CHAPTER-IV

DEMAND FOR STATE AUTONOMY: A CASE OF TELUGU DESAM PARTY

Since the formation of Andhra Pradesh in 1956, it was ruled by Congress party. Though it was in power continuously for twenty-seven years as a single dominant party in the state, it was not free from swings and pulls of party politics at the centre. The state wing being a branch of an all India party mortgaged its power to the so-called “High Command” which rules from Delhi. There has been a continuous erosion of the respect and dignity of the people of Andhra Pradesh by the docile attitude of the elected state government and nominated Chief Ministers and their puppet cabinet. In Delhi the country's capital, Andhra has no existence. They are classified as south Indians or madrasis. Telugu people are second-rate citizens for these colonial rulers of Delhi. Telugu, the language spoken by 60 million people has no value or respect. The Telugu people who are docile paid a heavy price for their patience.¹ The party leaders frosted from above had the necessary skills to run the administration and to balance factional fight within the party. Such imposition of leaders by the party high command resulted in the erosion of state autonomy and was naturally resented. That was the reason for political parties should be put to an end. And the spurt of regional parties in the country.

The people have been crying for a change. A change not in the government but a change in the whole set up. A set up which ignores even their existence. Andhra Pradesh Congress politics acquired a special feature that the ruling Congress group always supported the
ruling faction at centre. When the congress faced a major split at centre in 1969, the Congress party in Andhra Pradesh under the leadership of Brahmananda Reddy supported Mrs. Indira Gandhi faction at the centre. In 1969 due to the Telangana agitation, Brahmananda Reddy had to resign on the advice of the High Command to give a chance to a Telangana person to become the Chief Minister.\(^2\)

The resignation of Brahmananda Reddy and the succession of P.V. Narasimha Rao as the chief minister of Andhra Pradesh took a major turn in party politics. The year 1969 is a landmark in the history of congress politics of Andhra Pradesh because, for the first time the chief minister acted on the advice of high command from the centre and a Chief Minister was made by the centre. This was a first step towards the deterioration of party politics in the state. The influence of the centre intensified and the interference increased. It resulted in a shift of party politics from Andhra Pradesh to New Delhi.

During the period 1969 to 1982 almost all the chief ministers in Andhra Pradesh were the choice of congress at centre. In 1978 though congress was out of power at centre, in Andhra Pradesh under the leadership of Dr. Channa Reddy, Congress could retain its strength in Andhra Pradesh both in Assembly and Lok Sabha elections. The period under Dr. Channa Reddy was one of political turmoil. Corruption and nepotism became the order of the day. Dr. Channa Reddy was out of office due to the factions led by Raja Ram who demanded resignation of Chenna Reddy with the support of 150 MLA's. After Chenna Reddy's resignation, most of the strong leaders
were either indifferent or inactive in party politics. The indifference of party men and imposition of centre were the reasons for the congress party to lose its credibility with the masses. The people got the impression that leaders were not interested in anything except the political power and state was nothing but a puppet in the hands of the centre.

The misrule of congress since 1978 under the leadership of Dr. Chenna Reddy till its fall under the leadership of K. Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy in 1982 discredited and devalued the politics of Congress at the state level. During this period party experienced factionalism and groupism to its maximum extent. The party infits, the high handedness of central leadership, especially regarding the frequent changes of Chief Ministers, spoiled the image of the party. The members of the legislative assembly belonging to ruling party, which enjoyed absolute majority, had no voice in electing their leader. Since party politics shifted from Hyderabad to Delhi, the administration suffered to a great extent. Corruption and nepotism were at their peak. As a result of its misrule the party lost its base with the masses, which ultimately resulted in the defeat of the congress party in the sixth state assembly election in 1982 and this in turn led to the fall of congress party and the rise of Telugu Desam Party in Andhra Pradesh.

**ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF TELUGU DESAM PARTY**

The political mass created by the congress and a weak opposition gave rise to a new personality to step into state politics. N.T.Rama Rao a top film star required no introduction and publicity who had acted in more than 300 films over a period of three decades.
N.T.Rama Rao had expressed his desire to form a new political party on 28th March, 1982, named as Telugu Desam party. His idea of forming a party was welcomed by his film fans' associations and also by some opposition leaders. The idea, however, was ridiculed by the ruling Congress (I) and also by some of the opposition parties. The fans’ associations formed themselves as Yuva Sena and extended their support to Anna (elder brother) for his political career. The Yuva Sena popularized the idea of forming Telugu Desam party in Andhra Pradesh.3

The formation of Telugu Desam Party was mainly helped by the “Eenadu” the daily Telugu newspaper gave wide publicity to this infant Telugu Desam Party. This paper circulated in regional language both in rural and urban areas. This newspaper covered each and every activity of N.T. Rama Rao and referred to every word that was uttered by him thus giving publicity to N.T. Rama Rao. The paper impressed on the minds of people that the Congress had surrendered the states to the center. It also created an emotional feeling that the self-respect of Telugu speaking people was neglected by the leaders of the Congress party in the state for their selfish gains.

On March 21, 1982, Akashvani at Hyderabad, in one of the interview, N.T. Rama Rao says, “forming a regional party is to restore the prestige of the Telugu people, to protect the respect and dignity of the Telugu people, to understand the problems ourselves to provide everything that our society, our state our people badly require.” Why is Andhra Pradesh not industrially developed as Tamil Nadu, which is ruled by a regional party? Why? Do we not have resources? We are not
utilizing the existing raw materials, resources etc? We are not providing power to the remote villages. But we are supplying power to other states. Who decided their distribution? Central government? Andhra Pradesh would not be developed unless we utilized our resources? To do this we need a regional party. The people asked, what is the name of the party on the spur of the moment, N.T.Rama Rao responded Telugu Desam "I am a Telugu man he said I have decided to devote myself to the cause of our state. I have decided to fight to revive the glory of cultural heritage of our language. Therefore we will call our party Telugu Desam. The flag of the party was to consist of a wheel, which is red in colour representing the industrial front, a plough which is green in colour to symbolize the framer community and a hut in white colour. The flag was to have a yellow background". The Telugu Desam Party skeleton was formed by N. Bhaskara Rao and N. T. Rama Rao gave life to it. Many opposition parties, prominent people and the intelligensia welcomed the newly emerged Telugu Desam Party. This was a welcome trend in Andhra pradesh politics.

