

Understanding Political Violence: A Study of Factionalism in Rayalaseema Region

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DANDU CHINNA RANGAIAH

17SRHL03



CENTRE FOR REGIONAL STUDIES

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD

HYDERABAD – 500046

TELANGANA (INDIA)

JUNE 2019



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Supervisor

Head of the Centre

Dean of the School

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The present study analyzes the issues and politics of factionalism in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh. The main objective of this study is an attempt to understand factionalism and politics in the region from a sociological point of view. The region is known for factional violence, and political leaders used this violence to achieve their political aspiration. The most popular leader late Dr. Y.S. Rajasekara Reddy (YSR), who thrived on factional violence, became the Chief Minister (2004-2009) of Andhra Pradesh (Balagopal, 2004). Factionalism is mainly found in three districts of Rayalaseema- Kadapa, Kurnool, and Anantapur. History of factionalism can be traced back to Palegarh¹ system, which was created during the 16th century to collect village revenue taxes on behalf of the Vijayanagara Empire. Palegarhs have regular quarrels with other Palegarhs to occupy and control over the village. After independence, these Palegarhs started entering first into national politics and then to the regional parties, mostly to wield more power in the local context. During the period 1970-1980 new set of leaders who happen to be the progeny of the factional leaders emerged in Rayalaseema. These political leaders manifested and redefined factionalism in order to gain political mileage, and their political involvement gave them an edge over their factional rivals. Hence, politics and factionalism have a long association and became inseparable in Rayalaseema region.

Kadapa district has historically been a hotbed for factionalism. Kamalapuram, Pulivendula, Jammalamadugu, Proddaturu are known for their notorious history of factionalism in the district. When we talk about factionalism, in Kadapa, the well known factional feud between YS Raja Reddy and DN Reddy factions is remembered for the intense violence it generated in the district that resulted in the loss of many lives (Balagopal, 1996).

¹ Palegarh system will be discussed in detail in third chapter

It is evident that there was factionalism amongst most of the political leaders across the district (Balagopal, 1996). Earlier it was the conflict between Congress and Telugu Desam Party (TDP), after the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh in 2014 and formation of Telangana State, Congress lost its power in the state. Former Congress factionist politicians joined the newly established political party Yuva Jana Samika Raythu Congress Party (YSRCP) and TDP., and continued their factional rivalries from the platforms of these political parties. Factionalism can be noticed in all parts of the country. At the village level, it is the competition between groups for power, prestige, and supremacy in the village. Whereas in the context of politics it is between the members of a party to occupy key party positions.

1.1 Political violence

Violence perpetuated to achieve political ends can be defined as political violence. A large number of people are active in political violence, and it becomes a main agenda for political parties in some parts of the country. The local leaders exercise violence to wield power in their respective locality and dominate the local politics. The state of Andhra Pradesh also witnessed state-level leaders who were either perpetrators or victims of this political violence either when they were emerging as political leaders or when they established their name and fame and indulged in political violence.

1.2 Faction: Basic structure and definitions

The term faction has been used more or less to refer to social groups. It is a small group formed based on political ideology, caste power, the clash of personality in order to serve the political, social and economic interests of a small minority. Firth (1957) has treated factions as informal political groups. He has studied structural characteristics of factions. In the year 1965, Nicholas elaborated and observed that factions as essentially symmetrically organized conflict. "Factionalism is a product of rapid social change and a socio-political adjustment of dynamic equilibrium in the society" (Seigal and Beals, 1966). Several sociological studies have been carried out on factions and factionalism at the village level. They have stressed the organization of factions, conflicts between factions and organizational aspects. Sociologists observed that factionalism rises in the

rural communities on account of natural rivalry and conflict or clash of personality over power and scarce resources.

A faction is a subgroup within a larger organization that conflicts with other members of that organization. A faction is generally found in contending, and competitive situation as the members of another faction also try to corner maximum facilities for themselves. In most areas, it happens between two upper class or caste groups. One group is trying to dominate another group to control the maximum resources and power in the village/s.

Harold Lasswell defines a faction as: “any constituent group of a larger unit which works for the advancement of particular persons or policies” (Lasswell 1931: 49). Accordingly, factions arise through struggle or competition for power resulting in control over official and unofficial positions.

Nicholas (1965) defined ‘faction’ as a kind of political process, and also faction is a “special form of political organization.” In his comparative analysis of five case studies of factions he concluded, “Factions are conflict groups, factions are political groups, factions are not corporate groups, faction members are recruited by a leader and faction members are recruited on diverse principles.” (Nicholas 1965: 21) He conceptualized faction as a “common phenomenon and structural feature of village social organizations with little or no significance given to historical or cultural conditions” (Nicholas 1965: 22).

Brass (1965) notes that a faction performs integrative as well as disintegrative functions. Integrative functions are less obvious, but essential in the long run. Whereas the disintegrative functions are less essential in the long run, but the factionalism is more manifest.

Dhillon (1955) observed that a faction usually comes into existence on account of mutual rivalry and conflict or clash of personalities. The studies conducted by Lewis (1958) in Rampur village of Delhi and Yadava (1968) in Kultana village in Haryana, focus on factions. Faction groups are known as “*Dharah*” in North Indian villages.

Dharah literally means the section of a whole. A *Dharah* is a group that competes or in conflict with some other groups, and its constituent members have ill feelings and hostility towards their opponents (Yadava, 1968). According to Lewis (1958), the meaning of *Dharah* is a faction, but *Dharah* does not always connote political factions.

A family is a miniature form of a faction or group. Structurally, the faction is an organization that centers on a single individual or a group of families' with a common interest. For example, we can see that there are various kinds of factions in the village: (a) peasant families owning vast landed property in a village may combine themselves into a faction; (b) families with small holdings may organize themselves into a faction; and (c) families who have no land and earn their livelihood as labourers may be part of a group or faction. Also we can see that the people belonging to the same caste or following one religious ideology or supporting one political party organize themselves into a faction to fulfill the mutual interests of their members (Lewis, 1958). Families and persons also form factions based on dependence on each other, in addition to some common interest.

A faction may be further subdivided into smaller factions when a few members of a faction group are not satisfied with the leader; they will come together and try to have their independent status if the members are not interested in working with a leader, they openly resist the authority of the leader of their faction and form a faction of their own. Each difference in the faction leads to the further subdivision of the faction. If at all there is a common problem in the village, all the factions in a village cooperate to solve the problem (Lewis, 1958).

1.3 Features of a Faction

Oscar Lewis (1958), points out that the faction has three essential features : (i) it is a well-knit unit, (ii) it is large enough to have self-sufficiency, and (iii) it is economically viable. Homogeneity and a common goal are also necessary for the formation and smooth functioning of the faction. Some essential features and functions of factions as identified by Lewis are listed below and compared with factions in Rayalaseema. The observations on Rayalaseema are drawn from group discussions done as part of fieldwork.

A well-organized unit: A faction is a well-knit unit. The strength of the faction lies in its unity and loyalty of its members. All the members will pledge their loyalty to the faction and subordinate their interests to the faction. This is found in factions in Rayalaseema.

Common interest: Faction members work based on a common interest to attain resources and power. Factions are organized based on certain objectives, aims, aspirations, and considerations common to all its members. In villages in Rayalassema, caste solidarity is one of the major common interests. In addition to the leader and members, common interests; social, economic and political considerations determine the formation and existence of the faction.

Homogeneity: A homogeneous group is necessary to form a faction. One observes that in Rayalassema, people sharing the same social status or economic aspiration or political ideology constitute a faction. As long as the members of the group can follow and share their homogenous interest, the faction continues to exist. Heterogeneous elements can never group into a faction as it has differences and conflict of interests.

Self-sufficiency: A faction is self-sufficient. As the size of the faction determines its efficient functioning, it should be neither too small nor too large. Faction should be adequate to meet the needs of its members, organize social functions independently and maintain its independent identity. In Rayalseema most factions have about 35-40 members, of whom 5-10 are the Reddy leaders (related families), and rest are members drawn from largely lower castes (BC and SC).

Economic viability: The faction does not depend on any external source for financial assistance. Most factions in Rayalaseema are economically independent; the leaders contribute generously or arrange funds to make their faction financially secure. Faction members may also pool in and arrange funds if their leader is unable to arrange funds. Otherwise, the economic wellbeing of the members cannot be safeguarded, and the faction might disintegrate.²

² Source: Field interviews

1.4 Conceptual frames to understand Factionalism

Various studies on factionalism have shown that a leader recruits faction members. Often the member of a particular faction group under a leader is not recruited on wages or any other material benefits, but they have respect towards their leader and a kind of devotional bonding towards the leader and his family. Based on the review of literature on factionalism certain key concepts identified are discussed below to provide a conceptual understanding.

Feudalism: Feudalism is associated with resources and power. Max Weber who laid the foundation for the idea of the theory of political sociology has characterized “feudalism in terms of private property, of the means that of military violence, and in the corporate appropriation of the means of administration” (Weber 1904:34). He uses this concept of feudal order in analyzing the pre-capitalist societies, which can be of help in the analysis of contemporary societies. According to Weber feudal society is, “a society in which the ruling class holds power by possessing fee and control over the territories within which its members appropriate political and juridical rights, achieving this by their independent means of administration, both fiscal and military” (Weber 1904: 34). Unlike Marx, Weber made a distinction between economic power and political power. Weber’s notion of rationality is the basis for this distinction. Patrimonialism is a very significant characteristic of feudalism in India. The patrimonial nature of the Indian Jagirdars³ is different from its counterpart in Europe (Weber, 1904).

