CHAPTER III

REGIONAL POLITICAL PARTY IN ANDHRA PRADESH:
TELUGU DESAM PARTY
In this chapter, it is to be discussed the profile of Andhra Pradesh, background of the party, emergency of Telugu Desam Party, leadership styles in the party, their activities, relations of the other political parties and other views.

**ANDHRA PRADESH**

**History & Geography**

The earliest mention of the Andhras is said to be in Aitereya Brahmana (200 BC). It indicates that the Andhras, originally an Aryan race living in north India migrated to south of the Vindhyas and later mixed with non-Aryans. Regular history of Andhra Desa, according to historians, begins with 236 BC, the year of Ashoka’s death. During the following centuries, Satavahanas, Sakas, Ikshvakus, Eastern Chalukyas, Kakatiyas ruled the Telugu country. Other dynasties that ruled over the area in succession were the kingdoms of Vijayanagara and Qutub Shahi followed by Mir Qumruddin and his successors, known as the Nizams. Gradually, from the 17th century onwards, the British annexed territories of the Nizam and constituted the single province of Madras. After Independence, Telugu-speaking areas were separated from the composite Madras Presidency and a new Andhra State came into being on 1 October, 1953. With the passing of the States Re-organization Act, 1956, there was a merger of Hyderabad State and Andhra State, and consequently Andhra Pradesh came into being on 1 November, 1956.
Andhra Pradesh is bound on the north by Orissa and Chattisgarh, on the west by Maharashtra and Karnataka, on the south by Tamil Nadu and on the east by the Bay of Bengal with a coastline of 974 km.

**AGRICULTURE**

Agriculture is the main occupation of about 62 per cent of the people in Andhra Pradesh. Rice is a major food crop and staple food of the State contributing about 77 per cent of the foodgrain production. Other important crops are jowar, bajra, maize, ragi, small millets, pulses, castor, tobacco, cotton and sugarcane. Forests cover 23 per cent of the State's area. Important forest products are teak, eucalyptus, cashew, casuarina, bamboo, softwood, etc.

**IRRIGATION**

from S.R.S.P., Jurala Project, R.D.S. Link Canal, Bhima L.I. Scheme, T.B.P.H.L.C. Stage-I Modernisation, Guru Raghavendra Swamy L.I. Scheme and Singur Project. The expenditure for the ongoing projects during 2001-02 was 771 crore and the budget allotment for the year 2003-04 is 1,102 crore. Net area irrigated through all irrigation sources during 2000-01 was 45.28 lakh hectares.

Andhra Pradesh is the first state to involve the farmers in the management of irrigation sources. There were 9,922 water user associations and 163 distributory committees formed. Rs.142.90 crore were allotted to these associations during 2002-03 to make them functional and economically viable.

POWER

Important power projects in the State are: the Nagarjunasagar and Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy Sagar (Srisailam Hydel Project), Upper Sileru, Lower Sileru, Tungabhadra Hydel Projects and Nellore, Ramagundam, Kothagudem, Vijayawada and Muddanur thermal power projects. The Srisailam Hydro Electric Project with an installed capacity of 770 MW and the Nagarjunasagar Complex with 960 MW are the principal sources of hydel generation. Vijayawada Thermal Power Station with an installed capacity of 1,260 MW and Kothagudem Thermal Power Station with an installed capacity of 1,180 MW are the main sources of thermal power.
generation. The 1,000 MW coal-based Simhadri Thermal Power Station aims at supplying the entire energy generated to the State³.

INDUSTRY AND MINERALS

There are several major industries in operation around Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam. They manufacture machine tools, synthetic drugs, pharmaceuticals, heavy electrical machinery, fertilizers, electronic equipments, aeronautical parts, cement and cement products, chemicals, asbestos, glass and watches. Andhra Pradesh has the largest deposits of quality chrysolite asbestos in the country. Other important minerals found in the state are copper ore, manganese, mica, coal and limestone. The Singareni Coal Mines supply coal to the entire south India⁴.

There were 3,111 large and medium scale industries in the State with a total investment of Rs.43,317 crore, providing employment to 8,02,878 persons as on 31 March 2002. Besides, there were 3,29,444 tiny and small scale industries with credit assistance of Rs.2,707.53 crore employing 28,09,468 persons.

TECHNOLOGY

The State government is also promoting Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) at Hyderabad. IIIT offers 4-year UG and 2/3 year PG programmes. IBM, Oracle, Signal Tree, Satyam and Motorola have established their corporate schools.
TRANSPORT

Roads:

National Highways passing through Andhra Pradesh constitute 4,104 km. There are 60,453 km of state highways and 1,03,814 km of Panchayati Raj roads in the State as on March 2002.

Railways:

Of the railways route covering 5,085 km in Andhra Pradesh, 4,362 km is broad-gauge, 686 km is metre-gauge, and 37 km is narrow gauge.

Aviation:

Important airports in the State are located at Hyderabad, Tirupati and Visakhapatnam. International flights are operated from Hyderabad.

Ports:

Visakhapatnam is a major port in the State. Minor ports are located at Kakinada, Machilipatnam, Bheemunipatnam, Krishnapatnam, and Kalingapatnam.