The first Mahanadu was held in the Nizam College in Hyderabad on 11th April 1982. Thousands of people attended the convention; the first Mahanadu itself was the first step to mobilize the people. In the convention N.T. Rama Rao categorically criticized the congress (l) and promised to restore Telugu pride. He said “the people should rule themselves." This remained the major motto of the Telugu Desam Party. After the first Mahanadu the members toured Andhra Pradesh in order to consolidate the party’s position by the time of the second state level convention at Tirupati. In this convention N. T.
Rama Rao released his party manifesto programmes and policies and exposed the follies of the congress (I). During the first Mahanadu the youth who had already formed an association, as his fans, transformed themselves into party workers under the name "yuva sena". They decided to follow the principle of "Anna." They were determined to propagate NTR's mission to safeguard the self-respect of Telugu people.

The second Mahanadu of the party was held at Tirupati on 28th May, 1982, where N. T. Rama Rao concentrated on the current problems of the people and planned for the future programmes of the party. He called for the immediate ouster of the congress-I government in view of the alleged land grab scandal. A resolution adopted by the Mahanadu said, "The government's continuance might affect the inquiry into the charges made against some ministers of their involvement in the scandal. In this convention, he planned to tour the whole state and towns. For one month N.T. Rama Rao travelled through the nooks and corners of Andhra Pradesh in 1983- remodeled and christened "Chaitanya Ratham" which he used as a platform to address public meetings and street corners, gathering and in which he also slept. Thus he built up a tempo, which is in passioned oratory timely modulations, and theoretical gestures and they kept the crowds sheering and in rapt attention he used to the greatest advantage all his histrionic gifts to win the hearts of the people.5

In 1983 election N.T.Rama Rao took a new turn with the emergence of Telugu Desam Government toward Centre-State Relation. He said that there would be no Strong Centre without Strong
States. He used such slogans as “Atma Guavaram of Telugus” which means the self respect of Telugu people, in his election speeches and thus kindled the feeling of Telugu regionalism, taking sufficient care to see that he was not misunderstood in the process as being anti-national or against the unity and integrity of India. He says that he was an Indian first and Telugu man next. N.T.Rama Rao’s charismatic campaign attracted considerable attention, with observers noting a possible challenge to India’s federal structure implicit in the emergence of powerful state based rather than nationally based popular movements. However he made it clear on January 7 1983, we stand for national unity and integration and this party favoured greater autonomy to the state rather than separatism.

N.T.Rama Rao built up an extremely efficient publicity and communication system to convince the voters even in remote villages that the two-year period of chief ministership, and the state congress president had been changed five times in 30 months. His message was that no government could function independently and honestly unless it could uphold the dignity and self-respect of the Telugu people. Hence the state government should possess all decision-making powers except defence, foreign affairs, currency and communication, which should be under the purview of the central government. N. T. Rama Rao said, “we do not have any powers except to say that state is ours”. However, as soon as he assumed power, N. T. Rama Rao made it clear that Telugu Desam was not a separatist party. While seeking more autonomy for the state the party stated categorically. We stand for national unity and integration. We owe allegiance to the center and wish to strengthen it so that it could fulfill its responsibilities.
Eenadu election manifesto of Telugu Desam Party and campaigned openly against the congress (I). There was editorials everyday appealing to the people to vote against congress (I). Corrupt methods of the congress (I) leaders here highlighted and the need of regional stressed party. Eenadu published the finding of an opinion poll conducted by its staff in a few selected constituencies. The survey conducted revealed the results that the Telugu Desam would bag between 175 and 225 seats and congress (I) between 50 and 80. This was something like a gallop pull and it came true.

N. T. Rama Rao's anti-centre views were well known right from his starting of the Telugu Desam party. He called the centre a conceptual myth and advocated that a strong centre was possible only when there were strong states. His role in the formation of the southern Chief Ministers Council at Bangalore in 1983 and his demand for the appointment of a high power committee for a review of centre-state relations. The style of functioning of the congress (I) government of Miss Indira Gandhi after the 1980 Lok Sabha election, particularly her handling of the party affairs at the state level, led to the emergence of regional party in some important states. The emergence of the Telugu Desam as a victorious regional party in Andhra Pradesh in 1982-1983 set the pace for various other non-congress parties in Karnataka, Assam, Sikkim, West Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Tamil Nadu significantly altered the balance in favour of the states.

Almost all opposition parties in the state welcomed this trend but expressed different views regarding the role of Telugu Desam
Party. But the congress (I) vehemently criticized it and their target was N. T. Rama Rao an actor turned politician. The president of the Andhra Pradesh Congress Party Sri. G. Venkataswamy called Telugu Desam Party, as kamma Desam. An actor could not become a politician; politics was not acting with heroines. Some congress leaders called N. T. Rama Rao a paper tiger unfit for politics. Vijaya Bhaskara Reddy, then chief minister said "we can take N.T.Rama Rao 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 difficult situation.8

The attitude of other parties was different George Fernandes (Lok Dal), at Vijaywada, 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 stated that the regional parties could not solve the problems of the people. In 1982, Telugu Desam Party decided to join hands with other opposition parties, BJP, Lok Dal, Janata, congress (s) formed the Progressive Democratic Front. CPI and CPM also aligned with this new party. Telugu Desam Party was determined to mobilize the people of all classes and party had consolidated its position.

The foremost factor was the charisma of the leader, which has been determining the political fate of many a party in Indian politics. Indira Gandhi's charisma no doubt previously influenced the people of Andhra, but N.T.Rama Rao reversed the trend, by his charisma and dominated the political scene. N.T.Rama Rao's personal appeal and
his constant politicalisation of the people, his speech, his action-oriented gestures stirred up the sentiments of the Telugu people, who felt proud of being Telugu. Wherever Indira Gandhi went, she received stiff opposition many times her election campaign was not successful. Whereas N. T. Rama Rao was received by almost all the people, without any reservation.