Kosambi (1956) observed that cultural leisure became a hallmark of superiority during feudalism. Weber said feudalism was a closed system which professed and advocated the styles and interest of the ruling class while ignoring the interest and welfare of the masses. In the feudal system, the Jagirdars and the Zamindars⁴ exploited resources to the maximum for their narrow ends.

³ Jagirdars- Jagirdar is a title created during the times of Delhi Sultanate. Under Delhi Sultanate, the Jagirdars were allowed to collect taxes, revenues and maintain a standing army. This way, they received benefits and land grants from the Delhi Sultans.

⁴ Zamindari- A Zamindar is also a Jagirdar in many ways. However, their rank differed under different Emperors and Kings. They are seen as an equivalent of a British/European Aristocrat. A zamindar purchases and allows peasants to work on the land he owns. In turn, he pays in bulk to the empire’s coffers while retaining the independence to rule the lands.

Social structure: Economic, political and ideological forces are at work in any social formation. The dominant role may be taken by politics or ideology or by kinship in primitive societies. Bailey (1960) in his analysis of the Konds of Orissa used the concept of “Structure.” A structural analysis emphasizes the regularity, the continuity, the permanence of certain forms of social structure and also subsumes the “social system.” The structure itself provides the resolution of the conflict that arises within it; hence social structure negotiates the conflict. Singh (2006) makes a distinction between a structural analysis of change and a cultural one. Structural analysis is concentrated on social relationship. “Family, caste, kinship, class, occupational groups, factory, and administrative structures which comprise distinctive fields of social interaction constitute structural realities” (Singh 2006: 147).

Political parties: Weber (1904) observed that political parties live in a house of power. The political parties’ actions are headed toward the acquisition of social power in society. A party may have several factions. A faction could be in opposition on certain issues with other factions within the same political party. Such a situation of ‘antagonism’ within the party and ‘harmony’ between different party ‘factions is found due to ideological unison.’

Ideology: Ideology behind factionalism is abstracted from varied sources, such as statements of public policy, doctrines about political issues, religious ideas, moral positions, and sensible judgments and even from specific social practices. Thus, ideology becomes a strong way of abstracting, conceptualizing and evaluating the social environment. It may provide enduring social and intellectual structures for social interaction. Brown (1973) suggested some useful generalizations regarding the concept of ideology. “An ideology provides an answer to important questions and defines approaches to them. It involves a commitment to a recognized position. These ideologies are concepts and make us aware of our society and culture, and therefore ideologies are the sets of structures, preferences or dispositions that intersect. Many ideological systems have a core with peripheral variants. The response to ideologies is personal although their basis is social” (Brown 1973, 179).

Development: The concept of ‘development’ is of fairly recent origin. Horowitz (1972) view of development is more relevant to our study of factions. He observed that

development is the existence of a development process and is a social fact. Development as a social fact becomes a focal point in our analysis of factions as it refers to the direction of the use of resources of a society. Horowitz also states that any theory of the social change must indicate what development excludes; that is, how it distinguishes itself from other concepts such as industrialization, externally induced transformation, the growth of population and the economy. Myrdal's (1968) concept of development like that of Horowitz implies a dichotomy of the notion of societies in terms of a continuum of development or other words a dichotomy between tradition and modernity. Myron Weiner (1968), Brass (1965), Rudolph and Rudolph (1969) have all analyzed changes in the power structure with development. Myrdal's model of development in the case of India is referred to the modernization ideals, which are the ideology of the politically alert, an active part of the population - particularly the intellectual elite. Myrdal holds them responsible for acting as barriers in the development of the larger society.

1.5 Conflict theory – The basis of Factionalism

Factions can be seen as a type of conflict. All the factors identified to generate conflict also hold good for the origin of factions. Different kinds of causes for conflict and factions have been explored in western societies, and a few studies have been undertaken in the Indian context. The analysis of society from the perspective of typical conflicts has a long past (Martindale, 1961). The conceptual sources of such analyses may be traced to the ancient texts- of Heraclitus (c. 544-484 BC) in Greece, Kautilya (c. 300 BC) in India, Han Fei Tse (c. 220 BC) in China, and Polybius (c. 205- 125 BC) in Rome.

Karl Marx (1848) analyzed conflict in both historical and contemporary society. Marx observed that the conflict could arise as “two different groups compete for each other with different interests” (Marx 1848, 315). Conflict can arise over economic issues or issues involving power or authority or from the difference over cultural values and cultural beliefs (Coleman, 1957). Conflict may arise when “two or more individuals or groups pursue the same goal by creating contradictory means or two individuals or groups pursue the same goals, but only one party can win” (McCord 1977: 56). George Simmel (1955) has contributed more to the understanding of conflict than anyone else with the possible exception of Karl Marx (Marx propounded the concept of conflict).

Conflict theory would give importance to groups and individuals' interest, rather than norms and values. We can see conflict as a traditional facet of social life. It is a competition between two groups over resources. Conflict theory underlines the following in understanding the nature, reason, and role of conflict: 1) society consists of various groups that are competing for resources and power; 2) societies might portray a way of cooperation between groups to pursue their interests and these groups can maintain their dominance in acquiring resources and means of production; and, 3) social groups can use resources in achieving their goals and targets. Conflict theory helps us to understand factionalism as they both share similar concerns and conceptual frameworks.

1.6 Gang Wars:

Gangs and the war between two or more gangs is a common law and order issue in most countries. It is mostly observed in western societies, but not limited to the western context. Gang wars are highly related to the economic, social and geopolitical change that a region undergoes. Gangs and gang wars are reciprocal phenomena for the social and racial oppression faced by the members of the gang. Gang members seek refuge and take pride and feel secure in being part of the gang. Often, the gangs are viewed from the criminal lens, and it is not completely false to do so. "Gangs can involve from ethnic riots to drug market conflicts, even to working for local oppressors in enforcing law and order" (National Youth Gang Centre, 1994:1).

The social dimension of the gang or the social history of the gang members is key to understand the structure and functioning of the gang. Most of the gangs and gang members are victims of the social, economic and racial oppression. Gangs are mostly found in urban areas in the slum settlements. Gang members feel that they are being neglected by the mainstream society, police view them as criminals and at times unlawfully detain them for the crimes they did not commit. Gangs are formed and organized as a result of the marginalization of the members involved in it. The gang members have lost faith in the governance structure and development programs initiated in the name of uplifting the poor. "Gangs are not unique form but one of the many kinds of armed groups that occupy the uncontrolled spaces of a world of slums" (Hagedorn, 2008: 25).

Gangs are formed and function for a different reason from factionalism in India. Faction leaders come from socially and economically well off families, mostly from the 'dominant caste' of the region. Factionalism thrives and seeks power and dominance over the other, who are equal in social, political and economic status. Whereas, most of the gangs are organized for the survival of its members who are poor and disadvantaged as are the leaders. Factionalism is fighting an individual/s, while gangs are usually against the system and sometimes individuals. One notes that while factionalism is more of a rural phenomenon, gangwars are largely confined to urban poor localities.

1.7 Patterns of violence in Andhra Pradesh:

In this section, the study focuses on different kinds of violence, specifically *physical* violence in the state of Andhra Pradesh (AP). Broadly we can categorize physical violence in the state into three kinds, - *collective violence*, *caste violence*, and *factionalism*. These three happen at different levels and sometimes are specific to a region of the state, but one common feature that underlines all these kinds of violence is caste.

Factionalism happens mainly for power and resources; in collective violence, a large number of individuals may respond to a single goal or a common stimulus. Caste violence may be determined by historical reasons; caste violence is directed at the lower castes in the caste hierarchy. In A.P. state we observe that factionalism is dominant in rural Rayalaseema region; collective violence in coastal urban areas, particularly in Krishna, Godavari districts; and caste violence has occurred in different rural parts of the state.

Collective violence:

The concept of 'collective violence' has been extensively dealt by Parthasarathy (1997). Parthasarathy defined this concept in trying to understand the nature of violence in Vijayawada, a provincial town in coastal Andhra. Collective violence is a violent form of activity of collective behaviour involving a large number of followers or members responding to a particular stimulus. This collective behaviour at the instigation and orders

of a leader results in a mob mentality indulging in violence. Collective violence and collective behaviour are mutually correlated.

There are two types of collective violence in the society; social revolutions, terrorism, and wars are one kind of collective violence which are organized incidents. They are linked to conditions, needs and existential situations in society. Second, are the massive attacks of the followers who are accustomed to the cult following or hero worship of a leader. The collective behaviour of these members is spontaneous. This kind of violence breaks out when the followers of a charismatic leader are offended by any criticism or perceived offense to their leader. This violence is not directed at any particular individuals, nor planned. Once, the violence breaks out it would be difficult even for the leader to control his followers.

A brief discussion of the classic sociological works on collective behaviour is presented to understand “collective violence.” The concept of collective behaviour was first used by F.H. Giddings (1908) to refer to a social process which does not reflect existing social structure including laws, conventions, and institutions. Later it was employed by Robert Park (1954), who defined the term Collective behaviour as “the behaviour of individuals under the influence of an impulse that is common and collective, an impulse, in other words, that is the result of social interaction” (Park 1954: 27).

Blumer (1975) defined Collective behaviour as “primitive forms of human interaction” that constitute the antecedent conditions for social unrest, crowd behaviour, and social movements. “Collective behaviour is the mechanism whereby people are led to act collectively by breaking through established rules and realities of group life” (Blumer 1975: 22). Blumer stresses the spontaneity of social unrest, the absence of established rules and organizational features.

