unvarying impartiality. His primary duty or fundamental function is to preside impartially over the sittings of the House so as to enable it to function smoothly”.

“To inspire confidence in his impartiality it is not enough that the Speaker should formally renounce membership of
the party to which he belonged. He should also scrupulously refrain from entering into political controversies or giving an impression that he is helping one section of the House, even though it may be minority section, in their struggle for power”.18

By taking bold decisions and conducting impartially the proceedings of the House he proved himself true to his own words.

Speaker Reddy regarded himself first and foremost as “a servant of the House”. He firmly believed that, “if aspirants for Speaker-ship have to maintain their impartiality and independence they should accept the office with a sense of fulfillment, regarding it as a rare privilege to be called upon to serve the cause of Parliamentary democracy in the unique way which is open only to a Speaker”.

An able guardian of Members’ rights, speaker Reddy will long be remembered as a great speaker who raised the stature of that high office by his scrupulous regard for impartiality, integrity and independence of the Chair.

On July 22, 1969, the Loksabha paid a unanimous tribute to Speaker Reddy for the dignity and success with which he presided over the deliberations of the House. The Prime Minister and Leader of the House (Smt. Indira Gandhi) moved the following resolution:
“That this House places on record its high appreciation the
dignity and great success with which Shri N.S. Reddy
presided over the deliberations of the House in his
capacity as its Speaker”.

Moving the resolution the Prime Minister said:

“I am sure that all Hon. Members will agree that although
Shri Reddy presided over this august House for only to
years, he left his impress on the office and lent it
distinction and dignity by his fairness and vigilance in
upholding the rights of the elected representatives of the
people. By his sense of humour and tactful handling of
the most difficult situation in the House, Shri Reddy
earned respect for himself and for the high office of
Speaker”.19

The 33rd Conference of Presiding Officers was held in New Delhi on 6th
and 7th April, 1968. This emergent Conference was called by Speaker Reddy
to discuss “the functions and powers of Presiding Officers of Legislative
Bodies in India in the light of recent events in West Bengal and Punjab”.

The Controversy regarding the Decisions of the Speakers of west Bengal
and Punjab State Assemblies:

In his opening address20 to the Conference as its Chairman, Speaker
Reddy outlined the developments in the States of West Bengal and Punjab and
observed that the crisis in both the states were, in his opinion, not an
unavoidable. It was at least arguable, he said, that the west Bengal Governor need not have precipitated matters by insisting on the Chief Minister to convene the Assembly earlier than the scheduled date, especially when the interval between the two dates was only of a few days. It was not the Governor, he further stated, who should decide from day-to-day whether or not a party or a coalition of parties had a majority in the Assembly, particularly when defections were, unhappily, the order of the day. The proper place to decide the issue was the floor of the House.

At the same time he felt that despite this the Speaker of west Bengal should have avoided entering into the controversy. By adjourning the House sine die, he rendered the very House which could take a decision in the matter, ineffective. It was the first duty of the Speaker to enable the House to function and not to shut it out.

Speaker Reddy added that if a controversy arouses as to whether a Ministry was legal or not, the proper forum to settle the matter was the court. But the House was not helpless, for even if the court upheld the appointment of the Chief Minister and other Ministers, the House could vote them out of office if it so wanted. If the Speaker took upon himself to pronounce on the legality of the Ministry and precluded the House from expressing its views on the matter, he was arrogating to himself the functions of the House and the courts.

As regards Punjab, he remarked, it was the Speaker’s action in revising his ruling regarding the removal of a member that led to the subsequent
developments. However, the Speaker was within his rights to change his order in the changed circumstances.

Speaker Reddy emphasized that one had to remember that the office of Speaker was an august one. He was the one who should be shown all respect by every section of the House. In fact he could not discharge his onerous duties effectively if he was denied such respect. It followed that motions and resolutions for the removal of Speaker should not be brought forward light-heartedly. There were constitutional provisions, rules and conventions in this regard, which should be followed scrupulously.

As regards the power of the Speaker to adjourn the House he said:

"... The Speaker has considerable discretion to adjourn the House, but this discretion has to be exercised within reasonable limits and in a manner so as not to obstruct the working of the House, particularly, if it has summoned to transact a particular business. No presiding Officer can ignore that it is the privilege of the House and the House alone to decide how long it should sit and what business it should transacts".