The manifesto of Telugu Desam Party was to provide clean administration without corruption. It promised that the ministers would declare their assets publicly. The basic changes in the education system, rapid industrialization to the state, improved 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 radio and television, freedom of press, independence of the judiciary, electoral reforms, curb on government expenditure, a kilogram of rice for 2 rupees, rational tax structure, priority to housing secularism, development of backward classes and aid to handloom industry. Telugu Desam Party will strengthen the public distribution system and essential commodities are distributed to the people at very reasonable rates.

But the internal tensions and conflicts in Telugu Desam party challenged the leadership of N.T. Rama Rao who was the chief minister from 1983 to 1989. N. T. Rama Rao’s children came out openly to demand a share of power. What began as fight for the Tekkali assembly seat vacated by N.T. Rama Rao he was elected from two constituencies now snow balled into a better successions fight.
between the chief minister's sons on one hand and his wife, Lakshmi Parvati on the other side. It was largely because of the opposition from his sons that N.T. Rama Rao did not give the party ticket to Lakshmi Parvati to contest from Tekkali assembly constituency. But within months, she consolidated her position in the party, and emerged as a new power center in Andhra Pradesh. At forefront of the opposition to N.T. Rama Rao and his wife and his third son, Hari Krishna, and Lakshmi Parvati ever since she made her political intentions clear. she was severely critical of her for patronizing the congress defectors who had joined Telugu Desam Party recently.

So far, Lakshmi Parvati who had been maintaining a dignified silence, hit back by suspending the Nellore Telugu Desam legislator, for siding with Hari Krishna, led a demonstration in front of N.T. Rama Rao's banjara hills residence, but the chief minister refused to revoke the suspension order on the Nellore legislator. It was strongly resented in the party that N.T. Rama Rao was taking decision's consulting his wife only, of late, however, who had no power to stand either in the party or the government, totally ignoring the senior leaders of the party. The resentment infact was more against Lakshmi Parvati. N.T. Rama Rao's sons- in- law, D. Venkateshwarra Rao, who was a Telugu desam MP and Chandra Babu Naidu who was then the state finance minister who also shared the general resentment openly opposed Lakshmi Parvati's entry into politics.

Even as pressure mounted up to keep Lakshmi Parvati out of party politics. N. T. Rama Rao tried to smoothen dissent by removing his critics from key party posts, and revamping entirely the
propaganda and disciplinary committees of the party unilaterally, without consulting any senior party leaders. What is more, N T Rama Rao deliberately kept the post of the general secretary of the party vacant, probably to give it Lakshmi Parvati at a later time.

These measures boomed ranging Lakshmi Parvati since the senior party leaders as well as his family members including Chandra Babu Naidu rose in revolt against him. Exasperated N. T. Rama Rao threatened that he would dissolve the assembly and recommend fresh polls. Chandrababu Naidu declared, "there should be only one group, the N. T. Rama Rao's group in party. The revolt was only delayed but could not be prevented". The aggrieved members did rise against N T Rama Rao to prevent further disaster to the party and its government. As a result, N.T. Rama Rao was ousted from his own party and his master minded son in law Chandra Babu Naidu assumed office of chief minister of Andhra Pradesh on 1st September 1995.

**NARA CHANDRA BABU Naidu CHIEF MINISTER OF ANDHRA PRADESH**

Chandra Babu Naidu became the 13th chief minister of Andhra Pradesh. He was only second chief minister who had attained this position at a very young age. He started working in the direction of N.T. Rama Rao. He knew the pulse of the people. He had understood their problems and he was anxious to learn more.

With N.T.Rama Rao's sudden demise in 1996, the split became inevitable. The Telugu Desam under the leadership of Chandra Babu Naidu fought the elections to Lok Sabha in 1996 and won 16 seats on
its own. And CPM and CPI captured 22 seats; the emergence of a hung parliament with no party able to form the government on its own at the centre came in handy to the supreme Telugu Desam Party. Chandra Babu Naidu opposed the formation of BJP at the centre in 1996. As the Telugu Desam Party president and United Front convener, Chandrababu Naidu played a major role in the formation of United Front comprising of 14 parties viz., the Janata Dal, DMK, Telugu Desam, Assam Gana Parishad, National Conference, Tamil Manila Congress, and Communist Party of India as major supporters and congress (I) supporting from outside.

After the fall of the Atal Behari Vajpayee government, the United Front formed a government at the centre in 1996. At the first instance United Front government was formed under the prime ministership of H.D. Deve Gowda with the support of regional parties viz., AGP, DMK, NC, and Telugu Desam as partners. Thus after a lapse of six years the regional parties once again emerged as potential forces to share power at the centre. Besides being the principle architect of the United Front, the Telugu Desam Chief Minister Chandra Babu Naidu realized the need for an institutional arrangement for regional parties at the national level and took an active role in the formation of another Front known as the Federal Front consisting of the Telugu Desam, AGP, DMK and TMC to act as a ginger group in the larger United Front and to protect the interests of the states they were representing and gained a better bargaining power for themselves under the United Front dispensation. The Telugu Desam Party also played a crucial role during the crisis that gripped the nation as a result of withdrawal of the support of congress party to the Deve Gowda government. As the
convener of both the United Front and Federal Front, Chandra Babu Naidu maintained political contact with the congress-I president, Sitaram Kesari and brought the recalcitrant congress party to the negotiation to effect a smooth transition from the Deve Gowda government to the Indra Kumar Gujaral government.

The role of Telugu Desam Party in Indian politics, under the leadership of N.T.Rama Rao and subsequently N.Chandra Babu Naidu, has been commendable in the context of federalizing the Indian political process. Under Chandra Babu Naidu’s stewardship, the Telugu Desam Party, originally a regional outfit, has been at the forefront of National politics, especially in times of political crisis at the centre, and playing the role of catalyst, bringing divergent political forces together to forge a United Front of National and regional parties as an alternative to both the centrist congress and the rightist BJP at the centre.