TOURIST CENTRES

Narasimha Swamy Temple at Simhachalam, Sri Sita Rama Temple at Bhadrachalam, Araku Valley, Horsley Hills, Nelapattu, etc., are the major tourist attractions in Andhra Pradesh. Thirty-three life-size statues of eminent Telugu personalities of the State were erected on Tankbund of Hussainsagar Lake in Hyderabad. A giant statue of Lord Buddha of a height of about 60 feet has been erected on the Gibraltar rock in the Hussainsagar Lake which separates Hyderabad and Secunderabad cities.

TELUGU DESAM PARTY

The emergence of an alternative political party that could end the Congress dominance, a process that began in several states of India in the 1960s was much played in Andhra Pradesh. This is surprising owing that the anti-congress opposition and the electoral support it enjoyed during the 1950s was much stronger in the state when compared to most others. Even after 1967, it did not follow the example set by the neighboring state of Tamil Nadu. It had to wait until the second round of the emergence of the state parties during the 1980s. As if to make up for the delay, the Telugu Desam Party(TDP) was formed by NT Rama Rao(NTR) a famous Telugu cinema actor, in March 1982 and came to power in January 1983, all in a matter of nine months time, a record in the history of political parties in India and probably in the world too. At a time when the non-congress opposition in the state presented a dismal picture of hopeless division and
decay, the TDP rose like a tidal wave sweeping away the listless congress out of power in the 1983 assembly elections.

Unlike Shiromani Akali Dal, National Conference, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), Asam Gana Parishad, Shiv Sena, etc., the TDP did not emerge as a result of any long-drawn struggle of sustained social movement. When it was launched it had no leaders trained in any ideology or not many leaders who lived through the rough world of politics. It had no party organization worth the name. In the initial days, some thought that the TDP was an aberration in state politics, or at best a transient phenomenon, but it proved to be an enduring one. It went on to become the single largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha after the 1984 parliamentary elections, surpassing all other so-called national parties. It lost power in 1989, but regained it in 1994.

Those who believed and hoped that the TDP would die with its founder leader proved wrong. Even NTR believed so, as he once said: TDP came with me and will go away with me. It continued, not merely as a political party, but as the ruling party in the state even after his death. In August 1995, NTR was deposed from the leadership of the legislative wing in an ignominious way by the very legislators who won the election in his name and was removed from the presidency of the party by the very leaders who merely floated on the waves of his charisma. In January 1996, 73-year old NTR died an unhappy man, but the party continued in power
happily, consolidated itself and won the 1999 assembly elections without him.

Apart from entrenching itself firmly in the state, the TDP played an important role in shaping power sharing arrangements at the national level during the 1990s. Today the TDP has the distinction of being the largest state party in India, both in terms of seats and votes in the Lok Sabha, and the largest party in the National Democratic Alliance.

The emergence of the TDP heralded a new era in AP politics. It effected far-reaching changes in the political imagination of the people as well as the nature of political competition. AP ceased to be merely an arena for the warring factions of the congress party. Congress leaders could no more take the people of the state for granted. People’s interest in politics saw a revival, as the mood of political indifference. If not cynicism, had greatly diminished due to fierce party competition. A bipolar electoral contest and a veritable two-party system had come to stay within few years of the emergence of the TDP. It made the polity more democratic, in the sense it proved an opportunity for the electorate to choose between political parties truly competing for their mandate. TDP also posed challenges to the old political elite, as a new band of relatively better educated, dynamic young men and women, including a large number of graduates, engineers, lawyers, doctors, professors, etc, entered the political arena to emerge as leaders and people’s representatives.
Why and how state parties come into existence, consolidated and thrive, how they co-exist or fight with the national parties, how they articulate a different perspective of Indian polity what interests they represent and their implication to the future of the Indian Union have engaged the attention of political analysis for quite some time now. An attempt is made to examine some of these aspects in relation to the TDP.

Emerging of TDP

The sensational victory of the TDP in 1983 in a state long considered the citadel of the Congress Party startled many politicians and analysts. Several competing interpretations for the emergence and rise of the TDP to power were offered. Each of these interpretations emphasizes one or the other aspect of or factors in the emergence of the TDP.

The most popular explanation harps upon the age-old theme of the supposed rivalry between Reddis and Kammas, the two main peasant communities in the state. It goes like this; from the time the state was formed, Reddis gained control over the congress party, and since the congress party ruled the state continuously from 1956, the year of its formation, Reddis always had the political sway, Kammas tried to come to power through the communist party initially, and later through other parties, but without success. So, they were thirsting for power for long time. Since the chance for a kamma to become the chef minister were bleak so far the
Congress ruled the state, the kammas backed the TDP to see their man⁹, NTR as the chief minister.

