CHAPTER - IV

PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA

This chapter presents a detailed profile of the Guntur District which was selected for the study. It mainly focuses on the Panchayati Raj System functioning in the District. The historical background, geographical, socio-economic conditions and political situation existing in the District are briefly discussed in this chapter.

Origin of the Name Guntur:

There is no unanimity regarding the meaning and origin of the word Guntur. According to some historians the word Guntur is derived from a local popular Telugu word “Gundu” which means a rock, while others believe that it is derived from another word in the same language, “Gunta” which means a pond or Kunta meaning a measure of one third of an acre.

History of the District:

Guntur District in its present form was constituted only in 1904, out of the areas of the south of Krishna Rivers of Krishna district and Ongole taluk of Nellore district. Prior to 1859 also there was ‘Guntur District’ with its headquarters at Guntur but with a different jurisdiction. In 1859, this District was abolished and was divided between Machilipatnam and Rajahmundry Districts, which were later renamed as Krishna and Godavari Districts. In 1904 Guntur District was again constituted into an independent district by merging some areas of the above two Districts. In February 1970, while forming a new district, namely Prakasam District with Ongole as its head quarters, the parts of Bapatla and Narasaraopet taluks and the whole of Ongole taluk of
Guntur District were merged with the newly formed Prakasam District leaving Guntur district with only eight taluks namely 1) Guntur 2) Sattenapalli 3) Tenali 4) Repalle 5) Bapatla 6) Narasaraopet 7) Vinukonda and 8) Palnadu.¹

With effect from 1st November 1977 again, these eight taluks were reorganized into eleven taluks by upgrading the sub-taluks of 1) Mangalagiri, 2) Ponnur, and 3) Macherla as taluks bifurcating the old taluks of Guntur, Bapatla and Palnadu respectively. In 1980, Chilakaluripet taluk was formed as the 12th taluk taking parts from Narasaraopet and Guntur taluks.

During 1981-82 Repalle Taluk was divided into Pallapatla and Repalle Taluks, Tenali into Tenali Taluk and Emani Taluks, Guntur Taluk into Guntur and Prathipadu Taluks, Sattenapalli Taluk into Sattenapalli, Tyalluru and Rajupalem Taluks. Vinukonda Taluk into Vinukonda, Ipuru Taluks and Gurazala into Gurazala and Piduguralla Taluks thus bringing total number of 19 Taluks into existence by the end of 1982. After the emergence of Mandal System in the State in 1985, 57 Revenue Mandalas have come into existence in Guntur District in the place of erstwhile Taluks and Firkhas.

**Physical Features of Guntur District:**

**Location:**

The District of Guntur is located between North latitudes of 15° 18′ and 16° 50′ and East longitudes of 79° 10′ and 80° 55′. Guntur district bounded on the north by the district Nalgonda and on the east by the Bay of Bengal and the District of Krishna, on the south by District

of Prakasam and on the west by the District of Prakasam and Mahabubnagar.

**Climate Conditions:**

The climate in the District is generally hot in summer. The year may be divided into four seasons. The summer season starts during the middle of February and continues till the first week of June. The Northeast monsoon which occurs during this month breaks the hot spell and makes the weather bearable. The south-west monsoon follows thereafter and extends up to the end of September. October and November constitute the post monsoon season. The period from December to the middle of February is generally marked by fine weather i.e., winter.

**Geographical Situation:**

Guntur District is spread over an area of 11391 sq. kms. The District is divided into 57 Revenue Mandals and three Revenue Divisions. There are 729 Villages, 10 Towns and 1 City in this District. The District consists of 1022 Village Panchayats, 10 Municipalities and 1 Municipal Corporation.

**Demographic Profile:**

According to 2001 Census, the total population of the Guntur District is 44, 65,144 and the density of population per sq.k.m. 394. There is gradual growth in the density of population of the District as in 1961 it was 201 per sq.k.m, 303 sq.k. in 1981. and 361 in 1991.