The manifesto of Telugu Desam came out demanding more powers to the states which could go along with strengthening the federal structure of the country. They also suggested inter state councils for quick solution to problems facing the states. It expressed concern for the erosion of democratic values in the country and assured the maintenance of these values at any cost, One man one job, was the slogan of the party with regard to the occupation of several posts by politicians. Telugu Desam also pressed for electoral reforms and demanded that the election commission should bear the cost of conducting the elections. They also demanded a ban on all defections.
After the congress (I) government's defeat at centre in the 1996 elections, in the Andhra Pradesh Bhavan in New Delhi became the centre of power politics at the National level. The announcement of the elections of Deve Gowda and Indra Kumar Gujral as prime minister were made from Andra Pradesh Bhavan in Delhi prolonged the United Front steering committee had at Andhra pradesh. As the president of Telugu Desam Party, convener of Federal Front and United Front and the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Chandra Babu Naidu played an important role in nominating unanimously Mr. K R Narayan, Mr Krishnakanth and Mr. Sangma for the post of president, vice president and speaker respectively, and hence Chandra Babu Naidu came to be called as king maker. The salient feature of this period was that Chandra Babu Naidu rejected prime ministership twice when it was offered to him, saying that he wanted to develop his own state as its chief minister. These developments viewed retrospectively in the pattern of national politics indicate a total reversal of the authoritarian and centralized politics of congress (I) leadership.11

Under the tenure of congress (I) its high command was treating the state chief ministers like chiefs of municipalities. The congress (I) prime ministers never treated the state chief ministers as equal partners in the running of federal policy of India. In contrast to this past political culture, the current Indian Politics has been drastically federalized by the regional parties especially by Telugu Desam Party.

After the fall of the United Front government the Lok sabha was dissolved. In mid term poll the BJP emerged as a single largest party and formed the government with the help of regional parties
numbering eighteen. The Telugu Desam party with its 12th Lok Sabha members is also one among the eighteen. Chandra Babu Naidu wisely decided to support the BJP government at the centre for his own reasons. The confrontation with the centre so that he could develop his own state by getting all the pending works at the centre accomplished. At the centre he created an opportunity for a new and single largest party to rule in country by eliminating the same old traditional party. Chandra Babu Naidu played a crucial role in getting Mr. C.M.C Bal Yogi (TDP) member unanimously elected as the speaker of the 12th Lok Sabha. The Lok Sabha elections brought about a complete change in the state and National politics. The instability that had been haunting politics in the state was finally dispelled. At the same time instability started affecting the centre. Within two weeks, Delhi had seen two governments taking over. The first Atal Behari Vajpayee government lasted exactly 13 days. In its place, United Front’s Deve Gowda government was installed. In the tense situation that saw these events transpire, the role played by the Telugu Desam was by no means inconsequential. Chief minister Chandra Babu Naidu played a key role in Delhi during those crucial weeks was carrying forward the legacy of N.T. Rama Rao. He had succeeded in forming the United Front, but who was to lead it? There was a unanimous opinion that Chandra Babu Naidu should take this role. Senior leaders who were impressed by the dedication with Chandra Babu Naidu took over the task of forming the Front, requested him to accept the responsibility of Prime Minister. That was indeed a great opportunity. If some one else had been in his place, he would not have forsaken the opportunity. Immaterial of how long he would be the
prime minister, the structure of that position would have enticed him. Infact the entire state remembered N. T. Rama Rao at this juncture. They knew that if he had been alive, he would have become the prime minister. That apart, does opportunity knock at the doors of the people, as it does to Chandra Babu Naidu? Who would get an opportunity like this at so young age? In the slippery world politics, even to become a chief minister, leaders have to wait an entire lifetime. But Chandra Babu Naidu did not accept this offer. He excused himself saying that he had a lot of work to do in his state. He clarified that his state was his workplace. On Chandra Babu Naidu's refusal the opportunity went to Karnataka's chief minister, H.D.Deve Gowda. Chandra Babu Naidu again played a key role in confirming the name of Deve Gowda, a senior leader in the Janata Party. As soon as the Vajpayee government fell, on behalf of the United Front, Chandra Babu Naidu and CPM leader, Hari krishan Singh Surjit met the president and informed him that they had chosen Deve Gowda as their leader. With the congress party also supporting this proposition, the first government of the United Front was formed. Chandra Babu Naidu's name spread throughout the country as a kingmaker. Leaders in Delhi and senior journalists boosted his image to the skies. Chandra Babu Naidu was facing opposition everywhere. He was a lonely journey; suddenly he was a unquestioned leader in the state. Even in this successful march ahead, he had, however, to meet resistance. Hari Krishna Singh Surjit revolt was one such. Certain leaders had wanted Telugu Desam to vote in favour of the BJP front so Telugu Desam MPs voted in favour of Vajpayee government. Chandra Babu Naidu maintained a safe distance with the congress at the
centre. As long as the congress leaders did not criticize him, he decided not to indulge in it himself. But if they start behaving as enemies, he would also behave equally aggressively. Since his party was in power, and since the congress was supporting the ruling formation in the centre, he exercised considerable patience. He advocated a vote of conscience, like Indira Gandhi had advocated at the time of presidential elections. Chandra Babu Naidu nipped these efforts in the bud. This caused considerable distance between the two leaders. The rift was to increase later; meanwhile, the 1996 elections had made Lakshmi Parvati inconsequential to the state politics.