Another interpretation was that the alliance between the kammas and the numerically large peasant and Backward Castes (BCs) was responsible for the victory of the TDP and its consolidation later. Some of the TDP leaders also say that the vote of the BCs has been the mainstay of the party, including its success in the 1983 election. This interpretation goes somewhat on the following lines: many who belong to the peasant and backward castes were alienated from the congress party from 1970 onwards due to the political strategies followed by Indira Gandhi. Land reform and pro-dalit rhetoric and alienated the peasant classes from it. Indira Gandhi’s political strategy of forging alliance of national upper castes and the dalits to undermine the hold of provincial leaders hailing from the intermediate castes and to tighten her grip over her own party and government and the people at large, proved to be counterproductive and ultimately boomeranged on her. A overwhelming majority of the BCs, who constitute about 40 per cent of the total population of the state, supported NTR because of the feeling prevalent among them that the policies of Indira Gandhi were mainly aimed at capturing the votes of the dalits and that little was done by the congress for the welfare of the BCs, even though the proportion of the dis-advantaged and the needy among the BCs was considerable high.
A third interpretation focuses on the decay of the congress party and the issue of self-respect: the centralization of power during Indira Gandhi has not only undermined the autonomy of the state in both party and governmental matters, but also wounded the self-respect of the Telugus. The way the Congress high command encouraged factionalism in the state party to keep the state leaders weak and dependent on it and changed chief ministers at will, especially during 1978-82, was outrageous. The state congress leaders came to be viewed as factionalists and sycophants. Who would stoop to any level to curry favours from central leaders.

A fourth interpretation takes a political economy approach. According to this analysis a class of neo-rich hand regional bourgeoisie had emerged in the state since independence, although some date to colonial times, primarily by siphoning off agrarian surpluses and using political power at the state level. The interest of these classes came into conflict with the policies of the central government, which catered to the needs of the all India bourgeoisie; call it national or big bourgeoisie. This interpretation seeks to posit the tension in centre-state relations and the demands for state autonomy to this clash of interests between the national and regional bourgeois classes, which prompted the regional bourgeois to embrace the TDP. Some went further and argued that this regional bourgeoisie mainly belonged to the Kamma community, as it was the members of this community that grew economically strong by accumulating agrarian surplus,
and then using it to invest industry, cinema, hotel and liquor business, etc, and that an asymmetry grew between their newly acquired economic strength and marginal role in politics\textsuperscript{10}.

There could be yet another interpretation to the emergence of the TDP. It says that the formation of Telugu Desam party is less due to the mobilization of new social groups into the political arena, but more due to the desertion of certain groups from the congress party, which had hitherto supported it. True, some sections that supported the congress, especially among the BCs broke away from it in 1983. But the success of the TDP largely lies in its ability to weld the vote bases of the non- congress parties erstwhile Swatantra, Lok Dal, Socialist Parties and latter the Janata Party. The non-congress vote had always been substantial in AP since 1956. Unity of this historical non-congress vote block explains TDP’s success in 1983 elections. It also tells us more as to how the TDP could later consolidate itself and remain a major party in AP politics\textsuperscript{11}.

One thing is clear, NTR launched his party at the most opportune time. The congress party was in complete disarray. The congress electoral support base had already shrunk to dangerous level by the time of 1978 assembly election. With the destruction of local level leadership structure and self serving leaders holding the reigns everywhere, its organization grew very weak over time. People were extremely dissatisfied with congress misrule, corruption, inefficiency and rampant factionalism. But the non-
congress opposition was fragmented, their leaders were too mired in their own old thinking to inspire people, lacked the will to rule, and too exhausted to take on the congress. It appeared as if the state was in search of an alternative new political formation. NTR fairly grasped the situation, immediately seized the opportunity and persuasively articulated the people's sentiment.

The charismatic appeal of NTR was the crucial factor for TDP's success, as most parties in India do thrive around the personality of the leader. People reposed great faith in him, as some one who could deliver the state from the congress misrule. He also worked with great zeal and conviction. His idealism, determination, cine popularity, and hard work mesmerized many. He was looked upon with admiration and awe, as a leader, with superhuman capacities. He was a great public speaker. He knows that people hardly care for what the speaker says, but are only interested to see how the leader speaks. He spoke in chaste Telugu. The histrionics were perfect. The delivery was excellent. His exhortations fell on receptive ears. NTR, the cine-idol for millions of people, known more for his excellent performances in mythological films, especially in the divine roles of Rama and Krishna, used his celluloid image most effectively to carry his political message. The newspapers, especially the Eenadu, gave good publicity to his campaign. The congress leaders dismissed all this as a stunt with a calculation to deceive people, but people did not care.
The evolution of the party can be studied under two different phases: one was when NTR headed the party during 1982-1995 his son-in-law Chandrababu Naidu. During the first phase, the party relied mainly on the charisma of NTR. It has mobilized support based on the sentiment of Telugu nationalism, the demand for more autonomy to the state and populist welfare policies and programmes. In the second phase, Chandrababu made an attempt to bring about a shift in favour of good governance paradigm, in tune with the changing times. The party tried to mobilize support by showcasing the performance of the TDP government. The two leaders of the party during these two phases-NTR and Chandrababu-presented contrasting styles in leading the party and the government, which we shall examine now. NTR strode over the party and government like a colossus. He was as powerful as any populist leader should be in the world. He strongly believed that the TDP won the election in 1983 solely because of him and his hard work. He said that he was one a god sent mission to serve the people of AP. He thought himself to be infallible. His opinion was the opinion of the party. All party leaders and activists were his brothers (tammullu) and sisters (Aada paduchulu). He was addressed in private conversations or public gathering as ‘Anna garu’ (elder brother). In 1989, he declared himself ‘rajarshi’ (philosopher-king) and began to wear the robes of a sanyasi. Really, there was some kind of divine madness in his thinking and political practice.
Some treated him an enigma, while others regarded him as a bundle of contradictions\textsuperscript{13}.