The total population of the District in 1991 was 41.07 lakhs, and 44.65 lakhs in 2001. The decennial growth rate in the District between 1991-2001 is 3.58. In Guntur district, the number of females per 100
males in 1991 970 even but in 2001 984. The decimal growth rate between 1991-2001 14 per cent in rural population in 1991 29.20 but 31.79 in 2001. The decennial growth rate between 1991-2001 2.59. The literacy rates in the District was 39.44 per cent in 1991 while it raised to 35.00 percent in 2001. The decennial growth rate between 1991-2001 15.56. The size of Agriculture labour was 9.67 lakhs in 1991 and 10.73 lakhs in 2001. The decennial growth rate between 1991-2001 is 1.06. The Scheduled Caste population as a percentage to the total population in 1991 was 13.95 while it was 18.32 percent in 2001. The decennial growth rate is among them is 4.37. The Scheduled Tribes population as a percentage to total population in 1991 was 4.43 and 4.66 in 2001. The decennial growth rate among the Scheduled Tribes was 0.23 per cent during the period 1991-2001. The religion-wise population of the District is Hindus-33, 93,562, Buddhists-106, Christians-2, 74,172, Jains-1,796, Muslims-4, 36,863, Sikhs-231 as per the 2001 census.2

**Literacy Rate:**

According to 2001 census the percentage of literates in the District is 62.5 per cent. The literacy rate among the males is 71.2 per cent and 53.7 per cent among the females. The total literate population in this District stands at 24, 55,965 lakhs. The male literates are 14, 07,402 while female literates 10, 48,563.3

**Educational Institutions:**

The Educational institutions existing in the District are: government schools 44, Mandal Parishad Schools 2,423, Municipal Schools-230, Aided schools-254, unaided schools-45. The total primary

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schools in the District are 2,996. The total numbers of high schools are 615. There are 119 Junior Colleges and 132 degree colleges. There is one University named as the Acharya Nagarjuna University in this District.

**Medical Facilities:**

There is a Government General Hospital in Guntur City. Further, there are 4 Dispensaries, 44 Ayurvedi Dispensaries in the District. There are also 2 Unani Hospitals. 11 Homeopathy Hospitals and Dispensaries with 11 Doctors.

**Agriculture Scenario:**

Guntur District occupies the foremost place in the State for cultivation of both food and non-food crops, especially, paddy, cotton, chillies, tobacco, groundnuts and also pulses like red gram, black gram and green gram. The District stands second in the entire India next to Coimbatore in the consumption of chemical fertilizers and pesticides due to the cultivation of large extent of both food and commercial crops.

**Land Utilization Pattern:**

There is 1,61,094 hectares of forest area and, 34,470 hectares of barren and uncultivable land along with 1,55,939 hectares of land put to non-agricultural use and 35,860 hectares of cultivable waste land. The permanent pastures and other grazing lands extend over an area of 24,297 hectares.

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4 Directorate of School Education, Andhra Pradesh.  
5 Ibid.  
6 Ibid.  
Irrigation:

The different irrigation facilities available in the district, are as follows: 2, 04,293 hectares under canals, 2,335 hectares under tanks, 41,498 hectares under tubewells, 6,238 hectares wells and 9,567 hectares under other sources. The total extent of land irrigated under different sources comes to 2, 63,931 hectares.\(^9\)

The two important irrigation projects exist in the district are 1) the old Krishna Ayacut, now renamed as the Prakasam Barrage with an ayacut of 2,02,032 hectares of land and 2) The Nagarjuna Sagar Dam with an ayacut of 2,54,583 hectares. Both these Projects are constructed on the river Krishna.

Rivers:

The important rivers and rivulets flow through the District are: the Krishna, the Naguleru, the Chandravanka and the Gundlakamma.

Crops:

The predominant food crops grown in the district are paddy, jawar, bajra black gram and red gram. The cotton, chillies, turmeric and tobacco are the important commercial crops cultivated in the District.

Animal Husbandry:

The district is considerably rich in livestock population and it stands at the seventh place in the state. The district ranks first in the state in the production of milk and also milk products like butter and ghee. Similarly, Guntur district is rich both in land and marine fisheries along with prawn culture which have large export potential.

\(^9\) Ibid.
Soils:

The soils framed in the District in general are fertile and they are broadly classified as black cotton, red loamy and sandy loamy. The Block cotton soil constitutes 70 per cent, red loamy 24 per cent and sandy loamy 6 per cent of the total land in the district.