Chandra Babu Naidu played a decisive role in the centre. There was rather minimal presence of the National Front under the stewardship of the Janata Dal, the Left Front formed by all the Leftist Parties, and a Federal Front of the various regional parties. The four regional Parties in the last grouping included the Telugu Desam, Tamil Manila Congress, DMK and Assam Gana Parishad. All these had come together to form the ruling United Front. Thus United Front had in its fold about thirteen political parties. Congress gave its external support. Chandra Babu Naidu was perhaps the only leader, who dared to brush aside such apprehensions and forge the Front with its support. He was driven by the single-minded idea becoming a partner in the ruling Front, and was determined that the United Front should take over the reins at the centre. Delhi politics had its natural impact on the state politics as well. It was a precious opportunity that both the state and the centre had the same party in the ruling formation.12
The non-congress state governments, whenever they emerged since the late sixties, were only more worried about and interested in defending themselves against the politics of dismissal by the centre. Now multi party governments are not only the order of the day in current Indian politics but they emerged as potential forces so as to provide a viable alternative to the monolithic congress system at the centre. The formation of the National Front in 1989 and United Front in 1996 provided this alternative. The National Front was a loose coalition of the centrist and mainly state based non-congress political parties. It was the outcome of efforts of the non-leftist opposition parties to cut down their fragmentation and to become politically meaningful though a sort of Federal Alliance. The Front comprised the powerful state based parties Telugu Desam Party AGP and DMK; Janata Dal was the big brother partner. It was an Article of faith with these Front partners to dislodge the congress from the centre and to take its place at the centre to federalize the country's policy. As chairman of the Front N T Rama Rao said that the Front would dedicate itself to the “sacred cause of redeeming the country from the evil institution which is at the help of affairs.” an equally important objective of the Front was to re-examine centre state relations so as to remove the imbalance in fiscal, legislative, administrative relations, and to usher in an era of harmonious relations between the union and the state in the true federal spirit.

Telugu Desam party being a regional party, having power in two places was a significant step. For the congressmen, denial of power in both the places was a novel experience too. This situation had not come to pass even when N.T. Rama Rao was ruling at the state and
V.P. Singh was at the centre. It was strange that should have been brought on by Chandra Babu Naidu; Telugu Desam had become a partner of the Front Government at the centre, which was being supported by the congress. Naturally, this dispensation brought some problems to the congressmen in Andhra Pradesh. Without power in the state and the centre, they did not see how they could pull on the politics, because, congressmen found it difficult to conduct politics without power. This meant that there were widespread apprehensions and reservations in congress about the current situation. Congressmen started condemning the Front Government right from its first day in office. In private conversation they were yearning either to join the Front Government within six months or form their own government. They were all angry with P.V. Narasimha Rao, because they felt that he had given away power to the Front.

The Telugu Desam Party has a fairly long history of allying with the Left Parties and the regional parties. The Third Front, which had fought many elections, had been founded on the principle of non-alliance with both the congress and the BJP. This however, was to change after the 1998 Lok sabha elections. The Telugu Desam Party had won 13 crucial seats in the house. This was a significant number and would prove decisive in the formation of the next ministry. There were several factors that Chandra Babu Naidu had to consider before he made his decision. His first priority was to avert the possibility of congress, his main rival, from coming to power.¹³

The second was to ensure that the nation did not have to face another exhausting election. Thus, despite the fact that the other
members of the United Front opposed the BJP. Chandra Babu Naidu proceeded with his plans of supporting them. His sudden interest in an alliance with Atal Behari Vajpayee made Chandra Babu Naidu the object of fierce criticism. Every party he focused on furthering its interests why then couldn’t he take steps, which would help the interests of his party?

Chandra Babu Naidu offered to support the BJP led government, unlike the AIADMK, Trinamool Congress and other regional parties, he was not a partner in the government. It is true that Bala Yogi of Telugu Desam Party was made the speaker of the lower house of parliament, when the congress was trying to stifle the Vajapayee government regarding the election of the speaker, Chandra Babu Naidu suggested Balayogi’s name. On all other occasions, he steered clear from power. Though pressurized many a time, he always avoided becoming a partner in the BJP alliance. He proved that he was interested only in betterment of Andhra Pradesh and not in sharing power at the centre. Chandra Babu Naidu continued his anti congress stance even when AIADMK left the BJP led Front and broke bread with the congress.

Chandra Babu Naidu, who was under an eclipse during the mid term Lok Sabha elections on 1998, was in for good times during the Assembly Elections. Loans from the World Bank, loan from Norway, the continuing international acclaim, the completion of hi-tech city construction in lightning speed, and victories in the elections for the assembly and the local body institutions followed one after the other. There was a strong feeling that people will once again lean towards
Telugu Desam Party, which was interpreted by Chandra Babu Naidu as the gains of developmental politics. Chandra Babu Naidu was more self-confident. In the opposition and official machinery there was rethinking, parties had only won on a negative vote, there are very few parties that had come back to power on a positive vote. Probably Jyoti Basu was a sole exception to this. But the success of Left Front in West Bengal is always considered as the victory of well-oiled party machinery. Be that as it may, there was a new consideration economic affair of Andhra Pradesh. Chandra Babu Naidu had brought international recognition. He was able to impress international financial institutions and national capitalists. Chandra Babu Naidu can utilize international loans in a proper manner; he was achieving the development of the state and getting the confidence of the people, which ultimately resulted in the victory of developmental politics. This is how Chandra Babu Naidu evaluated the state affairs.

As elections approached, Chandra Babu Naidu started examining the election exercise in new angles. As part of these, he encouraged political neutrals, by earmarking seats for women; he decided to give them prominence, through, "Praja Deevena:" programme. He encouraged people to exercise their vote unfailingly, and strengthen democracy. He encouraged people to realize that good people's representatives and through them, a good government will come only when each one of them exercise their legitimate franchise. Non-participation in voting tantamounts to disrespecting democracy and committing national sin. He appealed to all the political parties and the people to keep criminals away from politics and public
positions. Criminalisation of politics is detrimental to welfare and development.