Although NTR had the opportunity to build a party on democratic lines, he moves in the opposite direction. He thought that the party organizations at best was an extension of his own self, and to his leaders were unimportant for him to continue in power, because in the eye of the people it was he who mattered, not any one else. He declared that there is No. 2 either in the party or in the government. That there cannot be any one above him or no a par with him was understandable. But he said that there was no one below him too; because any such admission, that there is some one next to him in position or authority, would make his position only relative, only one of degree, which was clearly unthinkable for him.

NTR decried the congress for lack of inner-party democracy in it. But the exactly practiced what he decried public about. He was declared president of the party for life. The president nominated all its top function acne, including the members of politbureau, executive committee and the heads of other party wings. The president nominated the party functionaries at district levels too, although they were formally elected at the general bodies by consensus on the suggestion of the observer deputed by the president for this purpose. It was exactly the way the congress high command nominated the leaders of the Pradesh Congress commitée and the
Congress legislature party, although the farce of election was nominally enacted.

Leaders who were critical of NTR had to either keep quiet or leave the party. There was no other option. Especially, those who considered themselves No. 2 in the party could not continue for long, N. Bhaskara Rao, who was the cofounder of the TDP, split the party in 1984 to become the CM for a short while, with the support of the congress Party. In 1987, Srinivasulu Reddy also had to leave the party since he was suspected to be harboring ambitions of No.2 position. Srinivasulu Reddy levelled serious charges against NTR and Chandrababu for running the party like family property. Some important leaders who supported NTR in the initial years got gradually disenchanted. Upendra, the leader of TDP in parliament, Mudragada Padmanabham, an influential leader from kapu community. Jana Reddy, Vasanta Nageswara Rao, Renuka Chowdhary and so on left the TDP or were expelled from the party for anti-party activities\textsuperscript{14}.

NTR style of functioning in the government was no different. No sooner he came to power he took a decision to reduce the retirement age of government employees from 58 to 55, without giving them reasonable time to reconcile to the decision. He dismissed all his ministers. In February 1989, just before the assembly elections and constituted a new ministry with all new faces, saying that there was no dearth of suitable persons in the party.
to hold positions in the government. All these issues became hot topics for the opposition to attack the TDP.

The TDP went through its worst crisis in August 1995, when NTR was removed from power and party position in a revolt against him within the party. He could never recover from this place coup. The ouster of NTR was the tragic outcome of NTR politics itself. Although NTR lambasted the congress for perpetuating family rule over the country, the pursued the same this much more vigorously in AP. Supremacy of a single leader and the grooming and anointing of family members as heirs seem to be the general trend with most parties in India. But this seems to be more true in case of the state parties. Once NTR his actor-son, Balakrishna, to be his political successor, two of his sons-in-laws, who occupied crucial position in the party, did not relish this dynastic wish. The inheritance of power becomes an issue during the lifetime of NTR itself.

The immediate reasons given out by the rebellious leaders for ousting NTR were that he permitted his wife, Lakshmi Parvathi, to play a prominent role in public affairs and that her interference in party and governmental matters was intolerable and it was causing much damage to the party’s image and functioning of the government. Unlike the earlier occasion in 1984, when the overthrow of NTR was projected as murder of democracy, this time in 1995 there was much pity but no mass upsurge. NTR toured the state wailing over the treachery and imploring the people to fight for his
restoration, but no avail. NTR political career should remain an example as to how autocrats in democracies come to grief or bring their own ruin. Left forlorn and worn down by humiliation. NTR died soon as a broken hearted man. In all his celluloid life spanning 35 years and 300 films, NTR preferred not to act in tragedies, ironically enough, his real life ended as a tragedy.

The removal of NTR and the assumption of the twin offices of CM and party president by Chandrababu was a major turning point in the history of the TDP. It marked the end of an era of politics of charisma, populism and bonapartism, and the beginning of the new phase, characterized by politics of pragmatism, economic reform and performance. Before he became the Chief Minister, Chandrababu Naidu was known more for his organizational abilities as ‘an outstanding back room organizer’. Unlike older generation of political leaders, he represented the new type politician; he described himself as the chief executive officer of the state.

A postgraduate in Economics from Sri Venkateswara University, he was known from his student days for his ‘organizational’ abilities. As a congress leader and minister he had an inside view of how the congress party functioned. As the general secretary of the TDP for a long time, he built the party organization and the most of the key functionaries were those who enjoyed high confidence. He has tremendous memory and he could call most of the local party activists by name. Unlike NTR, he was a realist; his theory and practice of democracy are different from that of NTR. His thinks
that a leader has to keep his ideas and political practices in tune with the changing times and circumstances. Thus, he perceives himself as a dynamic leader. His decisions were not impulsive. He allows sufficient time and public debate before he takes decision or enact public policies on the lines he wants them to be. Unlike NTR, he mustered support the MLAs and ministers by offering them relevant motivators. Unlike NTR, Chandrababu Naidu gave more importance to civil servants than his own party functionaries. But he keeps a rigorous control over bureaucracy. He also takes care to keep the social balance in the party and the government in such a way that no one can blame him of favouring any community.