One of the seminal contributions to the theory of collective behaviour is that of Smelser (1962). He agreed with previous writings on the characteristics of collective behaviour such as spontaneity, distinct methods of communication and absence of institutional aspects. However, he sought to provide a different definition “Collective behaviour is purposive behaviour in which people are trying to reconstitute their social

environment based on certain kinds of beliefs” (Smelser, 1963: 2). Smelser’s definition would limit the scope of the term to specific forms of collective behaviour.

Ralph Turner (1972) in his works on collective behaviour defines it similar to that of Smelser. For him, “collective behaviour is group behaviour that is spontaneous, unstructured and unstable and not rooted in usual cultural or social norms” (Turner 1972: 556). He states that given the complexity of the social structure it is not always possible to recognize some aspects of collective behaviour. Turner states, that sometimes they do have continuity with conventional behaviour, and they can occur as part of institutional phenomena.

Caste violence:

Caste violence is an everyday social reality in India. The upper castes often use violence to control and exploit Dalits. Mostly, caste violence happens between the members of the upper castes and lower castes. In Andhra Pradesh, incidents like Karamchedu⁵ where the upper caste Kammas attacked and killed Madigas who belong to scheduled caste (SC) in the village; in Tsundur⁶ upper caste Reddis indulged in physical violence and killed Malas who belong to scheduled caste and in Laximpet⁷ upper caste Kapus killed Malas. All these conflicts occurred at a historical juncture when Dalit consciousness and awareness has been on the increase. The social change that brought about positive changes in material and political consciousness in Dalit lives were not tolerated by the upper castes (Sukumar, 2004).

Traditionally lower caste Dalits worked as agricultural labour in the fields of upper castes, and they depended on upper castes for work, and the terms of engagement are determined by the ideology of caste. Under the constitutionally guaranteed rights the lower caste people got educated, and rejected the upper caste domination and discrimination, and fought for their rights. So “the violence and atrocities are often directly associated with Dalits or lower caste assertion of basic rights as well as land rights, freedom of expression, access to justice, access to education, water, food, good

⁵ A village in Prakasam District of AP where caste violence happened in July 1985

⁶ A village in Guntur District of AP where caste violence happened in April 1991

⁷ A Village in Srikakulam District of AP where caste violence happened in June 2012

work and other services and equal participation in cultural and religious activities” (International Dalit Solidarity Network, 2015- idsn.org). Caste violence creates social unrest and anger in society.

In some regions of India one also finds violence among upper castes for controlling the village affairs, acquiring the land, status, and power. Like, the conflict between Jats and Rajputs of Rajasthan in acquiring ritual status and power. Conflicts between upper castes or same castes is seen in A.P. where factional violence takes place among / between upper caste Reddis and Kammass (in the majority of cases we find factionalism is among upper castes).

1.8 The scope and significance of the study:

The present study attempts to explore and understand factional violence in Kadapa district of Rayalaseema region of A.P. There are several studies on factionalism that have been done across the country and also in the Rayalaseema region. Political science researchers have studied factionalism at the state level focusing on political parties. Siegel and Beals (1960a, 1960b), Levine (1961), Epstein (1962) focused their attention on the analysis of the conflict between factions, while others like Lewis (1954) and Nicholas (1965) stressed on the organization of factions, and Yadava focused on organizational aspects. Drawing on these existing studies, the present research focuses on understanding aspects of violence in factional feuds in Rayalaseema from a sociological perspective. Factionalism has a long history in Kadapa, Kurnool and Anantapur districts of Rayalaseema. To probe the impact and perceptions of factional violence, Sambaturu village in Kamalapuram Mandal, Kadapa district is chosen as a case study. This village is chosen as it witnessed recent factional killings in 1998 and 2000.

1.9 Objectives:

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To understand the historicity and reasons why factionalism emerged and is still prevalent in the Rayalaseema region

2. To understand socio-political and economic reasons that favour factionalism in the region
3. To understand the effect of factionalism on women and families of the victims.

1.10 Research questions:

Based on the above objectives, the following research questions are identified to guide the research.

1. How does the history of Palegarhs system in Rayalaseema region influence the continued occurrence of factionalism in the region?
2. What are the caste dynamics of factionalism in the Rayalaseema region?
3. How does economic power intersect with political power in Rayalaseema region?
4. How do the families of victims affected by factionalism cope with and perceive factionalism?

1.11 Data sources and Methodology

In order to fulfill the above-mentioned objectives of the study, the research was carried out majorly by using the qualitative tools and techniques. Data through primary sources was collected by conducting fieldwork for about two months in 2018. Data was collected from the villagers of Sambaturu. This village was selected as it had a recent history of factional killings that affected a large majority of its population.

A sample of 30 people in Sambaturu village were interviewed with a semi-structured schedule to collect the relevant data. Snow ball sampling and justified sampling methods were adopted to identify the sample of the study. Detailed case studies of the families of the victims were collected to understand aspects linked to factionalism comprehensively. Two women victims of factional killings (who lost their husbands) were interviewed to document their perceptions about factionalism.

Data was also collected from the secondary sources from various books, journals, and official reports in order to provide a context and strengthen the findings. The secondary

data was also useful to establish connection and draw comparisons between the micro and macro level study of factionalism in Rayalaseema. The study was approached through the structural-functional theory in order to understand the existing structural phenomenon of the factional groups in Kadapa. The recruitment, organizational methods and the necessity for the existence of these structures were analyzed to understand the functional aspects of the factionalism. An attempt was made to track the changes in these structures with political consciousness and how this has altered the functioning of factionalism in Rayalaseema..

1.12 Limitations of the Study:

There are some drawbacks in the study that could not be overcome. Most of the data collected is from male participants. It was very difficult to approach women to collect data in the village. Though one tried to meet more members of factions it was not easy as people were afraid to give information. Reasons for this may be the fear and memory of the recent violence. Another significant limitation is the time constraint which prevented a deeper exploration of issues connected with violence and factionalism.

1.13 Chapterization:

Chapter 1- Introduction

This chapter gives an introduction to various forms of political violence with a focus on factionalism. It gives brief information about the meaning, the structure of factions and its characteristic features. The objective of this chapter is to explore the difference between factionalism, collective violence, and caste violence. All these have happened at specific historical junctures. This chapter also includes the objectives, research questions, and methodology of the study.

Chapter 2- Factionalism in India

This chapter traces the genesis of factions, nature, and transformations of factional struggles in different parts of India. The numerous studies of factionalism in post-independent India can be broadly categorized into Micro level - factions at the village level, Macro-level, i.e., Regions of political factionalism (intra-party and inter-party

political cleavages, factions at political party alignments) in India. Factional phenomena occur at various levels, like the interaction between micro-level factions and macro level factions and factional cleavages in regional and national political parties. The Chapter concludes by comparing the dynamics of factionalism across different regions of India.

Chapter 3- Mapping factionalism in Rayalaseema and Kadapa

This chapter maps the history of factional struggles in the Rayalaseema region and Kadapa district in particular. It gives brief information about the historical origins of factional conflicts in the region. The objective of this chapter is to trace the nature, growth, and classification of factions and also explain the role of political parties in factionalism in Rayalaseema and Kadapa district.

Chapter 4- Factionalism and its influence on Families

This chapter attempts to document the experiences and coping mechanisms of families who lost a member to factionalism. For this, primary data was collected from 30 respondents of various social backgrounds including family members of the victims of factional violence in Sambaturu village.

Chapter 5- Conclusion

This chapter summarises the major findings of the earlier chapters and also provides concluding remarks on factionalism in Rayalaseema.

Chapter 2

Factionalism in India : An overview

This chapter traces the genesis of factions, its nature and transformation of factional struggles in different parts of India. As per the numerous studies on factionalism in post-independent India, factionalism can be categorized at two levels, i.e. micro and macro. Micro-level is factions at the village level, and Macro level comprise regions of political factionalism (intra-party and inter-party political cleavages, factions at political party alignments) in India.

Several studies like ‘Village life in North India’ (Lewis, 1958), ‘Tribe, Caste and Nation’ (Bailey, 1960), ‘Factionalism in a Haryana village’ (Yadava, 1968), ‘Factionalism, social structure and politics in Rajasthan’ (Nagla, 1984), ‘Dynamics of factions in Maharashtra’ (Hiramani, 1979), conducted over the past two decades on factions can be divided into two types. Those that focus on factions at the level of a village community, and those in which the focus is on party alignment. The studies of the first type mainly focus on village social organization in order to identify the groups that would consciously try to gain further interest of their respective members by acquiring socio-political power. The studies of the second type focus on one or more political parties to identify intra-party or inter-party cleavages and the acquisition of power for the benefit of their members. Such studies focus on power politics at the regional or national level.

Analysis of both kinds of studies on faction shows that several criteria have been used in arriving at a single classification of factions. Generally, recruitment is the basis for the formation of a faction, and another criterion is the permanent or temporary character of factions. Micro-structural studies of factions, focus on how these factions are based on the criteria of caste, kinship, and lineage, etc., and consider factions as an enduring phenomenon. The macro-structural studies consider these factions as an issue or a problem-oriented one. Hence they imply that factions are temporary, interest-based, and cut across caste and kinship lines.

2.1 Factions at the level of the village community

Village level analysis of factionalism is quite evident in the studies that have been conducted by the Social-Anthropologists. These studies discuss the cleavages over the control of the village, family quarrels and conflicts that arise due to land disputes and inheritance of property. Figure 1 shows the locations of the select studies on factions.

Lewis (1958) in his work, “Village life in Northern India” made a comprehensive study on factions during the year 1952-1953.