Chandra Babu Naidu advocated voting for only clean candidate. He pleaded with the voters to give prominence to work culture the need of the hour. These were some new angles Chandra Babu Naidu chooses in the elections. He conducted praja deevena meeting in Hyderabad, district centre's, and later at mandal and village level. Cycle rallies; party flag hoisting campaigns etc. were conducted throughout the state. The workers developed loyalty towards the party and became confident to win the elections. The entire state was anxiously waiting for the conduct of elections and the victory of the party. The Telugu Desam Party and BJP garnering majority of seats. People had presented a grand victory to the Telugu Desam and BJP combine. The Telugu Desam Party secured 182 seats and BJP won 12 in Lok Sabha, the Telugu Desam Party had won 29 seats while BJP took 7 seats.¹⁴

The manifesto of Telugu Desam Party the essence of cooperative Federalism envisaged by the founding fathers of our constitution must be realized in full. It is a mistake to suppose that the strengthening of the states can only be at the expense of the power and authority of the union. The states ought to enjoy genuine autonomy -fiscal, economic, political, and administrative, without submitting themselves to the indignity of becoming suppliants before the centre with a begging bowl. All the constitutional amendments that resulted in the weakening of the states vis-a vis- the centre shall have to be repealed forthwith.
When several states were ruling under the burden of ill-conceived reforms, the Telugu Desam in Andhra Pradesh could gainfully implement the reforms and convert them into votes. It is a difficult phenomenon in contemporary politics of the country to succeed in implementing reforms on one side and also avert anti-incumbency. The 1999 elections gave Chandra Babu Naidu a moral victory. It was a victory of the democracy for the people of the state. The elections clearly indicated that work culture will bring the government back to power. People had happily endorsed the way Chandra Babu Naidu upheld N. T. Rama Rao dictum, society is the temple and people are gods, which was also the political ideology of Telugu Desam Party. This was the victory of the people. This was ideal in politics having realized the increased responsibility, Chandra Babu Naidu vowed that every drop of blood that flows in his body would be dedicated to serve the people and develop the state. Swarna Dhara Pradesh will be a reality soon. This was an ideal for the entire society this needs everyone’s support.

In 1999 Lok Sabha elections at the centre, and the Assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh were held simultaneously. Chandra Babu Naidu had stepped out of N. T. Rama Rao’s shadow and was contesting as the face of Telugu Desam Party for the first time in the election. Moreover, to counter the congress at the state and the centre, he had formed a new alliance with the BJP. Chandra Babu Naidu was seeking the electorate’s approval on both these decisive issues. The BJP secured a fair share of the mandate, riding high on the sympathy wave. The Telugu Desam party and BJP alliance garnered 36 of the 44 Lok Sabha seats from Andhra Pradesh of which the Telugu Desam
Party had secured 29 seats. The BJP came back to power at the centre leading the National Democratic Alliance. The Telugu Desam Party continued to provide its critical issue based support, albeit externally.

The results of the assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh were as expected. There was a marked increase in the voting percentage for Telugu Desam Party. The party won 182 assembly seats the BJP with the support of Telugu Desam Party Won 12 seats; Chandra Babu Naidu came back to power despite the two vital factors that could have gone against it. The first of course, was anti incumbency and second was the fact that Chandra Babu Naidu previous government was born out of revolt, yet, Chandra Babu Naidu emerged a clear winner. The 1999 election result having received massive mandate and having averted the anti establishment phenomenon, the responsibility on the Telugu Desam Party government increased further. They had to sustain their performance, provide good governance in state.¹⁵

The following are the aims and objectives of the Telugu Desam Party:

1. Autonomy to the state and it operate along with commercial lines.
2. Ensuing that government may continue to direct and determine the overall policy framework for the power sector as a whole, it withdraws from regulatory functions.
3. Promoting increasing participation of the private sector in power Industry.
4. Supporting progressive privatization of the distribution network under conditions and phasing that are sustainable.
5. Establishment of independent regulatory commission.
6. Advises the state government on any matter on which its advice is sought.
7. Encasing licenses to carry on their activities in accordance with the terms and conditions for their license.

Chandra Babu Naidu was untiringly making efforts to achieve the distinction for Andhra Pradesh to be known as leader in reforms, he was improving the party's prestige and the stature of the government in Andhra Pradesh. But he was being incessantly disturbed by the Delhi politics to keep congress away from power. Chandra Babu Naidu was trying to keep a distance from the central politics, though he had extended issue-based support to the BJP government. Even as the 18 coalition partners led by the BJP started pulling in different directions, with instances like AIADMK chief Jayalalitha picking up a quarrel a day, Vajpayee government became an object of ridicule. Apart from the declining structure of the government its continuation had become a grave doubt, which was politically affecting Chandra Babu Naidu. Added to these were the prices of essential commodities that had risen steeply. The middle classes were subjected to great stress even as increase the price of commodities. In these circumstances, the elections in four northern states were announced.

BJP and congress party, the main national contenders in this election gave a tough fight to each other. Congress victories in four states, Delhi, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Mizoram, as BJP was rooted out. This was very disappointing to the BJP and also to its
allies. While the BJP was in power in Rajasthan, the congress was ruling in Madhya Pradesh. Strangely enough, while the ruling BJP was defeated in Delhi and Rajasthan. In Madhya Pradesh ruling congress won. The election analysis reveals that, instead of calling it an anti incumbency factor, the votes exercised this time were to be reckoned as anti BJP. The anti BJP votes in the north influenced the results of the elections. The anti BJP stance would affect Telugu Desam Party in Andhra Pradesh was an issue that was endlessly debated. At the state level however, the BJP and Telugu Desam Party never nurtured a strong bond. Congress was extremely happy because the elections had pushed the BJP rule to the brink of collapse. The general views in the congress camps were that if the BJP government collapsed in the centre, it would certainly be a blow to Chandra Babu Naidu. Added to this, if a congress government takes over in New Delhi, then Chandra Babu Naidu came to power.

POLICIES AND WELFARE PROGRAMMES OF TELUGU DESAM PARTY IN ANDHRA PRADESH:

Chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, Chandra Babu Naidu formed certain policies and programmes, of Telugu Desam Party he had been given priorities in the state had undergone a sea change. Political and economic sectors have espoused new ways. Foundations have been laid for a new culture. This new vision or call it modernization, has been collectively named as the Hi-Tech rule. These new visions are not castles in the air; these are the part of reform winds that were blowing nation wide, worldwide, much before he took over. The only exception was that Chandra Babu Naidu, intelligently, started running fast in
the reforms path, much before others could even take off, with a clear-cut approach. Chandra Babu Naidu single-mindedly proceeded in the reforms way. It brought him a special place. Chandra Babu Naidu spends thousands of crores of loans brought from the World Bank with the implementation of the plans without caring for political criticism or other hurdles. To achieve this victory, he chose the most difficult reforms as the super highway.