Minerals:

The district is rich in mineral resources. The principal minerals available are limestone, lime kankar, naspalsabs, copper and lead. Lime stone is being utilized by the cement factories of Macherla and Tadepalli. There are Copper mines at Agnigundala of Ipur Mandal. Lead concentrates tonnes 3,153 tonnes and limestone 1,805 tonnes in Guntur district.\(^{10}\)

Forests in District:

The Guntur forest division extends over the entire revenue limits of the district in 8,563.77 acres, which constitutes about 13.4 per cent of the total land area, and which is less than the national minimum fixed by the Government of India. About 93 per cent of the forest area in the district is spread out in the upland Mandals in the west, while the remaining 7 per cent along seacoast in the eastern part of the district.\(^{11}\)

Industrial Sector:

The industrial structure of the Guntur district mainly consists of agro-based industries like tobacco grading, cotton redrying, rice, oil and dal mills and mineral based industries like cement, lime, slab polishing and stone crushing. There are 35 large and medium scale industrial

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\(^{10}\) Indian Bureau of Mines, Government of India, Nagpur.

\(^{11}\) Chief Conservator of Forest, Andhra Pradesh.
units with an investment of Rs.13, 2422.6 lakhs providing employment to 10, 76,664 workers and 8,313 small scale and tiny industrial units with a capital investment of Rs.48.5 crores employing about 95,915 persons. Besides, 13 industrial estates are functioning. The products manufactured are pesticides and insecticides, engineering goods, automobile services, chemical products, utensils, wooden furniture, electrical goods, cotton ginning and edible oil. The district exports consist of raw cotton, grains and pulses, oil seeds, tobacco dyes, and turmeric, while the imports constituted mostly of luxury and other articles which are not produced locally. Guntur has become a pioneer in tobacco trades in the entire country.

Marketing Facilities:

The Guntur Market Committee has 17 regulated market yards. All these centers transact business in business crops such as the groundnuts, chilies, turmeric, tobacco and cotton. The Sales and purchases of these items are not restricted to market yards alone. A large number of private businessmen are also engaged in the sales and purchases of these commodities.

Political Profile of the District:

Guntur district played a significant role in the politics of Andhra Pradesh in the past as well as the contemporary politics. Guntur district is divided into three Parliament Constituencies and Seventeen Assembly Constituencies. Out of these total Assembly Constituencies sixteen constituencies are in rural areas and the remaining one in urban area. Now Guntur District has one member in the Rajya Sabha.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{12} Zilla Parishad Office Guntur.
The three tier system of Panchayati Raj was introduced in Guntur District in October 1959 along with entire state as consequence of recommendation of Balwanth Rai Mehta Committee Report. At the beginning there were 1022 Village Panchayats, 19 Panchayati Samitis and one Zilla Parishad. These Panchayat Raj Institutions were functioning according to the two Panchayati Raj Acts introduced by Government Andhra Pradesh namely, the Andhra Pradesh Zilla Parishad and Panchayati Samithi Act of 1959 and the Gram panchayat Act of 1964. Subsequently, several changes were introduced in the functioning of these bodies through various Amendments made from time to time to concerned Acts by Government of Andhra Pradesh. However, a radical change was taken place in the Panchayati Raj System in the District in 1987 as the Mandal System was introduced by the Telugu Desam Government. As a consequence of this change the existing 19 Panchayati Samithis were reorganized into 57 Mandal Parishads. There is no change of number in Village Panchayats. Hence, at present there are one Zilla parishad,57 Mandal Parishads and 1022 Village Panchayats.

(1) At The Village Panchayat:

There is one sarpanch and the total number of ward members. According to the Andhra Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act of 1994, a gram panchayat consists of 5 to 21 elected members inclusive of its sarpanch depending upon the size of its population. The members of Village panchayats are elected by all the registered voters of gram panchayat from wards whereas the sarpanch is elected by all voters of the Village Panchayat and they continue in the office for a period of five years unless otherwise removed from the office. However, the upa- sarpanch of Panchayat is elected by the elected members of the Panchayat.
The gram panchayats in Andhra Pradesh are classified into notified Village panchayats and non-notified Village panchayats on the basis of their annual income.