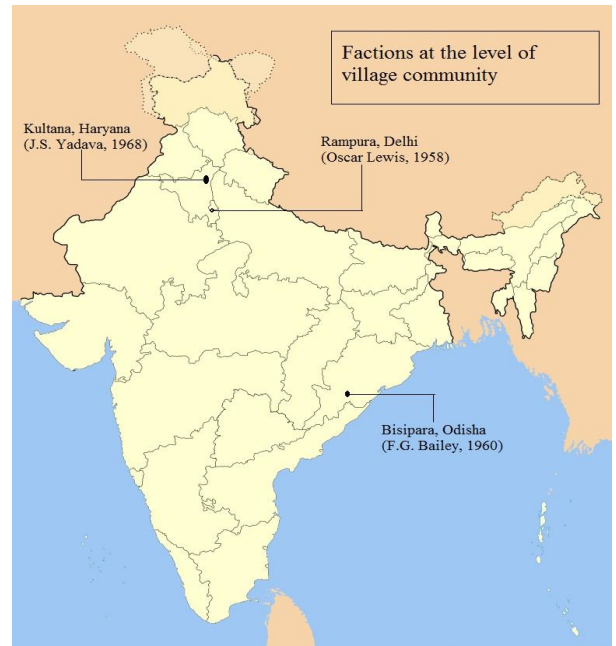


Figure 1: Factions at the level of village community

He considered Rampura village for his study which is near Delhi. In this study, Lewis observed that factions were an age-old practice in villages. It is a basic facet in village society along with caste, clan, and kinships. Factions are not political groups; rather they are kinship groupings. In addition to factional struggle, these groupings can carry the social, economic factors to fight against one other. Caste and other groups that are based on kinship-ties and kinship-divisions can be called as factions. These groups carry out a wide variety of functions such as social, economic and ceremonial on behalf of their respective members. Lewis also observed that insecurity of life in the village linked with scarcity of land and other resources further leads to the formation of factions. New factions develop based on: (a) quarrels over the inheritance of land, (b) quarrels over the adoption of sons, (c) quarrels over the house-sides and irrigation rights, (d) quarrels over the sexual offenses, (e) murders, and (f) quarrels between castes. The people of Rampura had a popular saying, i.e., *Dharahs*⁸ (factions) revolve around wealth, women and land !

Lewis made an interesting observation on the nature of leadership, i.e., “Rampura is limited to faction leadership whose primary goal is to protect the nature of faction and

⁸ *Dharahs* means factions, in north Indian villages.

to defend their interest. The leaders have little authority to make an independent decision or to exercise power over the groups (Lewis 1958: 3)". Lewis points out that faction leaders when compared with rest of the faction members are marked by the following characteristics : well settled in terms of possessing wealth, good family background, stature for being charitable and giving elaborate feasts, of advanced age, good education, influential with people, having free time to further interests of the group, hospitality, trustworthiness, speaking ability and support of large extended family.

Lewis described three conditions for the successful operation of faction. First, the faction must be an organized unit. Second, it is an independent and participating group; for example, it must be able to summon an impressive number of relatives for a marriage party or any other cultural event. Moreover, third, it is economically viable, i.e.; they do not look for external financial support to maintain factions (Lewis 1958: 3).

Lewis concludes that small groups viz., factions existing based on castes are the locus of power and decision-making, and they are a key to understand the socio-political reality of the village communities all over India. He discovered that there were as many as twelve factions, locally known as *Dharahs*. These caste-wise distribution of factions are Jat 6, Brahmin 1, Kumbhar (Potter) 1, Chamar 2, and Bhangi 2. *Dharahs* denote not only hostile relations between groups but also indicate friendly relations with others (Lewis 1958: 6).

Dhillon (1955), also made a similar kind of observation like Lewis in another comparative study of "Leadership and Groups in South Indian village." He writes: "while hostility towards other groups is a common attribute of factions and new factions are often formed as a result of quarrels and disputes, this seldom is the only or even the major force which holds factions together." (Dhillon 1955:30)

2.1.1 Organization of factions:

The village factions or groups are established based on social, economic and political factors with shared common interests or concerns. Caste, status and social class are the important factors in the formation of a faction. The group members have a common goal. In one village only, we can see the intra-village factions, inter and intra-caste faction, and

factions in the family. In all the cases, a faction leader is wealthier than other members in the group.

Yoginder Singh (1959) agreed with Lewis's arguments that factions have an enduring character. Singh studied six villages of eastern Uttar Pradesh and found as many as 97 factions in his study villages. In this study, Singh discussed that the basic structural principles of organization of a faction in each of the 97 factions were found to be the following:

1. The whole caste group which is working as a faction had relations of acceptance or rejection towards other factions. In such cases, the caste group usually consisted of a few households who often belonged to the same sub-caste, Gotra and lineage groups.
 2. Factions composed of sub-castes or other subdivisions within a caste had the following characteristics:
 - (a) Gotra relations;
 - (b) Brotherhood and kinship relations;
 - (c) Regional divisions due to immigration or outmigration within a caste or sub caste;
 - (d) Divisions of class based on land settlements;
 - (e) Divisions of caste into sub-caste based on occupational differentiation.
- (Singh1959 : 3-5)

According to Singh, the term 'faction' can be used structurally about caste, sub-caste or its segments but not in terms of the members drawn from different castes or sub-castes. Singh writes: "thus a faction may be defined as a group of households with in a caste or sub-caste rallying together for rites, rituals, ceremonies, community activities and who stand together in a relation of social conflict, co-operation, and neutrality (Singh 1959:61)". He recognized such a phenomenon as '*partbandhi*' or '*gootbandhi*' which refers to the process of faction formation. Small groups of people in the family or community can form as a faction. However, according to him, this would constitute a

power group and not a faction group, which is essentially a uni-caste entity. The power group is from the same caste in the village. Singh's observation in this regard is very significant; "The membership of a power group consists of factions and the membership of a faction consists of households (Singh 1959, 61)". The issue-wise break down of the factions studied by Singh is:

1. Inter-caste feuds on the issues of land;
2. Feuds based on the violation of the connubial rules of caste or sub-caste;
3. Serious fights and court cases;
4. Feuds about the inheritance of property. (Singh 1959 : 3-5)

The above study reports that a faction leader in all cases is much wealthier than the other members of the faction group. Also, he is supposed to have a commanding personality, be older and generally have more influence than other leaders. Majority of the followers of a faction come from social and economically disadvantaged sections, from other than leader's clans and lineages. A faction is permanent if it carries structural segments as its units, and temporary if it is determined by issues and problems which are shaped by external factors.

Bailey (1960), in "Tribe, Caste and Nation" studied factions in tribes of Bisipara and Baderi villages in Odisha. He discovered various factions all of which were rooted in caste division basis. He also found that factions which belong to different castes approved of each other in their day to day functioning bridged their differences and acted as one unit whenever there was a common threat or problem faced by the village community. For example, in the year 1953, an experimental post office was started in Bisipara. It was running at a loss. The government wanted to close it down. However, due to the unity exhibited by the various village factions, the authorities had to revise their decision of closing down the post-office.

Thus we may say that each faction group in the village maintained a double affiliation, one with its members and other with another faction in the village. These affiliations depended mainly upon the exigencies of social situations that occurred in the

village from time to time. For example, the Boad distillers, who came from a particular social group, which was originally lower down the ladder of the traditional social hierarchy, maintain this double affiliation and stress it in different contexts. Some times for the sake of fulfilling the interests of their faction members, the Boad distillers supported their faction group. On other occasions, when a broader issue affected the entire village community, they side with one or the other bigger political factions.

2.1.2 Organizational aspects of factions:

The formation and cohesiveness of factions in the village depend upon mostly on varied bases of social organization. The weakening of kin and caste identities will make social change a reality. The decision to join a social group other than the traditional bases of kin and caste is essential for the understanding of sociological facts in communities that were traditionally highly structured and rigidly segmented. In such societies status is ascribed, there being minimal scope for status attainment. However, democratization and increasing economic opportunities lead to an intensification of status seeking desires that lead to changes in changing pattern of leadership. Organizational aspects can help to broaden and diversify the faction (Yadava, 1968).

Yadava (1968) has studied factionalism in a Haryana village, Kultana, very close to Delhi. He emphasized the organizational aspects of factions, and also paid due attention to conflict since factions cannot be separated from conflict. He has engaged with two major questions, “(1) the causes and operation of increased factionalism in this village over twenty-five years (2) nature, scope, and functions of these factions (Yadava 1968: 1).”

In this study Yadava has discussed two kinds of factionalism such as contemporary and traditional as a special field in investigating the function of the social system under cooperation and conflict. Factions do come out of the caste, clan, and kinship at different levels. Some factions lived for a short time, some for a long time. These factions tend to become the future of village social organization. People of Kultana, are painfully aware of factions, they locally call it as “*Dharah*.” *Dharah* is one of the major developments of village social life in recent years. They usually use this

word to denote conflicting divisions in the village community. *Dharah* consists of people with similar interests to compete with opponents for resources and power. Their ill feelings and hostility encourage them to indulge in factionalism. Factionalism is not new a phenomenon in Kultana; it was there for the past 25 years. The traditional factions run across caste and kinship lines. These factions primarily came out of the dominant Jat community and operated as socio-political groups in the village. *Dharahs* are quasigroups in which membership is not decided by birth; instead members should have some common interest with no definite time and permanent boundaries.