He, therefore, urged the conference that if a permanent solution had to be found, that should be at the political level and by adopting sound conventions rather than by amending the Constitution and the rules.
Judgment of the Supreme Court in the Case relating to the Validity of the Punjab appropriation Acts:

Addressing another Conference in October, 1968, Speaker Reddy took an optimistic view of implications of the judgment of Supreme Court in the case relating to the validity of the Punjab Appropriation Acts.

Devoting the better part of his speech to the Punjab developments leading to the Supreme Court Judgment, Speaker Reddy sought to assuage the doubts and apprehensions that the judgment “has opened the floodgates of judicial review of the rulings of Presiding Officers and has thereby negativied the principle that the House is supreme as far as the conduct of its affairs is concerned… (and that it) has placed the Legislature at the mercy of the Governor--- or that (it) has upset the equation between the Legislature and the judiciary to the disadvantage of the former”.

He welcomed the judgment defining clearly the spheres of work between the Executive, the Judiciary and the Legislature and said:

“It is now for all the three organs to keep themselves within the limits of their authority and not to transgress upon the functions of the others”.

He further added that, similarly, the authority and powers of the Speaker vis-à-vis the House was well-known and clearly defined. He also declared:

“We have nothing to fear, if speakers strictly adhere to the firm parliamentary practice that they do not pronounce on the constitutionality and legality of laws”.

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In the Punjab case, Speaker Reddy pointed out, the Court, by holding that the constitutionality of the ordinance was not within the cognizance of the Speaker, "being a matter which could be decided only by the House", had vindicated the position that the Presiding Officer "is only a spokesman of the House and can not arrogate to himself functions which properly belong to the House".

**Speaker Reddy as a Presiding Officer**

After being selected as a candidate for the election of President-ship by the Congress parliamentary Board, Speaker Reddy resigned from the office of the Speaker of Loksabha on July 19, 1969.

A former speaker of the House of Commons J.W. Lowther, who held office from 1905 to 1921, once said, "The office of the Speaker does not demand rare qualities, but demands common qualities in a rare degree". The truth of this dictum appears to have been proved in the case of Speaker Reddy whose greatest asset in that role was a plentiful endowment of tact and common sense.22

With his vast experience of men and matters and his rare and intimate knowledge of personalities, Speaker Reddy managed to tackle with tact and skill difficult situations in the House when at times they became "Boisterous". Commenting on this outstanding quality of his, H.N. Mukerjee rightly observed:
"He never pretended to any profound acquaintance with the rules of procedure. He would not bat an eyelid when one or more of the extraordinary pertinacious and loud-voiced members shouted in Hindi that he just had to be heard. Only on rare occasions would he say that he was exhausted and that the strident member's vocabulary would not be permitted immortalization in the records of the House as he had asked the stenographer to ignore the verbal vibration".23

Though Speaker Reddy held the office of the Speaker only for a little over two years, he lent dignity and distinction to it by the exemplary manner in which he presided over its deliberations. He possessed a large measure of personal authority, a willingness to see the other man's point of view and a deep understanding of the sense of the House which enabled him to conduct the business of the House in an orderly manner. According to H.N.Mukerjee:

"Reddy has distinguished himself by avoiding with extraordinary patience and good humour, recourse to any idea of 'graduated punishment' for erring members even when the latter have appeared unwarrantably recalcitrant, and one regrets to add, considerably rude. Long experience of public work at all levels seems to have lent his innate sense of the practical a kind of dour imperturbability, which indeed has been all to the good, so far as
the conduct of an almost perpetually turbulent Loksabha is concerned".24

A few gleanings from the proceedings of the House might help the people to realize the way how Speaker Reddy brought round the impetuous members.

On 25th July, 1967, Loksabha had a half-an-hour discussion (which actually lasted much longer). During the debate Speaker Reddy was constrained to observe at different points.

"Order, Order. If Hon. Members do not want to hear the Hon. Minister I will adjourn the House. If this happens again, I can only helplessly adjourn the House".

"Will you all kindly sit down? Otherwise I will have no alternative except to adjourn the House".