Chandra Babu Naidu has started that the state planning board of Andhra Pradesh shall take up the responsibility to draw up a plan document “vision 2020 for the development of Andhra Pradesh”. Administrative to the doorsteps of people, and Janamabhoomi have all received the attention of people. Janamabhoomi was conceived as an admixture of three important elements Shramadhanam, {working for the benefit of people}, Prajala Vaddaku Palana {rule to the threshold of the citizens}, and micro level planning. But it was Shramadhanam was on the top of the chart priorities, this programme was taken up in 60,000 villages at the same time, which required a lot of preparation, inspiration and village level arrangements. Chandra Babu Naidu had formulated a long-term plan called vision 2020. His ideal was to develop the state into Swarnadhara Pradesh, heralding a golden age in Andhra Pradesh, through people’s participation, under the inspiration of Janamabhoomi programmes.16

Telugu Desam Party in Andhra Pradesh introduced the welfare measure to protect the girl child from exploitation. The government had recognized importance of women power in socio economic and political activities. Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Chandra Babu
Naidu was introduced CMEY programme for youth's in general and rural youth in particular has been launched. In Andhra Pradesh 35 percent of the population is comprised of youth. So the Telugu Desam Party launched a youth policy and earmarked Rupees 150 crores for it. Under this scheme youth societies were encouraged to come up and each youth society would be given certain constructive activities. This policy aims at developing youth as valuable human resources for economic development.

Telugu Desam Party realizes the Greening project, rightly, that the CEO (Senior Executive Officer) of top notch companies will not choose Hyderabad as their business destination if the city looks derelict, rundown, congested, and it is slowed down by enervating traffic and bumpy, potholed roads. A massive greening project has been taken up at the 55 acres NTR Samadhi and a general beautification drive is on all over the city. The Rs. 28 crore investment for necklace road, connecting the backwaters of the Hussain Sagar lake, has also been thrown open for an unhindered flow of traffic between the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secundrabad.

The manifesto of the Telugu Desam Party continued the large strings of indicators it had started from its early days of power in 1983 to 1989 with N. T. Rama Rao Welfare scheme reforms with a human face, scientific welfare, people led development schemes government acting as a transparent facilitator of economy and seeking a new term as an endorsement of the past performance and a mandate to carry on with the good work of creating a golden era in Andhra Pradesh.
Chandra Babu Naidu’s establishment of a SMART government (simple, moral, accountable, reliable and transparent) the very basis for good governance is founded on simplicity is a lifestyle of the leader himself. Chandra Babu Naidu set his first major paradigm of good governance, initially formalized with the launch of SMART government, into practice. Welfare or development, Indian democracy has essentially been, at least in theory of the people and for the people, seldom by the people. People’s participation, and feedback, was the first major contribution of Chandra Babu Naidu in the area of governance to Indian politics.

Bewildering even party men and shrugging all critics of pragmatic politics, Naidu went on with the campaign, mobilizing party men with a cool, sure air. “We are doing the right thing...people understand, we will win”. An unusually becoming Chandra Babu Naidu said “I was sure of our win because we had a very strong force in our favour, Good governance, better performance, best positive impact on people’s lives.” Signaling the end of populism and meaningless “politicization” of politics, Chandra Babu Naidu had heralded the era of moral politics rising above the rhetoric of Isms. No socialism, no capitalism, he announced, raising his trademark V- for victory as a symbol.

The V of Mr. Chandra Babu Naidu also stand for a vision of politics free of power politicking, rhetoric and senseless promises never meant to be kept. “Work and perform, let us not run behind power.” He instructs everyone, from party men and bureaucrats to leaders. Let us aspire to give a good performing government to people.
shall automatically bestow us with their mandate." The people politics versus power politics. The choice for the people of Andhra Pradesh is simple to re-elect a party which delivered goods against an impossible promise thought about for less than four minutes after victory." People would endorse performance politics or put a mark on promise politics, and shut out the hope of all citizens that good governance marked for good politics.20

Chandra Babu Naidu Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh was most strongly associated with information technology revolution the world over. IT as a strategic tool in making governance better. E-governance is a electronic governance as a facilitator for the government to make itself SMART, and achieve better services for the people is so fundamental to Chandra Babu Naidu, that not surprisingly, he is the pioneer of this new thought in current politics.

Good governance must ensure that the citizen does not have to suffer injustice. A delayed format of this fact of administration would infact mean the postponement of such justice, in short, would mean administration being derailed albeit for some time. At the administrative side of matters, it is contextually considered necessary to review laws, which have outlived their utility. The administration must come to realize that the credibility of law is its social relevance. When a law becomes irrelevant it is not only justifies defiance at the social level it also reflects the government failure to keep stock of changing social needs. Many of our laws are inherited over half a century ago. Chandra Babu Naidu said, “All we are attempting is to tinker at the margin and missing the big picture.”21 He criticized the
centre a marginal solution to the problems over the states. It was deplorable for a government, which owed its existence to the federal principles, to view the transfer of revenues as magnanimity shown to the states, instead of aid to development. He said, “We cannot progress unless we change this mind set”.22

FALL OF TELUGU DESAM PARTY AND RAISE OF TELANGANA ISSUE:

An anti-incumbency groundswell dashed the Telugu Desam party president, N Chandra Babu Naidu hopes of retaining power for a third term in Andhra Pradesh Assembly and swept by the congress led by Y S Rajasekhara Reddy back to power in 14 may, 2004.