Yadav argues that, traditionally the lineage, clan, kinship groups operated as socio-political groups of the community. The antagonism between these traditional groups is minimal. That does not mean there is no conflict within the traditional groups. During the economic crisis, the traditional groups help each other, for instance in harvesting season they seek help from kin or close relatives. Similarly, in court cases or any other legal problems, these traditional groups work together in resolving the problem smoothly. The traditional groups have little or no political interest outside of their village. Traditionally, the inter-group relations are balanced; if any conflict arises, then it will be resolved by the village council or Khap Panchayat (all the village elders of the village sit together to decide the solution to the conflict).

Yadava concludes that “the social and cultural changes that occurred often lead to rule or status ambiguities in potentially competitive situations and allow competition to become so intense that conflict results from that place (Yadava 1968: 5)”. Economy and politics are the major source for the development of factions in the village. It is obvious that there will be antagonism in rural societies over the sharing of scarce resources and power.

2.2 Macro Regions of Political factionalism in India:

Political factionalism has a regional character. Political factionalism has given an inherent dominant position to political parties from region to state level. However political factionalism has its roots not only in parties but also in the village to polarize the people to get power in Panchayat and state elections. We can observe different kinds of factions at a party level, such as inter-party factions in Maharashtra, intra-party factions in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

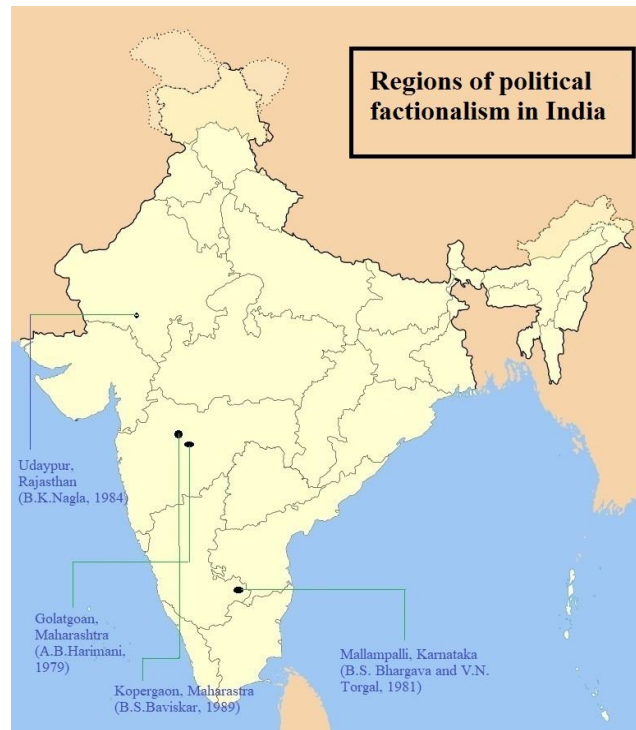


Figure 2: Regions of Political Factionalism in India

The interest in political factions first came from the political scientists who have studied some of their structural characteristics. Political scientists treated factions as informal counter parts of more formal political groupings. The faction members are recruited based on the structurally diverse principles. In parties or an organization, conflicts arise between an individual and an institution. In political party alignments there would be intra and inter party factions over political power. A brief discussion on factionalism in different regions of India is presented to enable a regional comparison of similarities and differences.

2.2.1 Rajasthan:

In Rajasthan, Udaipur district is a hot-bed for factionalism. The factional conflicts come in two different dominant caste groups; Jats and Rajputs. Jats occupied a lower social status and Rajputs occupied a higher status in the varna system. However, in terms of socio-economic and political mobility, both are transforming equally. From 1930 till independence, the majority of the princely states were under the rule of Rajputs, but soon

after the independence, Jats became more powerful than Rajputs in terms of social, political, and economic power. These social and economic changes may be the probable reasons for the conflict between Jats and Rajputs in Rajasthan. While villages are the cultural root for factionalism, this is further connected with power, resources, and ideology. In particular, factions are mainly a creation of political parties and their ideologies. If it is not ideology, it is the interest of dominant caste groups for power and personal interests. While there are a large number of Scheduled caste and Scheduled tribes in Rajasthan, their involvement is minimal in factionalism (Nagla, 1984).

The view that the village community in India is a ‘faction society’; or that various caste, clan, and lineage divisions in various communities function as factions may not be tenable. In many ways, factions at the village level are interest alliances as they cut across caste, sub-caste, clan, and lineage boundaries. While, the structural division may often correspond to interest groupings but, theoretically, structural segments and interest groupings are two distinct formations. The analysis of factionalism has to consider both structural and ideological factors. Political parties at the village level run their factions to influence the region and state politics. The parties like Congress and Jansangh maintained the faction groups among Jats and Rajputs in Rajasthan for a long time. We can see intra-party factions in these two political parties, as both Jats and Rajputs being in the same party have been found to maintain their particular caste factions for political power and resources (Nagla, 1984).

2.2.2 Maharashtra:

There are several studies carried out in Maharashtra which are mainly focused on factionalism along political party alignments. Hiramani (1979), in his study, “Dynamics of factions in Maharashtra Village,” examined factions and their dynamics in village Golatgaon in Aurangabad taluk of Maharashtra. The main objectives of the study were to find out: “a) the factors that are attributed for growth of factions, b) leadership and membership of factions, c) the affiliations of factions with outside political parties, and d) the effect of factionalism on the village” (Hiramani, 1979:177).

The study found that the origin or sustenance of the factionalism is mainly attributed to either sexual relations or woman related disputes or the land or economic related disputes in the village. An financial transaction around the cooperative society lead to formation of factions in the village. The study also emphasised that the importance of economic independence of the leaders to continue the factions.

A land dispute over a boundary line had widened the factional rivalry of the members who are involved. This lead to faction members resorting to violence in order to protect their lands. It also resembles with the observation of factionalism is mainly lead by the landlords in the villages. The other communities mostly depend on the landlords for their livelihood forming a web of different communities being dragged to the factionalism. In the subsequent course of change of events, the political parties encouraged the faction rivalries which resulted in the factional members joining the Congress Party of the Jan Sangh Party. This has created an opportunity for the factional rivalries to be controlled and guided by the external political parties.

The factional rivalry is posing a threat to the social cohesion of the village organization as the two groups mostly indulge in disrupting the village festivals, objecting the functioning of the cooperative societies, disrupt the proceedings of the village panchayats if they happen to be dominated by the rival faction. Both the parties would try to manipulate the village level institutions in order make things work in their favour. This has undermined the traditional conflict resolving mechanism and also obstructing the modern and developmental works at the village level.

Baviskar (1989) in his analysis of factional politics of Kopergaon taluk of Maharashtra writes about the factional units that are generally referred to as '*gats*.' These *gats* act as a local unit for the political parties who patronize them. These local *gats* lack organizational structure in the functioning. They exist and function only for the benefit of the party which patronize them. The author observes that there are two factions each having allegiance to the Peasants and Workers Party (PWP) and Congress Party. The *gats* and the leadership of the *gats* maintain a cordial relationship with the political parties.

2.2.3 Karnataka:

Bhargava and Torgal (1981), in their study, “Factionalism: A study of a Panchayat in Karnataka”, They have analysed the significance of factionalism in a political organization like Panchayat. They have studied the role of factions in Mallampalli Panchayat of Karnataka. They agreed with Nicholas’s (1969) five propositions discussed in the first chapter. Mallampalli village Panchayat factions are “conflict groups, political groups that are not corporate groups and faction members are recruited by a leader on diverse principles” (Nicholas 1965:21). Factions at the panchayat level exhibit functional and dysfunctional aspects in the village. The functional aspects such as competing to deliver the services and allowing the panchayat to function effectively out of competition between the two groups. The dysfunctional aspects are those which are contrary to the functional aspects. Out of jealousy or fear of losing the dominance the rivals also engage in disrupting and acting as a hurdle in smooth functioning of the panchayat.

2.2.4 Uttar Pradesh:

In Uttar Pradesh, intra-party factions are predominant in state politics. Intra-party factions mean the conflict between two or more groups (or member) of the same political party. As the aims of political faction are of diverse nature, the conflict arises from the induction of a new member into the party or adoption of new policies. Some members who are in a high position in the party, may not accept the support given to the new members. Factional politics often revolve around party member’s inherent qualities of character, with some people enjoying key roles, acting as a magnet for similar members, leading the activities of the faction, and acting as a dominant voice for the shared objectives of the faction.

Khare (1969) in his study of “Groups and Process of Political change in North-India- Gopalpur” discussed the formation of political factions in the village over some time. Different organizational forms exist in Gopalpur village such as factions, pressure groups, and political parties, regional and family cliques. Khare investigated how these forms are related to each other in an effective communicative structure of ‘power

management system.’ He also examined the concept of faction in a broader political system.

Khare’s study identified changes in the village at three periods, such as pre-independence 1935-1947, post-independence 1958-1968 and from the 1960s. In the pre-independence period, Zamindars and their kin decided factional fights in the village. After independence, this power pyramid changed. It was the fight between Zamindars and a Kurmi-Kayastha alliance. Later these two factions came under the influence of political parties. “During 1960-63, there were three changes in the organization of factions: (1) high caste groups (Kayastha and Brahmins) changing affiliations with other castes in the village, (2) striking extra-village contacts by all the factions, and (3) the untouchable caste groups reorganizing themselves (Khare 1969:2)”. All these changes were to capture power in the village.