Order, Order, if this is the way; we better adjourn and go-please conclude now"

About a year later, on July 25, 1968, Speaker Reddy asking simultaneously shouting members to sit down, added, "If still they go on I can only say that all that they say will not go on record". Four zealous members disregarded the direction, but the report indicates only by asterisks that what they had shouted forth was not taken down. It was then that Speaker Reddy observed: "it is 100 per cent wrong to raise points like this without notice; I have not given permission for any body to speak now. There is a feeling in the
House that those who shout will get a chance. Even Acharya Kripalani came this morning and told me, and I feel very small. That is why I say that the Hon. Members should not take the law in their own hands, I feel helpless..."25

Assessing the significance of his office in the context of a very explosive situation prevailing in the Lok Sabha since 1965, H.N. Mukerjee remarked:

“When the Finance Minister’s budget speech was interrupted, he beat out the vociferous demonstration by sheer patience and for a quarter of an hour or more the crowded public galleries, packed with diplomats and others looked on the scene, perhaps with “a wild surmise” about our parliamentary working. Almost every day in Parliament, ‘incidents’ would be in the making but Reddy, with an uncanny knack of doing things, generally succeeded in overcoming them. Since new entrants to the House watched the scene and tried to follow in the wake of successful publicity hunting members, in turned out to be a body which would be hardly controlled. Yet Reddy managed to make it work, which is saying a great deal”26

As the Speaker of Loksabha he had kindled interest in the proceedings of Loksabha through his resourceful and adroit handling of every situation and by his shrewd and humorous observations which blunted the edge of many a critical moment.
No wonder, Sri Reddy emerged as one of the best and the most reputed Speaker in the parliaments of the Commonwealth of Nations for conducting the proceedings with consummate skill. He steered the proceedings of the House with such dexterity that not even on a single occasion the opposition was reported to have staged a walk-out. No member was named, when he was in the chair. It was perhaps an unbeaten record. As Speaker, Sri Reddy won laurels internationally too. Sri Reddy was perhaps the first Speaker in the world to have invited and honoured by various countries including the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

Again Dr. Reddy was the first Speaker in India to express his desire to resign from his party to act as a no-party man on the British model and literally did it (resigned from the Party membership of the Congress party). For this he won applause from the Opposition parties and the elite of the country, but he did not receive sufficient encouragement for the move from the ruling party. Yet he commanded love and respect from all sides in the House. The opposition parties saw in him, in his smiling and serene face, a “friend, guide, counselor, philosopher and indeed, above all the custodian and guardian in action”. The secret of Sri Reddy’s success as Speaker was that he had based all his rulings on sheer “commonsense” and an unmistakable sense of fairness.

Thus an account of his role as a Speaker can be concluded by recalling the statement issued by Abdul Gani Dar, a member of the Loksabha, who said, “I assure you that the name of Sanjiva Reddy as the Speaker will be written in
golden words because he never discriminated between the ruling party and the opposition".28

SPLIT OF THE CONGRESS IN 1969

The great educationist and 3rd president of India Dr. Zakeer Hussain was the first to die in office before completing his term. He breathed his last, all of a sudden in the morning of Saturday, May the 3rd 1969. So now Rastrapathi Bhavan was vacant. Now it was responsibility of Government and more responsibility of Congress party to fill up this honorable and highest post. The power struggle between Indhira Gandhi and Syndicate reached its climax with the presidential election of 1969.

Indira Gandhi the then Prime Minster wanted to Propose V.V.Giri. Since there was no agreement among the party members she withdrew her idea. Later some of the party members proposed to select a Harijan leader in view of the Gandhi birth centenary year. In this connection, there were only two persons, Jagjivan Ram and D.Sanjivaiah. There was no unanimity regarding their selection as candidates for the Presidentship.

Several members suggested the name of Sanjiva Reddy the then Speaker of Loksabha. Indira Gandhi also agreed that Reddy was the only suitable candidate for Presidentship.29

As Speaker, Reddy, had established good traditions and by his non-partisan and impartial attitude he had earned good reputation. He had already severed his connections with the "Syndicate" and was away from active
politics. He commanded respect from both opposition and ruling party. Thus he became an acceptable candidate for all.

But several unexpected political developments affected the chances for unanimous election of Sanjiva Reddy. During his election period, as a candidate for the presidency, Sanjiva Reddy remained a mere silent spectator and never indulged in active politics.