He took sufficient care to remain in focus always. He made himself visible in the media everyday by launching Janmabhoomi activities, surprise visits to government offices, face-to-face programmes with the CM telecast every week on the TV, etc. he had put the information technology and electronic media to good use to this end. In way, the personalized attacks of the congress party against Chandrababu also helped him to remain the central figure in state politics. Chandrababu is not a charismatic leader like NTR but he compensated this in ample measure by gaining a firm grip on the governmental machinery and functioning as well as the party organization, hard work and down-to-earth approach to people and problems.
Chandrababu had another advantage which NTR never had. NTR, throughout his tenure as the CM, had to face the hostile congress government at the centre, while Chandrababu has always had the benefit of a favourable non-congress government. He remained a key figure in the central government both during the period of the United Front (UF) government and later the BJP-led government. He was the convener of the United Front. When the UF government was defeated, he supported the BJP in order to prevent the congress from coming to power at the centre. His close association with the NDA government enable him to get support of the central government, especially for securing funds to the state. Several large-scale schemes were implemented during his tenure, with funds and loans from international funding agencies or the central government.

Organizationally there is an inbuilt advantage for any state party. The top leader is not answerable to any one above him. TDP’s pyramid stops in the state itself, unlike national parties where the central leaders foster factionalism below or warring factions at the state level look for support from the central leaders. In TDP all the factions and faction leaders at the district level have to be loyal to Chandrababu.

Despite the distinct leadership styles of NTR and Chandrababu Naidu, one common aspect: power in the party and government under both of them was highly centralized. If it was democratic dictatorship under NTR, it is democratic centralism under Chandrababu. Under NTR earlier,
the TDP continues to resolve around one leader, whose authority is hardly disputed. There is no No.2 in the party. Most MLAs and ministers command very little authority. Earlier people asked the question, after NTR who? Today more or less the same situation prevails. Actually, TDP is no exception in this matter. A leader who is liberal and takes the path of consensual politics would be looked upon a soft leader, unable to deliver.

Chandrababu Naidu successfully marginalized his rivals in the party or those who posed a potential threat to him. The claim of his party as the true continuation of the original TDP is generally accepted now. The death of NTR in January 1996, within five months of his ouster, came as blessing for Chandrababu, with the rallying point against him gone. It was not difficult for him to quickly settle matters with all those who claimed the legacy of NTR and tried to rival him for position in the TDP. The 1996 Lok Sabha elections settled the competing claims between the NTRTDP led by Lakshmi Parvathi, widow of NTR, and that of TDP led by Chandrababu, for legacy of NTR. Even though the leaders of the BSP and the Janata Dal sided with the NTRTDP, it secured only 10.6 per cent votes, but failed to get any seat. On the other hand, Chandrababu group polled 32.6 per cent votes and won 16 seats. The marginalization of NTRTDP, was completed in the 1998 Lok Sabha elections, by the which time most of the leaders remained with NTR when he was toppled, had shifted their allegiance to Chandrababu’s party. some joined other parties. Another rival, the elder son-
in-law of NTR, had to leave the party as he felt that there was no hope of
gaining any prominent place in the TDP now or in future. He went
NTRTDP, then moved to the BJP and later joined the congress party,
Chandrababu settled the matter with another splinter group, called Anna
TDP, a feeble imitation of Anna DMK of Tamil Nadu. It was led by NTR’s
flamboyant son, Harikrishna, another pretender to the throne of chief
minister from NTR’s family and the one who played an aggressive role in
toppling his father in 1995. Initially there was some curiosity whether this
outfit would emerge as a rival TDP in the state. Some believed that the Anna
TDP would certainly rally sufficient support in a way that would damage the
prospect of Chandrababu’s TDP. But after losing the 1999 assembly
elections badly, it went into oblivion. All those TDP leaders who fell out
with Chandrababu dinned in the year of the people that Chandrababu was a
traitor and trickster and that he does not believe in the virtue of keeping his
word. But the TDP voters and supporters did not seem to bother much about
this kind of ethics. People might have chosen to forget the 1995 scoup as
time passed and as he appeared doing his best for the development of the
state.

Thus, Chandrababu, as chief minister and party president, has
demonstrated his leadership qualities in outwitting his rival in inner-party
struggles, managing the party affairs and keeping the congress out of power.
He entrenched himself in power not just because he was the son-in-law of
NTR, although it gave him a great initial advantage vis-à-vis his rivals in the party when NTR was alive, as he commanded free access to and NTR relied on him for advice and assistance. Unlike GM Shah of Kashmir, he emerged as a leader in his own right later. Chandrababu still uses the old NTR rhetoric of Telugu pride, garlands NTR's status and photos, uses the portraits and cut outs of NTR at public meetings, but mainly appeals for electoral support on the basis of the performance of the TDP government after he assumed power.