Mahanpatra (1985) discussed cleavages between the political party members, mainly because of power. In “Factional politics in India,” he analyzed that factionalism is an intragroup phenomenon. It was neither caste nor class conflict. In the context of political parties, it was fought between each other to control or occupy position in the party. This was the prevailing trend in several regional parties. One faction seeks to overpower the other/others so that it can dominate the party and thereby capture power at that stratum of the ladder where it is located. At the district level, a Congress faction would aim at dominating the district unit of the party for capturing power in district-level organizations like the Zilla Parishad, Co-operative Banks, and trade unions affiliated to the Congress party.

In political parties, factionalism runs either way vertically. It runs from top to bottom or from bottom to top. If there is conflict in a political party at the state level, it will percolate to its lower units like district units, block units, and village units. According to Mahanpatra, the factional leaders at the state level would tend to mobilize resources and support not only at the state level but also at lower levels. If the lower cadre in the party rejects state-level groups, they would be exploiting primordial loyalties like casteism, communalism, language, and regionalism. They would also seek to win over party members by distributing or even promising different kinds of benefits like

contracts, loans, and subsidies which are coming from the government. Factionalism may also run in the reverse gear. If a village unit of the party suffers from factionalism, the leaders of rival groups will tend to win the support of the leaders placed at a higher level of the party. Rarely would the party at a higher rung of the ladder be split due to the split at a lower level. However, if there is already a division in the party at the higher level, the lower level split of the party would happen. In other words, it would be easier for leaders of village factions to gain the alliance of higher - level leaders who are already placed in charge of rival factions. It is thus apparent that factionalism would run faster from top to bottom than from the bottom to top.

Mahanpatra's ideas found echoes in 1995 in Andhra Pradesh with a split in Telugu Desam party, a regional party formed in Andhra Pradesh. The party saw a big tussle between NTR's widow and his son-in-law Naidu who is now the party president.. Party members were divided based on emotional ground and social relations with local leaders. However, political party members did not get involved in violent activities. The political party factions witnessed the exchange of money and muscle power to control or occupy the party. It is the general scenario in Indian political parties to have intra-party factions to control the power and status among the leaders.⁹

2.3 Summary:

There are several studies carried out on factionalism in India. These can be broadly categorized into two, one is factions at village level, and another is factions at political party alignment level. Factions at the village level are majorly focusing on conflicts that arise between family relations, sexual offenses, property disputes, irrigation problems and adoption of sons, etc., Factions cut across caste, clan and kinship lines within the village community. Faction members are recruited on diverse principles. Factions are referred to by specific names in different regions of India. Table 1 presents a compilation of these names.

⁹ Telugu Desam was founded in 1982, it split in 1995. There was conflict between NTR's second wife and his son-in-law Naidu who became party president later.

Table 1: Name of the faction in different States in India

S.No.	State	Name of the Faction
1.	Andhra Pradesh	<i>Vargam</i>
2.	Delhi	<i>Dharah</i>
3.	Harayana	<i>Dharah</i>
4.	Maharastra	<i>Gat</i>
5.	Rajasthan	<i>Dharah</i>
6.	Uttar Pradesh	<i>Dharah</i>

Yadava discussed factionalism in two ways: contemporary and traditional factionalism. Contemporary factionalism involved serious violence whereas the traditional factionalism is ‘with little or no violence.’ Factions may be short term or long term which depends on the future of conflict. The village people are very much aware of factionalism. Economy and politics are the key determinants of factionalism and central to the development of factions. Factionalism due to political party alignments has regional significance and affects from bottom to top level of party organization. The interest in political factionalism came from political scientists. In Rajasthan, the conflict over the status and power between Jats and Rajputs had adverse effects as both are dominant agrarian caste groups in the region.

Hiramani (1979) discussed the growth of factions, membership, and leadership of factions and their affiliations outside the political parties. He discussed factions in village Panchayat and cooperative societies. According to him, factions may arise over the economic interest, for instance, issuing of loans to the beneficiaries and misappropriation of funds in village administration. In Kopergaon, Maharashtra, factions work as local units for the political parties. The village faction leaders are political agents in the village who support state leaders. Local leaders have connections with state leaders, ministers, and party bosses. The village leaders show their loyalty towards state-level leaders to continue their dominance in the village.

Intra-party conflict exists in Uttar Pradesh between political party members. The conflict within a political party is neither caste nor class conflict. The conflict arises over the power to occupy party organizations and results in factions within the same party.

A comparison of the above studies on factionalism in India shows that:

- (a) There are several studies on factions to understand the reasons for the formation of factions in the village. Their characteristics, the leadership pattern of factions, principles of recruitment to factions, expression of hostilities by factions, their role in village politics, etc., were explained in these studies carried out in various parts of the country.
- (b) There are also studies on factions within political parties - main factions within Congress party and how these factions within the party shape the outcome of elections.
- (c) There are few studies which explain the network of the factionalism from the rural to the state level political leadership. Factions which originate from village level spring up to the district level politics and continue further to reflect in the state level politics as well.
- (d) Some studies focus on the role of factions within political institutions such as panchayats and Zilla parishads.
- (e) However, there are limited studies which attempt to theorize factionalism and its role in Indian politics at a macro level. The studies available also fail to give a strategic approach to understand political violence and factionalism persisting in the Indian political scenario.

A consolidated picture of select studies on micro and macro levels of factionalism across regions of India is shown in Table 2 and 3, to enable a comparison of differences and similarities between regions.

Table 2: Factionalism at the Micro Level of Village Community

S.No	State / Region	Delhi	Haryana	Odisha
1.	Scholar	Oscar Lewis	JS Yadava	FG Bailey
2.	Study	Village life in North India (1958)	Factionalism in Haryana village (1968)	Tribe, Caste, and Nation (1960)
3.	Village / Town	Rampura	Kultana	Bisipara
4.	Key focus	Factions are an age-old practice in villages. The insecurity of life in the village linked with scarcity of land and resources leads to the formation of factions.	Organizational aspects of factions. Contemporary and temporary factionalism.	Factions are rooted in caste divisions.

Table 3: Macro Regions of political factionalism in India

S.No.	State / Region	Rajasthan	Maharashtra	Karnataka	Uttar Pradesh
1.	Scholar	B. K. Nagla	Baviskar	Bhargava, Torgal	Mohanpatra
2.	Study	Factionalism, social structure, and politics (1984)	Factional politics in Kopergaon taluk of rural Maharashtra (1989)	Factionalism: A study of a panchayat in Karnataka (1981)	Factional politics in India (1985)
3.	Village / Town	Udaipur	Kopergaon	Mallampalli	Allahabad
4.	Key focus	Social structure and political factionalism among the Rajputs and Jats of Udaipur district in Rajasthan.	Factions are local units of political parties. Local units are called gats.	Political conflict and the role of factions. Factions are both functional and dysfunctional.	Intra-party factions. Conflict between party members over political power.

The literature suggests that there is no comprehensive study in the discipline of sociology covering village factions and their social, political as well as economic functions, their network with political parties as well as their role in district politics. There is a need for such a study in the regions where factional phenomena have been existing to understand the changing scenario of both the factions and the political context in India. It is against this background, that the study of factions in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh which is known for intense and violent factions is expected to add to the existing literature.

Chapter 3

Mapping Factionalism in Rayalaseema and Kadapa

Rayalaseema region is geographically disadvantaged and backward region, but is politically strong as it has sent several political leaders to state and central politics. These leaders were the beneficiaries of factionalism. Kadapa, Anantapur, and Kurnool are notorious faction-districts in the region. Factionalism is between the upper castes like Reddis and Kammas, who are both agriculture dependent communities. Earlier, factional conflicts were only between Reddis, but after the emergence of Telugu Desam party, the Kammas became competitors to the Reddis in the region.

This chapter maps the history, nature, and transformation of factional struggles in the Rayalaseema region and Kadapa district in particular. It gives a brief background about the historical origins of factionalism and the dominant characterization of caste in politics. The objective of this chapter is to trace the growth, and classification of factions and also explain the role of political parties in factionalism.

3.1 Political Economy of Rayalaseema

Rayalaseema region, consists of the districts of Chittoor, Kadapa, Anantapur, and Kurnool, occupies 27.4 percent of the state area and lies mostly at an altitude of 1000 to 2000 feet (305 to 610 meters) above the sea level. The average rainfall of this region is approximately 27 inches (68.5 cm) compared to about 41 inches (104.1 cm) for coastal Andhra. Long known as a drought-prone and famine belt, Rayalaseema is most sparsely populated and economically the most vulnerable part of Andhra Pradesh. The soil is rocky and unyielding; rainfall is scanty and uncertain. Confronted by frequent famines and droughts, farmers struggle for existence. Most of the population in Rayalaseema still depends on agriculture due to the lack of opportunities in the secondary as well as the tertiary sectors of the economy. This region has considerable forest resources and sizeable mineral deposits, but these assets are slow in being exploited. Industrially, Rayalaseema is the most backward region in the state, although Kurnool district has textile operations and a modest food processing industry (Reddy, 2003).

The politics in Rayalaseema and AP is characterized as that of, accommodation, factionalism, and populism. The political system accommodates leaders of movements (socio-political movements and political agitations) and groups (caste, class) who hardly represent the interests and wishes of all groups and movements. It also accommodates some interests and wishes of groups and movements by taking up some popular policies like reservations, land reforms, etc., which are implemented half-heartedly. The state leaders gave more importance to their political survival rather than the development of Rayalaseema because of factionalism or groups within the ruling party. That is why Rayalaseema has not developed well as expected, and it has not achieved its objective of social transformation as expected. Upper caste-class groups have been influencing the politics and ruling the region to continue their domination through the politics of accommodation and populism (Rao, 2002).