The first event which affected his fortune in this election was the conflict between syndicate and the then Prime Minster Mrs. Gandhi. The differences between them were not a sudden development but an outcome of the personality conflicts since the succession of Mrs. Gandhi to the Prime Minstership. The act of devaluation of Rupee by Indira Gandhi in 1966 and election of the congress Election Committee caused many differences between Indira Gandhi and the other party bosses. The programme drawn up during the past two years for implementation of 10 point programme disappointed the leftwing mostly from the side of young Turks in the organisation.

This divergence of opinions over economic policy clearly arrayed into two camps. Indira Gandhji had an ambition to establish direct influence over the party and sought to clothe her political ambitions in the garb of progressive ideology.

She did not attend the first day meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Board session held at Bangalore on July 10, 1969 and she did not like the draft resolution, prepared by C.Subramanyam and Sadiq Ali and sent Fakriddin Ali
Ahmed with a note to be placed before the working Committee. Ultimately, she herself attended the meeting and saw to it that a resolution incorporating her note was adopted at the session. After getting the resolution passed, she refused to support Reddy and proposed Jagjivan Ram (though she did not favour him earlier) as a candidate for the Presidencies.31

The parliamentary Board again met on July 12 and decided to elect its nominee. The contest was between Jagjivan Ram and Sanjiva Reddy. There were 3 votes in favour of Jagjivan Ram and 5 votes in favour of Reddy. At last the prime Minister signed the nomination of Reddy and proposed him for the Presidentship of the Country. Later it was evident that her attitude in filing the nomination papers was just a tactical move. Observing this V.V.Giri announced that he was in the run for Presidential post. Mrs. Gandhi was evidently aware of Mr.V.V. Giri’s reported decision to contest the Presidential election as an independent candidate.

Another political development which affected the chances of Sanjiva Reddy was the atmosphere of distrust in politics and mutual suspicion among the leaders. It was alleged that Reddy was a candidate proposed by the “Syndicate”, which was not true. He enjoyed full support even from other corners. Morarji and Y.B.,Chavan who had no connections with the “Syndicate” were also in favour of Reddy’s candidature, because they thought Reddy would be a more suitable candidate.
There was a psychological war between Indira Gandhi and the senior party leaders. She neither disclosed her views nor discussed with her colleagues. She went out of her way to disclose that what had really distressed was not so much the selection of Reddy, as the manner in which the Party leaders had managed it. Similarly the "Syndicate" did not question the Prime Minster's right to relive Mr. Morarji Desai of the Finance Portfolio, but denounced the manner in which it was abruptly taken away leaving him with no alternative but to resign from the Cabinet. Even over the bank Nationalization issue, the muted criticism inside the Congress Party was not so much against the act of arbitrary acquisition as the so-called manner in which it had been done. Even more unfortunate than these mental barriers created by the generation gap was the absence of candour and frankness between the Prime Minster and party bosses. An atmosphere of distrust developed between them to an extent that she rarely disclosed her own thinking while discussing any problem with them and they in turn, did not make known their real views to her. Both sides used to speak with considerable mental reservations when faced with an intricate issue either at the governmental level or in the party forum. Worse still there was no social relationship worth the name between them. Thus this procedural dispute ultimately affected the chances of Sanjiva Reddy.^32

The other political development which obstructed the chances of Reddy was the politics of prestige between Indira Gandhi and the senior leaders. She
started her strategy to defeat Reddy and refused to address the party general body, urging the members to vote for the party candidate. She even refused to address letters to the voters. However, Mrs. Indira Gandhi group waited for an opportunity to put the "Party bosses, in its proper place. They started their fight by questioning, the propriety of a Congress member Mrs. Tarakeswari Sinha in writing an article in Bombay Weekly attacking Mrs. Gandhi. Mrs. Gandhi held that article was a serious breach of discipline. Mrs. Sinha wanted to reply but she was hooted down. With this Mrs. Gandhi came out openly and utilized every possibility to defeat the official candidate. Her supporters attempted to revive a scandal on the basis of a Supreme Court Judgment when Reddy was Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. But it was ruled out by the then Attorney General that it was wrong to think that one Judgment could hang a man and kill him for ever and that Reddy was an able man. Apart from this one thing, there was nothing against him.  

Thus this mutual misunderstanding between Prime Minister and party bosses created a vicious atmosphere of extreme suspicion.