Policy Shifts

What is more interesting is how Chandrababu had moved away from the policies of NTR's regime and the way he sought to gain legitimacy for them, TDP did not have any well-worked out ideology in the beginning. When NTR formed the party, he offered policies that appealed to different classes and sections of society. Among other things, TDP manifesto for 1983 elections promised to provide a clean, corrupt-free and efficient government and policies that were oriented to liberal industrial growth and pro-peasant agricultural development. It sought to remove the meaningless and unrealistic restrictions on industrialists and thus attract capital from outside the state and encourage the enterprising industrialists within the state. The TDP called the congress pro-merchant and anti-peasant for its failure to give remunerative price to agricultural products and to supply
electricity for the peasants at subsidized rates. It was a strange mixture of social democracy and pro-market philosophy.

In the immediate context, NTR borrowed heavily from the experience of neighboring Tamil Nadu. His role model was M.G. Ramachandran (MGR). Like MGR, he too launched some populist schemes such as mid-day meals for schools children. Other schemes, such as supply of rice, cloth, construction of pucca houses for the poor and backward communities, supply of electricity to the farmers at subsidised rates were implemented on a large scale during 1983-89. The congress and other parties accused him of spending public money to consolidate his position in the state.

Although the TDP manifesto in 1983 called for thorough deregulation and downsizing the state, NTR launched a trenchant attack on the liberalization policies introduced after 1991 by the congress party at the centre and in the state. In 1994 assembly elections he promised to restore the Rs. 2 a kilo scheme, supply electricity to farmers at subsidised rates and prohibition of liquor in the state. For the congress party, prime Minster PV Narasihma Rao took the major responsibility to carry on the election campaign in the state. He kept the focus on the liberalization policies, since he throughout that he would get support in his home state for what he was doing at the national level. He counterpoised development and welfare saying that development hood suffers if the pulist welfare schemes as promised by NTR were implemented. He contended that NTR's 2 rupees a
kilo rice scheme was a mere dole and would only perpetuate poverty. On the other hand, NTR maintained that it was the responsibility of the government to provide the basic needs, namely, food, clothing and shelter, to the people. He questioned the theory of development that opposes welfare schemes for the poor. He claimed that development for him was the welfare of the poor, while development for the congress meant enrichment of the rich and the party leaders. Although NTR was one of the richest persons in the state, he could project himself as the champion of the interests of the poor, disadvantaged and the weaker sections.

The congress party was no match to NTR’s populism. Once again, it was an NTR wave. If Indira Gandhi had upstaged her rivals with the slogan of ‘garibi hatao’ and her radical postures, NTR upstaged the congress with the slogan of providing the ‘basic needs to the poor. If the congress always exploited the rich-poor divide and talked about the poor without hurting the rich, NTR proved to be one up in this game to beat the congress. Being the master of rhetoric, he repeatedly said: Society is my temple and people are my god, I am waging a war for welfare of the common man, he thundered.

These changes in the direction of policies in favour of liberalization and marker-reform became complete with Chandrababu assuming office of the CM in August 1995. He appealed for a paradigm shift in our thinking on growth and development. TDP government said that the huge expenditure on welfare programmes, subsidies, salaries and losses in public sector
undertakings had made the state finance precarious, diverted scarce public resources away from productive use in economic and social infrastructure and had consequently inhibited private investment and curtailed growth. In 1996, a government from being primarily a controller of economy to that of a facilitator of private sector activity and investor-friendly environment; from that of a provider of welfare to that of an enabler. Commentator described it variously as an attempt to sail with the times or a different kind of populism in the era of neo-liberalism. A large loan was taken from the World Bank for economic restructuring of the state. During the 1998 Lok Sabha elections, he openly debated with the opposition parties about the need for these reforms and the TDP’s performance was reasonably good in the elections.

But Chandrababu always maintained that vigorous pursuit of market reforms would not mean abandonment of welfare programmes. During the few months prior to the 1999 elections, he introduced a number of schemes, outclassing ever NTR, purportedly for the welfare of backward castes, dalits, tribal people, minorities, women, handicapped and what not, every conceivable section of the electorate. If he appeared pragmatic in his advocacy of fiscal prudence and downsizing the government earlier, he appeared equally pragmatic in his fiscal profligacy on the eve of elections. The congress and the Left parties, which had hitherto attacked the TDP for giving up or diluting welfare, found themselves at their wit’s end. They
lampooned him for trying to beguile people with his 'scheme gimmicks' and trying to buy votes with public money. But Chandrababu claimed that his attempt was to balance development and welfare. Of course, there was difference between NTR’s populism and Chandrababu’s welfarism. NTR did not have any well worked out policy framework. He just responded to the situation and assumed him to be the saviors of common people. Welfare schemes for Chandrababu were only a matter of political expediency – taking a step backward or sideways from logic of economic market to met the compulsions of the electoral market.