Table 4: Demographic Comparison of Rayalaseema and Coastal Andhra Regions

S.No.	Details	Rayalaseema	Coastal Andhra
1.	Population (in millions, 2011 census)	15.18	34.19
2.	Population Density (2011 census)	225	368
3.	Average annual rainfall (m.mtrs)	714.07	1078.11
4.	Area ('000 sq.km, 2011 census)	67.4	92.8
5.	Literacy rate (2011)	56.5	62.1

Source: A.P. Regions Profile, Loksatta party (2012)

Rayalaseema has an area of 67.4 thousand sq. kms with 15.18 million population with a density of 225 persons per sq km for the census year 2011. Out of the total population in Rayalaseema, 74 percent live in rural areas and remaining in urban, with some migrating to other cities for employment and other work. Of the total population in Rayalaseema, 13.89 percent are cultivators, 17.6 % agricultural laborers, 1.24 % in the household industry, 10.4 % are other workers, 2.64 % are marginal workers, and 54.23 % are non-

workers in the census year 2011. The literacy rate is low at 56.5, which is less than the national average.

3.1.2 Caste composition and Development

It is well known that caste is an important determinant of the character and fabric of Indian society and politics. Earlier politics have been monopolized by the dominant castes; now the entire political scenario has changed. BCs and SCs are effectively campaigning for legitimate political share and succeeding in their mission. The following table shows the caste composition of Rayalaseema.

Table 5: Caste Composition in Rayalaseema, 2011

S.No.	Demography	Percentage	Total Population of Rayalaseema
1.	Schedule Castes	17 %	1.52 Crore (30.58% of the Total Andhra Pradesh population)
2.	Schedule Tribes	2.7 %	
3.	Backward Classes	44.5 %	
4.	Other Castes	34.3 %	
5.	Total	100 %	*the total population of Andhra Pradesh is 4.97 crore

Source: Census 2011, NSSO 64th round report

The above table shows that of the total population in Rayalaseema, 16 percent were SCs, 2.7 percent were STs, 44.5 % were BCs, and other castes constitute of 34.3 percent which represents the Reddis, Kamma, Kapu, Brahmin and Vaishyas in the region. Reddis are a well-organized community in Rayalaseema in terms of social, economic and political position. Like MN Srinivas's dominant caste; they have numerical strength and dominate economic and political power in the region.

3.1.3 Economic conditions

Rayalaseema is treated as one of the distinct natural regions of Deccan, as it is a distinct physiographic region, known as, Rayalaseema Plateau. From the economic point of view, the region has been identified as a backward one because it is drought-prone. This semi-arid region is disadvantaged in terms of water and low rainfall. The climate in Rayalaseema is mostly dry. There have been efforts by the state and central governments to alleviate backwardness. *“In 2015, locals complained about neglect of several projects to alleviate this, particularly in the areas of irrigation (Rajeev, The Hindu, Oct 11, 2015)”*. The region lies in the shadow zone of Western Ghats. As a result, this region receives low rainfall throughout the south-west and the northeast monsoons as well.

Red soils predominate in this region so that the moisture availability for dryland crops is poor due to low water retention in the red soils (Reddy, 2003). Soil erosion is one of the serious problems in the region as the terrain is undulated and thus the soils are poor in fertility. Despite this, agriculture is the major economic activity in Rayalaseema. Paddy, Jowar, Bajra, Maize, and Turmeric are the major crops in Rayalaseema. There are only a few factories/companies concentrated in Rayalaseema, that are in decline now, because of non-cooperation from state or lack of political will. Cement factories are the major industries in Rayalaseema. Rayalaseema paper mill in Kurnool district, dairies and sugar cane mill in Kadapa have been declared sick and are closing. The state and political leaders did not give much attention and allocation for development to Rayalaseema. In contrast to the development measures, the political leaders have found factionalism as the cheapest tool to consolidate their vote banks in order to attain and increase political power.

3.1.4 Landholding and dependency

Most of the people of this region depend on land for agriculture. In Rayalaseema, Reddis are the major land-owning caste, occupying a large amount of land holdings in the villages and are agrarian dependent families. Other communities like SCs and BCs possess marginal or small land holdings. The tenants are mostly from socially, economically backward class in the region. The SCs are mainly agricultural labourers,

working under Reddy landowners. The government of Andhra Pradesh distributed land to landless SCs in the region because most of the Dalits are agricultural labourers, small and marginal farmers. Most of the government distributed lands are Banjar lands and unfertile lands. As land is the primary economic resource in rural Rayalaseema, ownership of land signifies both economic and political power. AP is one of the states which distributed land to landless poor to bring economic equality. The following table explains the details of land distribution from 1969 to 2005.

Table 6: Land Distribution by Govt. of A.P., to Landless Poor during 1969-2005 (Rayalaseema Region)

S.No.	District	Caste category	Beneficiaries	Allotted land	Total land
1.	Anantapur	SC	63244	86642.64	391601.3
		ST	79014	109261.1	
		OBC	84796	117026.7	
		Others	57128	78670.91	
2.	Chittoor	SC	29322	53215.5	237940.4
		ST	34355	63017.83	
		OBC	39298	72575.26	
		Others	26778	49131.8	
3.	Kadapa	SC	46055	71292.81	263938.1
		ST	55930	87136.31	
		OBC	60967	40730.52	
		Others	41321	64778.45	
4.	Kurnool	SC	53870	137311.6	624225.1
		ST	67187	171846.9	
		OBC	72703	185741.5	
		Others	50826	129325.1	

Source: Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of AP, 2011

Table 6 presents the distribution of land to landless people and their caste wise shareholdings. The total government distributed land accounts to 1517704.9 acres, and this has been allocated to 862740 landless poor, from 1969 to 2005, in Rayalaseema region. Out of the total distributed land, the government has allocated 28.41 percent of the land to STs, 27.41 percent to BCs and 22.95 percent of the land to SCs or landless people. SCs got the third position in the distribution of land to landless people, actually, they are more dependent on the land compared to STs and BCs, but the SCs were allocated lesser than STs and BCs. An interesting fact is that OC were also allocated 21.21 percent of land, even though they are socially, economically and politically well-organized communities in the region.

Rural families mostly depend on agriculture and allied activities, and hence land is the major source of their income-generation. In villages, Reddis hold the majority of land, but now with land distribution, the landless poor have become small land owners which in turn reduced their dependency on Reddy land owners for their daily livelihood. The land distribution to poor families could be one reason for the decline of factionalism in Rayalaseema. This land distribution may have helped the landless poor SCs to break out of the traditional Jajmani relations. After the distribution of land, the phenomenon of factionalism changed. The earlier practice of faction leaders recruiting lower caste people by providing them basic-necessities, has somewhat reduced now. The land distribution created some sort of dignity and self-respect among the lower caste people. All these factors may have led to the decline of factionalism in Rayalaseema.

3.2 Historical origins of Factionalism in Rayalaseema

In the region, the history of factionalism can be traced back to the Vijayanagara Empire that lasted from fourteenth to sixteenth Centuries AD. Rayalaseema region was a part of the Vijayanagara Empire. The Kings of Vijayanagara appointed nearly eighty military chieftains (Palegarhs) in Rayalaseema to have administrative control over the region. Even after the defeat of Thallikota battle¹⁰ in 1565, and end of this empire, the Palegarhs continued to exist. They had frequent fights to control or occupy the villages. They also

¹⁰ Thallikota battle between Vijayanagara empire and Deccan Sultanates(January 23,1565)

troubled the British government and passed on the baggage of vengeance to the subsequent generations. These conditions in the region made the unemployed youth depend on these chieftains or Palegarhs. To ensure permanent loyalty, these leaders developed the practice of financially supporting the families that stood by them. These naturally beneficial arrangements divided the society along emotional lines and, here, caste also played a dominant role. Subsequently, in independent India, backwardness, unemployment, individual loyalties and assured financial support in case of death or injury were some of the reasons that encouraged factionalism among the poor (Bhuman, 2003).

Konaiah (2012) observed that armed factional culture was highly prevailing in Kadapa, Kurnool, and Anantapur districts of Rayalaseema. Mostly, there were conflicts due to personal and land disputes which led to murders and counter attacks by armed factions. He stated that the people of Rayalaseema remark that the soil is known for such behaviour and its water nourishes it, from the rivers named as Chitavathi, Kundu, and Penna.

In response to a question as to why Rayalaseema preferred to acquire power and property through terror or use of arms – Balagopal (1994) explains, “*what prevails in Rayalaseema is a culture in which the human traits of loyalty and faith are tied to the feudal-patriarchal mode of society, so that the liberty we are speaking of may well be seen as an illegitimate disloyalty to the natural leaders and elders of society, and would be recognized as legitimate only if there is an opposition faction within the dominant class to whom the loyalty can be transferred. Existing conjointly as this trait does with a proneness to the violent expression of anger, which is again sharper in Rayalaseema than elsewhere, it can mean that the desire for individual liberty may attract violent hostility from one's fellow creatures, persons of one's class, caste and family. Even in factional conflicts among followers of different Reddy landlords, the violent anger and hatred that can and does divide close kith and kin are startling to an observer unfamiliar with the specific mode of feudal culture dominant in Rayalaseema*” (Balagopal 1994:2).

Rao (1998) observed that the village factions were born out of the conflicts amongst Reddis to gain supremacy over the villages which had a long history in

Rayalaseema. To gain such power, the violence which involved assaults, murders, burning of houses, etc., led to the creation of hereditary enmity that went on for generations, until one family was either exterminated or driven out of the village. Hence, these family driven factions were often used to show one's power, property, and prestige.