Several times the party President Mr. Nijalingappa requested Mrs. Gandhi to meet and to clear the misunderstanding and restore a degree of mutual distrust and confidence before they could tackle specific issue which has contributed the ugly situation in the eve of Presidential election. But she never responded to the requests of the party President and refused to issue a whip for the Presidential poll.
Later Mrs. Indira Gandhi chalked out a strategic plan and set up a “War Council” to fight against the Syndicate. This war council was nicknamed as “Kitchen Cabinet”, which mainly consisted of Jagjivan Ram, Fakriddin Ali Ahmed, Swaran Sing etc.

They persuaded the electorate to believe that every one had the right to vote according to his conscience. The Prime Minister joined Mr. Jagjivan Ram and Ali Ahmed in demanding a free vote in the Presidential election and warned that if the demand was not conceded in the extra-ordinary situation obtaining them, there could be a serious division in the party.

The Party in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Mysore, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab and West Bengal issued whips to their members directing them to vote for Reddy. Even in some states where the Chief Ministers belonged to the Prime Minister’s group the whips directed the members to vote for Reddy. But as members arrived at the State Capitals on the eve of the poll they were asked to vote for Giri, the Prime Minster’s candidate. A telegram was sent by the A.P. Legislature Congress Party leader K. Brahmananda Reddy to the members of Party to vote for Giri. In Uttar Pradesh where cross voting was apparent Kamalapati Tripati (P.C.C. President) and the leader of Congress legislature party, C.B.Gupta issued separate appeals to party members. Here again, the appeals were in support of Reddy but events showed what they meant and how Tripati worked.
On August 16th, Mr. Reddy followed by his well wishers went to cast his vote and told newsmen “I hope God will be kind enough to do justice”. Mr. Reddy said, “I have not issued any statement till now to keep up the dignity of the high office for which contest is taking place to-day”. In the normal course, as a Congress candidate, I would have won hands down. We kisans fix up the fence to protect the crop from stray cattle and wild beasts, but if the fence itself begins eating away the crop who can help the kisan?

“As a humble kisan, this is my predicament. To-day, I hope that God will be kind enough to do justice”37.

The results showed Giri’s victory by second preference votes by a narrow margin of 14,650 electoral votes.

Observing the results Masani said, “May God held India”.

On being informed of Mr. Giri’s victory, Shri C.Rjagopalachari Swatantra Party leader said in Madras, “I am glad that a significantly large number of voters refused to be misled by the Prime Minister, who holds the highest executive office in India”. The most note-worthy fact is that the congress Prime Minister and leader if the Congress party in Parliament tried her best to defeat the Congress candidate.38

Sanjiva Reddy was cheered by his supporters when he entered the Loksabha and he took his seat next to Mrs. S.N. Dwivedi, leader of the P.S.P. group. Himself Speaker of the House before his nomination by the congress
Party, as its presidential candidate, Mr. Reddy greeted his successor Mr. G.S. Dhillon with folded hands before taking his seat in the House.

Reddy became the first Ex-speaker to attend the Loksabha as an ordinary member. While the first Speaker, Mr. G.V. Malvankar died in office, his two successors, M. Anantasayanam Iyengar and Mr. Hukam Singh were appointed Governors after they stepped down from the Speakership.

Later the meeting of the Congress working Committee was held on 25th August 1969 to hush-up the ills of the previous days and the "Unity resolution" was unanimously passed through. But soon after its release in press, it cracked down. Mrs. Gandhi was adamant to divide the Congress and the split finally took shape in November 1969.

The original old guards were settled under the name of Congress (Old) and the supporters of Mrs. Gandhi came under the umbrella of Congress (R) or Congress (New). Sanjiva Reddy was persuaded by many of his well-wishers to make him rejoin in the congress. At last Mr. Reddy expressed his willingness and joined as a member in the old congress organization and continued in it. Thus he believed in one party and in one principle and never acted as an opportunist.