Regarding centre-state relation also there a difference between NTR and Chandrababu, NTR went to the extent saying that the centre was a ‘conceptual myth’, The relationship between the centre and the state were highly congratulationist fueled the time of NTR, and this could be largely due the fact that congress was in power at the centre during his period. Chandrababu had always a friendly government at the centre. Chandrababu believed in bargaining federalism, where he could get maximum benefit from the central government by maintaining friendly relation with it. But one thing should be said here. TDP, despite its emphasis on Telugu culture and pride, near entertained the idea of succession like DMK or Akali Dal in their early years. Telugu people have exhibited this tendency, since the beginning of the 20th century, of finely mixing the Telugu national pride with that of Indian nationalism. NTR said that the TDP said that the TDP
was a 'regional party with a national perspective, for some time he even entertained the idea of becoming the prime minister of the country, by floating an all-India party called Bharata Desam.

A detailed study of this shift in policy framework, changes in public policies and the way they are articulated and legitimated would be interesting. They way changes in policies were effected in contradictory directions by the TDP leadership at different periods and the way the leaders managed these switches showed that public policies do not merely emanate from objective condition. Political leaders have a large role to play in articulating a specific course among the available ones under the given circumstances and shaping the policy framework depending upon their own perceptions, electoral compulsions, and the status of their own perceptions, electoral compulsions, and the status of their parties, i.e. whether the party is in power or in opposition.

REACTIONS OF THE OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES AND UNITED OPPOSITION PARTIES

Almost all the opposition parties welcomed this trend but expressed different ideas regarding the role of the Telugu Desam Party. But the congress (I) vehemently criticized this party and their target was particularly N.T.Ramarao actor- turned politician. The then P.C.C. President Sri G. Venkataswamy called the Telugu Dasam Party the Kamma Desam. On one occasion he said that Telugu Desam Party had been receiving funds from abroad. The congress leaders said that an actor can not become a politician;
politics is not acting with heroines. Some congress leaders called N.T. Ramarao a paper tiger unfit for politics. Vijayabhaskar Reddy, the then chief minister, said We can take N.T. Ramarao in our stride. Telugu Desam Party is one of those parties which sprang up before election. it has no political ideology, and is a temporary phenomenon. We have a party with ideology, we deliver goods we have infrastructure to cope with difficulty situation.

The attitude of other parties was different. George Fernandez (Lok dal), on 1st April, at Vijayawada, welcomed the formation of the Telugu Desam party and he wished it to help the opposition to give an additional blow to the Congress (I). However he stared that the regional parties can not solve the problems of the people. In November 1982, Telugu Desam party decided to join hands with other opposition parties – B.J.P, Lok Dal, Janata, Congress (S) and R.P.I. and formed the progressive Democratic Front CPI and CPM also aligned towards this new party. Just before elections they formed a united front to fight against the congress (I). The Telugu Desam party was determined to mobilize the people of all the classes and wanted to consolidated its position, before the announcement of the election date. So the party leader N.T. Ramarao traveled extensively and came into touch with all sorts of people. In short, his Chaitanya Ratham travelled 5,000kms and spoke to 1 crore 50 lakh people, within 55 days. The election date was announced, the ‘Prachara Ratham’ started in Tirupati on December 16th.
1982. This became a historic record as he traveled indefatigably for 19 days and worked for 430 hours out of 456 hours.

During the election campaign many factors, which are self-contradictory in nature, operated. Some of them can be started briefly. The foremost factor was the charisma, which has been determining the political fate of any party in Indian politics. Indira Gandhi's charisma no doubt, previously influenced the Telugu people, but N.T. Rama Rao reversed the trend. N.T. Ramarao's charisma dominated the political scene. N.T. Ramarao's personal appeal and his constant politicalisation of the people, his eloquent speeches his action-oriented movements stirred up the sentiments of the Telugu people, who felt proud of their Telugu pride. Wherever, Indira Gandhi went, she received stiff opposition and many times. Her election campaign was not all successful. N.T. Ramarao was received by almost all the, irrespective of any of their reservation.

N.T. Rama Rao belonged to the affluent kamma community in Andhra Pradesh where it constitutes 5% of the total population. The whole community supported N.T. Rama Rao because their rival community in politics was Reddy's who dominated the Andhra political scene for several years. Kamma community dominated funds, worked ceaselessly for the Telugu Desam party.

When N.T Rama Rao entered politics, he had 800 of his cinemas associated, which turned into 'Yuva Sena' and rendered valuable services in
carrying the message of the party as well as N.T.Rama Rao’s his cine – personality no doubt cashed out in politics. The role of the press was an important factor in giving publicity and propaganda to the Telugu Desam Party. The Telugu newspaper Eenadu with a circulation about 3 lakhs became a mouth piece of the Telugu Desam Party. All paper except ‘Eenadu’ failed to guess the pulse of the people.’ Andhra Jyothi’ and ‘Andhra Bhoomi’ supported the Congress (I). Andhra Prabha played a dual role. When Rama Rao came up with his Telugu Desam, Ramojo Rao himself said: here a messiah who could do something for the state. Why not give him a chance?