Riding on the popular support in all three regions of the state, the congress won 185 seats on its own an a three fourths majority of 226 seats in the 294 member Assembly in alliance with the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (26) the CPI {M} (9) and the CPI (6). The congress alliance made inroads into the Telugu Desam bastion the coastal Andhra region–where it won 102 out of 132 seats. In the Telangana region, the alliance bagged 84 of the 107 seats. Once partners that the TDP slumped to its worst electoral performance since N T Rama Rao founded it. When it last yielded power to the congress in 1989, the Telugu Desam Party had managed to win 74 seats. It failed poorly even in Hyderabad, which Mr. Naidu showcased to the rest of the world. By winning a mere two out of 13 seats. As soon as the counting trends shwed that the congress was heading of a landslide victory, Mr. Chandra Babu Naidu drove to the Raj Bhavan and tendered his resignation to Governor S. S. Barnala ending his eight month long
stint as the longest-serving Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh declined to discuss the reasons for his party's poor showing. Chandra Babu Naidu said "bowed with humility to the wisdom of the people". On May 12, 2004, Rajasekhara Reddy was elected unanimously as the leader of the congress legislature party and subsequently as the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. The congress leaders attributed his party's victory to the antagonism among farmers, agricultural labourers, women, youth and above all, government employees who resented Mr. Naidu's policies. Dr Reddy said the hi-tech governance was fall of hype and that the cosmetic development did not benefit anyone except the middlemen.

The anti-incumbency factor, which ultimately turned into a wave. The congress party's promise of supplying free power, which contrasted sharply with the stiff power tariffs the Telugu Desam Party Government had imposed the unrest among the farmers over the lack of irrigation facilities coupled with drought and corruption were cited by leaders of the congress alliance as the reasons for their victory.

The manifesto of Telugu Desam Party regarding more autonomy toward the state there was a difference between N T Rama Rao and Chandra Babu Naidu. NTR went to the extent of saying that the centre was a conceptual myth. The relationship between the centre and the state were highly confrontationist during the time of NTR, and this could be largely due the fact that congress was in power at the centre during period. Chandra Babu Naidu had always-friendly government at the centre. Chandra Babu Naidu believed in bargaining federalism, where he could get maximum benefit from the central government by
maintaining friendly relations with it but one thing should be said here. TDP, despite its emphasises on Telugu culture and pride, never entertained the idea of secession 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 was regional party with a national perspective.” for some time he even entertained the idea of becoming the Prime Minister of the country, by floating All India Party called “Bharata Desam”

The victory of congress party, the Chief Minister Y S Rajsekhara Reddy, said in New Delhi after meeting Sonia Gandhi that he was “euphoric” as the party had come back to power both at centre and the state with its victory much beginning in Andhra Pradesh. The rejection of the Vajpayee government and Chandra Babu Naidu leadership was so emphatic that in the Lok Sabha elections. Y.S.Rajasekhar Reddy, favoured continuation of reforms, “as ling as they benefit people but with suitable modifications”. He spoke of constituting a commission of inquiry, if necessary to probe the scams. That surfaced during the previous Telugu Desam regime, reviewing allotment of government land around Hyderabad to private parties, a special package better than that of Karnataka.24

The movement for a separate state of Telangana first spurred by support given by the states reorganization commission in 1953, took off in the late 1960s, more than a decade after the constitution of the enlarged state of Andhra Pradesh. In 1969,a spontaneous movement took a new turn when congress legislators from the Telangana region
joined it and Dr. Channa Reddy launched his Telangana Praja Samithi in a short-lived political revolt. A realist, he merged his outfit with the congress in 1971, went on seven years later to become Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, and give up the separate Telangana demand. In another political era. Mr K. Chandrasekhara Rao broke out of the Telugu Desam Party to found the Telangana Rashtra Samiti, which struck a deal with the congress for the 2004 Assembly and Lok Sabha elections in Andhra Pradesh. The Telangana Rashtra Samithi did not fare too well in these contests but its senior partners swept the polls. The Telangana region is badly in need of a development thrust. What is clear from election results is that its people do not want to break away from south India’s largest state. The constructive way of resolving the issue is to work harder to overcome regional imbalances, strengthen federalism at every level and perhaps craft a regional autonomy structure for Telangan within the state, by amending the constitution if necessary. The decision of the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) Chief K. Chandrasekhara Rao, and another party leader, A Narendra, to resign from the Union cabinet and put out of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) was inevitable. Since July 2005, when the TRS withdrew its ministers from the Andhra Pradesh government, the pressure has been on the union ministers to quit. While neither the congress nor the Bharatiya Janata Party has ever taken a clear, unequivocal stand on the demand for constituting Telangana as a separate state. The UPA as an alliance remains divided on the issue. a special sub-committee headed by Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee could not come to any consensus on the question. The Left parties, especially the CPI (M), have opposed the formation of
a separate state while recognizing the special problems of the
Telangana region and the need for special provisions and measures. It
was the on Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) insistence that the
Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting discussed the demand
for separate Telangana and felt the need to adopt a resolution. The
Congress Working Committee, expected to take a stand one way or the
other at its next sitting. Chandrashekar Rao said adding that it would
be celebration time if there was a positive decision. Otherwise, the
Telangana Rashtra Samiti would blow the conch for a battle.
Aftermath of the resignation of Telangana Rashtra Samiti Chief K
Chandra Sekhar Rao from the union cabinet, the congress high
command had suggest that the party could well be in favour of a
separate Telangana if it perceives that such a move pays rich electoral
dividends in the 2009 general elections.25

In conclusion it could be said that Telugu Desam Party also
reveal the distinctive and perhaps significant emerging trends of
Indian political system as a whole. At the outset the emergence of
Telugu Desam Party and subsequently ruling party providing an
alternative to congress dominance established a new dimension to the
political culture of our system. The Telugu Desam Party also reveals
the dynamics of political development not only at the state level
destroying the myth of congress dominance. Further also analysis if
Telugu Desam Party can throw light on the contextual nature of the
Indian federal politics. Hence the study of the regional parties from
different perspectives can provide answer to plausible question of
Indian federalism entering new era.
REFERENCES


2. Ibid, p.16.


11. Ibid, p.73.


13. Ibid.


15. Ibid, p.90.


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21. Ibid.