After keen observation we may come to conclusion that democracy in the party was dimmed and began to disappear. Party began to work according to will and wish of Mrs. Gandhi. Finally it became her packet property. But there was no one to question her.
In December, 1970 the Lok Sabha was dissolved and in the Mid-term poll held in 1971 for the Lok Sabha (for the first time delinking the elections of the Union from elections to state Legislature's, Sri Reddy, much against his will and as a result of the persuasion of his colleagues, contested from Anantapur Parliamentary Constituency and lost at the hustings. The reason was, in his obsession with national affairs, he failed to nurse his home town constituency. This reversal sent him into hibernation for several years.\(^{39}\)

After 1971 Mid-term Lok Sabha elections in which he was defeated. So now he could not become member of Lok Sabha. He had fallen a victim of conspiracy of circumstances owing to various political developments. He ceased to take active part and voluntarily retired from Congress (organization) politics by returning to his native village Illur.

As Sri Sanjivareddy himself put it, he had come back to his permanent and favourite occupation after a stint in volatile politics. He expressed his happiness and sense of relief on coming back to his hereditary occupation of agriculture. He did not merely hoe potatoes and cultivate cabbage. He devoted his attention, leisure and energy to the cultivation of his lands without indulging in the postmortem of the Judas–like behaviour of his political friends in his home state and slippery colleagues at the national level with whom he parted company. He gracefully reconciled himself to the inexorable fate, being a firm believer in the karma theory, a cardinal principle of Hinduism\(^{40}\).
By temperament and by nature being a philosophical and a God-fearing person, he took the defeat in true humility and viewed it as the manifestation of God's will. He regarded the uncharitable attitude and action of his own erstwhile disciples and colleagues as nothing but those of the agents of the Almighty's will and as instruments of a Divine intervention. Hence he never let loose his emotions andanguishes on any one. Nor did he pour vials of venom on the persons who betrayed him. Instead he maintained a stoic silence which stemmed from philosophic equanimity. He did lead a life of detachment which however, did not lapse into one of supine inaction. Sri Reddy was certainly passing through a period of active contemplation and introspection but not a life of sloth. He led a simple life, "far from the madding crowds and ignoble strife".

He took his new life as a manifestation of the law of nature and change. He knew that Fortune was a fickle goddess smiling and frowning alternately. He bided his time as though he drew comfort in the poet's message. "Be still, sad heart, cease repining. Behind the clouds is the sun still shining. Thy fate is the common fate of all. Into each life some rain must fall".

Sri SanjivaReddy knew that the mills of God would grind slowly but pretty fine. Although he withdrew from political life and lived away from the main-stream of politics, it looked as though he was recouping his energies and charging his batteries. He possessed the requisite personality to bounce back after a reverse. Perhaps his great strength lay in his resilience.
Although some people consider it is “seven year political externment”, we may call this period of interruption in his political career ‘an interlude’, a piece of music between certain more important passages. It is a sort of golden self-exile from politics, a meaningful retreat. Stefan Zweig gives a delicious description of the value of such periods of interruption:

“In the political world, a temporary exclusion from active life gives a statesman a new freshness of vision, enabling him to think things over quietly and to reckon up the forces in the political game. Nothing therefore, can be more advantageous to a career than a transient interruption, for one who has seen the world from the heights, from the upper levels of authority, knows only the smiles of the obsequious and their dangerous readiness to serve”.

This was a period of productive work in the field of agriculture. He used to go to his farm early in the morning and was perhaps the first farmer to be seen entering the fields, wading in knee-deep waters and cultivating the soil. He took his breakfast in the fields now and then, and his lunch under the shade of the mango grove. The so-called progressive farmers used to call on him to observe and copy the methods he employed in cultivation which had brought almost 100 percent increase in production. With careful planning and successful marketing, he was able to create his own assets. The agriculturist who had returned with a minus balance of Rs. 27,000 owing to the high cost of
living in Delhi became free from liabilities and was considered later a progressive and comparatively wealthy farmer in his neighbourhood.

He meticulously observed social formalities. He seldom missed a marriage or any social function when invited by friends and relatives, high or low. As irony would have it, his defeat in 1971 mid-term polls for the Lok Sabha was at the hands of Sri Anthony Reddy, who had been initiated in politics by Sri Sanjiva Reddy himself.

In 1973-74 he had visited Delhi for a medical check-up. He issued a statement in Hyderabad during his brief stay, while on his way to Delhi, appealing to one and all to co-operate with Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister, irrespective of their differences, in her efforts to improve the lot of the millions of the down-trodden.