The manifesto presented here gives in brief objectives of the party:

Clean Administration pride of Telugu Language aid to farmers; village development; rural electrification; more powers for Panchayati Raj Institutions; basic changes in education system ; rapid industrialization of the state; medical and health services; reforming the police force; timely completion of projects; Women’s welfare; encouragement to youth; centre state relations; dedication to democracy autonomy for radial and Television freedom of the press; independence of judiciary; electoral reforms; cub on government expenditure; a kilogram of rice for Rs. 2 rational tax structure; priority to housing; secularism; development of backward classes and aid to hand loom industry
Eenadu serialized the election manifesto of Telugu Desam Party and campaigned openly against the congress (1). There was editorials everyday appealing to the people to vote against the Congress (1). Corrupt methods of the Congress (1) leads highlighted and stress the need of the regional party. Four days before the election, Eenadu published the findings of an opinion poll its staff got conducted in a few selected constituencies. The survey said Telugu Desam would bag between 175 and 225 seats and the Congress (1) between 50 and 80 seats. This was something like a gallop poll and it come true.

**CHAOS IN TELUGU DESAM PARTY**

All is not well within the ruling family of Andhra Pradesh. After remaining in the shadows of N.T.Rama Rao during the Telugu Desam Party’s first stint in power between 1983 and 1989, NTR’s children all ten of them have come out openly to demand a share of power. What began as fight for the Tekkli Assembly seats vacated by NTR – he was elected from two constituencies – In TDP has now snow balled into a bitter success in between the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister’s sons on one hand the second, Lakshmi Parvathi on the other.

It was largely because of the opposition from his sons that NTR did not give the party ticket to Laskhmi Parvathi to contest from Tekkali, but the monts, NTR’s second wife has consolidated his position in the party. In fact, Laskhmi Parvathi has emerged as a new power centre in Andhra Pradesh.
At the forefront of the opposition to NTR and his wife is the Andhra Pradesh Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao's third son, Hari Krishna. The later is dead against NTR promoting his wife, and Harikrishna has been compaining against Lakshmi Parvathi ever since she made her political intention clear. He has ridiculed his step mother and criticized her for patronizing congress defectors who joined the TDP recently.

So for, Lakshmi Parvathi has maintained a dignified silence. But she hit back by suspending the Nellore TDP, for siding with Harikrishna. Not the one to take such an insult lying down. Harikrishna led demonstration inform of NTR's Banjara Hills residence, but the NTR refused to revoke the suspension order on Nellore Legislator.

Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao considers TDP has his personal freedom and takes decisions without the knowledge of even senior party leaders. Of late, however, NTR has been consulting: his second wife, Lakshmi Parvathi who has no locus stand in either the party or the government.

This is not been resented by party members even NTR's family has gone against the Chief Minster. Their target, of course is Lakshmi Parvathi. Even his two powerful son-in-law, D. Venkateswara Rao and Chandrababu Naidu, have openly opposed Lakshmi Parvathi's entry into politics.

Faced with mounting pressure to keep Laskhmi Parvathi out of party politics. NTR tried to smoothen dissent by weeding out critics from key
party posts. NTR revamped the TDP's control entire propaganda and disciplinary committees unilaterally, without consulting any senior party leaders. What is more, NTR has deliberately kept the post of the general secretary vacant, probably to give the job to Lakshmi Parvathi at a later time.

The more boomeranged, senior party leaders as well as his family role in revolt. Chandra Babu Naidu now joined Harikrishna in the campaign against Laskhimi Parvathi, leading NTR to threaten that he would dissolve the assembly and recommended fresh polls. And to drive home the message to the likes of Chandra Babu Naidu, Rama Rao said, These should be only one group, the NTRs group, and the party. There who wish to critic me and do not feel happy about my actions can go out of the TDP and from their own political party.

NTR's problems have been compounded by the fact that the local media, too, have turned against him. After this, too, largely because of Lakshmi Parvathi, whom the local journalists refer to as NTR's "Kitchen Cabinet". She controls access to the Chief Minister and even calls up editors to express his happiness my criticism of the Chief Minister.

And of late, Lakshmi Parvathi is also not hiding the political ambitions. In an interview to a local daily, she claimed that she had played an active role in NTR's political career. As his wife, it is my duty to defend him and also keep him updated about the feelings of his party men, she said.
and despite he protestations that she does not interfere in party or administrative affairs, the truth is other wise. The Chief Ministers visitors list is screened by her and she also holds durbars at the CM’s Banjara Hills residence where she receives petitions and gives instruction to party-men.

A political observes feels that by now, Laskhmi Parvathi would have occupied a key party post had it not been for Harikrishna opposition discontent had been brewing in NTR’s family ever since Rama Rao married for a second time, but it is only now that Lakshmi Parvathi is being publicity humiliated.

One fallout of this family war is that party men are a confused lot. They do not know which side to take and even ensure of the own-positions. Most senior leaders, however, swear by Lakshmi Parvathi as they know that she is the one who is called the shots in the Part. NTR has already made too many enemies and if the present discontent among party men is not taking on the form of a full-fledged revolt, it is only because of Rama Rao’s stature. Most TDP leaders know that the party will mean nothing without the Charisma of NTR.

As a result, N.T. Rama Rao is ousted from his own party in eight-day coup masterminded by his son-in-law Chandrababu Naidu, the real target, however, was his wife Laskhmi Parvathi. Nara Chandrababu Naidu who assumed offices as the new chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh on 1st September 1995.
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4. Ibid., p. 92.


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12. Ibid., pp. 63-66.


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