(2) Mandal Parishad:

a) The nomenclature of this intermediary tier in the state earlier was Mandal Praja Parishad, which has been changed to Mandal Panchayat by the Act and finally coined as Mandal Parishad.

b) At the Mandal Parishad level there is one President and certain number of members called as M.P.T.C.s.

c) For the purpose of election of members for Mandal Parishad it is divided into several territorial constituencies. Each constituency consists of a population between 3000-4000.

d). The elected members of mandal parishad only are eligible either to contest or vote in the election to the offices of presidents/vice president of the mandal parishad.

At present there are 57 Mandal Parishad presidents as there are 57 Mandal Parishads in the District of Guntur. There are a total number of 900 M.P.T.C.s in this District.

3) Zilla Parishads:

At District level, the Act provides for the constitution of a Zilla Parishad consisting of (i) Members elected from the territorial constituencies which obviously is a Mandal, (ii) MLAs of the state representing the Assembly Constituencies which form part or whole of the district (iii) Members of the Parliament representing the constituency (iv) Members of the Council of States who is a registered
voter in the district and (v) two members belonging to the minorities who are co-opted by the elected members of the Zilla Parishad.

The powers and functions of the political executives of the Panchayati Raj bodies at the three levels as per the Andhra Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act are as follows:

1) The chairman of the Zilla Parishad has the following functions:
   The chairman have been given powers of the supervision and control of the Mandal Parishads including collection of data, consolidation of plans of the Mandal Parishads, distribution of funds allotted to the district further down to the Mandal Parishad, examining and apprising the budgets of the Mandals.

2) President of Mandal Parishad has the following Functions:
   The President of Mandal Parishad specifies a number of development functions to be performed for raising the agricultural production, improving the livestock and establishing minor veterinary dispensaries and for expanding and monitoring the medical and health services under the rural health and sanitation programmes.

3) The Village Sarpanch has the following Powers and Functions:
   The Sarpanch of Gram Panchayat perform the duty of providing civic amenities, maintenance of gram panchayat roads, construction and maintenance of drains, cleaning streets etc., the development activities are also perform like, minor irrigation, watershed management, land reform measures including
consolidation of holding and cooperative management of community lands etc. 13

Reservation for Women:
As a consequence of 73\textsuperscript{rd} Constitutional Amendment Act 33 per cent of the political offices in each tier of the offices were reserved for women. In Guntur District the numbers of political offices in each tier of panchayati Raj reserved for women in given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Functionary</th>
<th>MEN</th>
<th>WOMEN</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ward Members</td>
<td>7130</td>
<td>3608</td>
<td>10738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarpanches</td>
<td>709</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>1022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandal Presidents</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.P.T.C.Members</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z.P.T.C. Members</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Zilla Parishad Office, Guntur. District Panchayat Office, Guntur

As the above table indicates, there are total number of 10738 of Ward Members in the Guntur District of them, 3608 Ward members are Women. There are total number of 1022 of village Sarpanches in the District of them, 313 Sarpanches are women. At the Zilla Parishad level the Office of Chairperson is reserved for women in 2006. Hence, the present chairperson of this Zilla Parishad is a woman. There are 22 Z.P.T.C. women members where as the total number of ZPTCs is 57. There are 21 women Mandal Parishad Presidents and 358 M.P.T.C. women members where as the total M.P.T.C. membership is 909. This

\footnote{Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act of 1994.}
indicates that there are women in all the political positions in the three tier of the panchayati Raj System. Among the three categories of the Panchayati Raj Bodies in Guntur District almost all the communities were participating in grassroots politics. Most of the respondents were belong to middle class families but some of them have belongs to forward community and financially, politically sound background. They account for 33 per cent of the total office barriers which is in accordance with Andhra Pradesh Panchayari Raj Act. 14

Since independence, the Congress Party used to have very strong hold and totally dominated the district Politics till 1981. In 1982, with the emergence of Telugu Desam party, a regional Party, the political scenario in the District underwent a drastic transformation. The Telugu Desam Party emerged as a very powerful party and ended the dominance of the Congress Party once for all. In all the Elections held to the Lok Sabha and State assembly after the emergence of TDP, there has been keen competition between these parties. There are also other parties like the Bharatiya Janatha Party, Communist Party of India, and CPM in the District.

14 District Panchayati Office Guntur.