He was admitted in the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi for a through medical check-up. Almost all the national leaders both in the Government and in the party organization including the prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi called on Dr. Reddy. During his political self-exile he used to have exchange of correspondence with Mrs. Gandhi and other national leaders on important national issues.

When the news of Sri Kamaraj Nadar's death was conveyed to him in his native village, he immediately rushed to Bangalore but missed the plane. He later reached Madras by another plane. The Government of Tamilnadu, out of regard for Sri Sanjiva Reddy and his intimate and personal relationship with Sri
Kamaraj Nadar, made special arrangements of conveyance to him to reach the place of Sri Kamaraj where all other national leaders including Mrs. Gandhi were waiting to pay their last respects to the departed leader. Sri Rajaram, the Minister of Industries in the M.G.R Cabinet who was also present, asked one of the onlookers to lock the house of Kamaraj after the body was taken out. People there said that the house of Kamaraj was never locked and he left with only Thundu and Mundu (Towel and Addaopancha or dhoti). The 'Veeticaaran' (the house-owner) had taken charge of the house, and the car he was using for public purpose was taken away by the owners who hade kept it at his disposal. Such was the simplicity and such the renunciation of the great leader Sri Kamaraj. He wrote no will and there was no need for it. Today these values have become unfashionable and they have given place to a new culture based upon vulgar ostentation and love of luxury.

His demise was the end of a great bond of friends that lasted for several years, between Kamaraj and Sri Sanjiva Reddy, who were on the same political and ideological wave -lengths. After attending the funeral, he returned to his native village with a hearty. He looked sad and forlorn having lost a true friend.

When Jaya Prakash Narayan blew his conch and gave the call for “total Revolution” in 1974 -75, Sanjiva Reddy joined the movement. During the emergence and till the dissolution of Lok Sabha in January, 1977, he led an uneventful life, which was, however, not incident-free.
During the emergency, Mrs. Gandhi left her opponents in South India, like M/s Sri Sanjiva Reddy and S. Nijialingappa almost untouched. That is one of the reasons why emergency could not have its impact in States lying south of the Vindhyas. They voted for her party in the fateful elections in 1977, while her party drew a blank in the North including the Hindi heart land. During this interregnum, Dr. Sanjiva Reddy was detained on the Railway platform of Dronachalam (Dhone) on his way to Guntur by the D.S.P who told him that he was under arrest. When Sri Reddy insisted on the production of the warrant of arrest, the D.S.P. went back to his office, perhaps to contact his superior officer stationed at Kurnool. After a few minutes, he came back and allowed him to proceed, and he even sews him off at the Railway Station. Obviously, there were no orders to arrest him. It is common knowledge that officers some times over-acted and exceeded their limits to please their masters.

The second incident was that he was asked to address a Meeting at Guntur organized by one Sri Peri Reddy, who invited him to a dinner in his house the previous night. In order to prevent the ensuring meeting without dishonouring Dr. Reddy, the police arrested Sri Peri Reddy even before hosting the dinner. While he was being taken away in police custody from Guntur, his other friends were hesitant to go to the Railway Station to see him off for fear of them getting arrested. But Sri Sanjiva Reddy, who always upheld ethical values, went the railway station to see him off. He was later not allowed the
freedom to go where he liked but was brought in a police van all the way to Anantapur and left in his residence.

On a third occasion, Sri Reddy was invited to Giddalur in Ongole district for a dinner engagement and a public meeting. While on his way to Giddalur, he was detained at the Railway Level Crossing by the S.P. of Kurnool, and was politely told to go back to avoid possible disturbances in the garden where his hosts were waiting for the dinner. When he went back, it was 12.00 noon. He was again brought back to Anantapur in a police van escorted by the superintendent of police, who left him at his residence saying that he would get a formal arrest warrant; he never turned up, though Dr. Reddy waited long enough for it. Later on telephone enquiries made with the local S.P., revealed that his Kurnool counterpart simply left for Kurnool long back without bothering to produce any warrant. They ways of the police officers were inscrutable.

These three incidents reveal the esteem in which Sanjiva Reddy was held by the officials though he was in political oblivion and in the rival camp of the ruling party. Despite the differences that existed between him and the party in power in the centre and his home state, Sri Reddy's admirers could not keep aloof from him. They used to call on him to pay their respects, despite his repeated advice not to disturb his peace. Truly it was a period of renewal. He could charge his batteries.