It also meant the creation of loyal gangs from low-income families and lower castes who indulged in mutual violence. Konaiah differentiated these gangs when compared with the urban mafia in two ways: *“one- mafia are professional criminals, whereas peasants are involved in illicit activities such as land grabbing, growing opium, making liquor illegally. Second- it is feudal loyalty as a matter of traditional dharma towards elders of the village or upper caste Reddy landlords that binds these gangs into slavery”* (Konaiah, 2012:28). Rayalaseema inherited this factionalism from the anarchy that followed the decline of the Vijayanagara Empire, the rule of armed chieftains or so-called Palegarhs over the group of villages.

The rural social and political structures are conducive to formation of factions in Rayalaseema since long. The violent factions in Rayalaseema were first manifested in the early '70s and from then it has influenced the region and state political culture (APCLC, 1998:2). The characteristic feature of factions in Rayalaseema is that there will be the excessive prevalence of armed faction culture and the violence created by them. Also, we can see the presence of inter and intra-caste factions in the region. Some parts of Kadapa district have witnessed inter-caste factions. For instance, in Rayachoti and Koduru in Kadapa district, there was a rivalry between Kapus and Reddis. They have quarreled over the mining business that led to the burning of houses, cuttings of trees in the field, murders and counter-murders (Balagopal,1996). It is observed that inter-caste factionalism in Kadapa district did not create hereditary enmity, whereas intra-caste factions are passing on from generations to generations.

The long-established factions in Rayalaseema principally were dominated by Reddis to have control over the village, power, and property. There was widespread violence among Reddis that had to happen due to prestige and land disputes in the village. The conflict started with some minor problem and led to murder and counter-murder of each other. Some villages in Rayalaseema have witnessed factionalism in

British times. At that time rural faction was limited to their village or taluk boards. These factions did not have any economic and political goal out of their village. However, with Independence, these village factions have crossed their village boundaries to occupy power at district-level boards. Even now tensions between the rural factions continue among the dominant Reddy families in Rayalaseema (Gitika, 2004).

The structure of village factions relies on the loyalty of local leaders, those who are patronized by the state level leaders. *“If a patron-client link is broadened to include larger structures that are related by the joining of many such links, we can talk of a patron-client cluster and a patron-client pyramid. The former refers to a patron’s immediately following- those clients who are directly related to him; and the latter refers to the enlarging on the cluster but still focusing on one person and his vertical links (Scott, 1972:96)”*. Factional inter-linkages are operating through district or state level leadership. They can encourage local leadership to get support in elections. Afterward the state level leadership offers some local level administrative positions like presidents in cooperative societies, marketing societies, and Samithi presidents, etc. Once these local leaders hold these positions, they command prestige, status, and authority in villages. This paved the way to achieve success in elections. The traditional village factions have become part of the political structure and factionalism was normalized in politics (APCLC, 1993:8).

The study also analyzed the published reports and the special bulletins run by the electronic media on political violence and factionalism in the Rayalaseema region. Various channels show a different number of deaths because of the political violence in the region. TV9, NTV, StudioN, The Wire, The Hindu, and Reddiff.com published articles highlighting the issues of political violence in the region. The Wire (31 March 2017), reports that, police records say that there were nearly 8,465 factional killings, including 970 Congress and 560 TDP workers who have been killed due to factional violence in this region. The NTV (May 2015) report states that Rayalaseema is notorious for factional violence, which has witnessed over 500 killings in the last 15 years. The Hindu, 2004, reports that about 450 murders had taken place in the region under 17 years

of TDP rule. Political parties aided and abetted faction feuds to sustain political power. Anantapur was relatively free from factionalism until the emergence of the TDP.

However, since 1995 there has been a small decline in the number of factional killings in Rayalaseema region. In Chittoor, while 114 individuals were killed in 1995 in factional rivalries, 93 were killed in 1996, and 87 people were killed in 1997. In Anantapur, 16 people were killed in 1995, 10 in 1996 and seven in 1997. In Kurnool, there has been a downward trend with 38 people killed in 1995, 26 in 1996 and 13 in 1997 (reddiff.com, 5 December 1997). The decline may be the introduction of welfare policies, like poverty eradication schemes, educational opportunities, and employment opportunities to reduce factionalism in the region. These schemes brought awareness among the followers of a faction leader. The figures of those killed in factional feuds in Kadapa district between 1989 and 2011 were 285. Kadapa has seen the highest number of factional killings as it had 20 percent more than that of Chittoor which had the second highest, while Anantapur had the lowest. Hence, Kadapa is seen as the hot-bed for such rivalries in Rayalaseema.

The reddiff.com 1997 report observed that factionalism is in decline in Rayalaseema for the following reasons.

- i. Traditionally, the SC families depended on the Reddy families for their livelihood. The recent shift of SC families from this dependence on the Reddy families can be seen as a loosening of the old jajmani relationship. This can be attributed to education and political consciousness of the latter.
- ii. Availability of modern economic opportunities for the SC families as part of reservations.
- iii. Government schemes and aspiration of the SC families to get their children educated and move away from the factional related violence.
- iv. Post-violence trauma of families of victims not to participate in factionalism can be observed both in the SC families and the Reddy families.
- v. Reddis do not actually participate in the direct action, they merely plan, guide and fund the political violence. It was mostly the SCs who were involved in the

violent action and became either victims or got arrested following the political violence.

3.3 Political affiliations of Factionalism in Rayalaseema

Since independence, the village factions were under the patronage of Congress party till the emergence of Telugu Desam Party in 1982. After the emergence of Telugu Desam Party, these village factions came under the influence of two rival dominant caste families of Reddis and Kammās from the districts of Kadapa, Kurnool, and Anantapur. Even though local body elections were fought on political lines, they were also influenced by factional tussles. These factions were influencing everyday village politics.

Table 7: Factional Groups Affiliated to Political Parties

S.No.	Parties	Affiliation of factional groups to political parties (in %)		
		1950-1982	1983-2011	2012-2015
1.	Congress	100	50	20
2.	TDP	0	50	50
3.	YSRCP	0	0	30
4.	Others	0	0	0

Source: Compiled by Researcher based on discussions with respondents

Factions in Rayalaseema were under the leadership of Congress party for a long time which encouraged factions at village and mandal level to gain an advantage in electoral politics. After TDP came into power in 1983, there was no new faction or faction leader that emerged from Congress. However, some of the old faction leaders who did not find political space in Congress shifted to TDP. Since then faction rivalry was between TDP and Congress till the state bifurcation in 2014. After bifurcation, Congress lost its political ground in Andhra Pradesh. So the faction leaders of Congress joined in the newly formed YSR Congress party and TDP. Most of the faction leaders are part of TDP and YSR Congress party. The Rayalaseema Reddy leaders have acquired dominance in both these political parties. (See Tables 7 and 8))

Table 8: District Wise Dominant Political Party in Rayalaseema

S.No.	Districts in Rayalaseema		Period		
			1950-1982	1983-2012	2013-2017
1.	Anantapur	Party	Congress	TDP	TDP
		Caste	Reddis	Reddis/ Kammas	Reddis/ Kammas
2.	Chittoor	Party	Congress	TDP	TDP
		Caste	Reddis/ Kammas	Reddis/ Kammas	Reddis/ Kammas
3.	Kadapa	Party	Congress	Congress	YSRCP
		Caste	Reddis	Reddis	Reddis
4.	Kurnool	Party	Congress	Congress	YSRCP
		Caste	Reddis	Reddis	Reddis

Source: Compiled by Researcher based on discussions with respondents

Table 9: Comparison of Factionalism between Kammas and Reddis in Rayalaseema

S.No.	Major Features of Factions	Dominant Factions	
		Kamma	Reddy
1.	1950-1982	Congress/CPI	Congress
2.	1983-2012	TDP	Congress/TDP
3.	2013-2017	TDP	YSRCP/TDP
4.	History	No	Palegarhs
5.	Number of factions	Less	More
6.	Economic Power	Less	More
7.	Political power	Less	More
8.	Killings	Less	More

Source: Compiled by Researcher based on discussions with respondents

Around 1950, there were two dominant political parties, i.e., Congress and the Communist Party, in the Rayalaseema region. Usually, the contestants in local body elections were upper caste unless there is reservation. The electoral competition was between Reddis in Kadapa and Kurnool whereas in Anantapur and Chittoor it was between Kammas and Reddis. In the first case, Palegarh Reddis used to get support from Congress, and other Reddis (non-Palegarh) got support from the Communist Party and other parties. Most of the Reddis were part of Congress, whereas Kammas joined the Communist Party until the emergence of TDP. (see Table 9)

After the emergence of TDP, Kammas patronized TDP to compete with Reddis for political gains, and after bifurcation of A.P. in 2014, most Reddis from the Congress joined the YSRC party. Hence, the villages of Rayalaseema were divided along party and caste lines based on the political party in that particular place. The entry of the political parties in the villages created a space for political participation and co-option of faction leaders, and it was the stepping stone to develop district-level leadership. “These political rivalries then developed between village level leaders with equal social standing to compete for district-level influence and authority” (Gitika, 2004:96).

3.4 Kadapa District : Profile

The study area of Kadapa district is in the southern part of Andhra Pradesh. Kadapa is bounded on the south by the district of Chittoor, north by Kurnool, east by Nellore and Prakasam and west by Anantapur districts. The district is spread over 5,935 square miles. The district was for a long time ruled by various dynasties like Nandas, the Mouryas, the Satavahanas, the Pallavas, Chalukyas, the Kakateeyas, the Vijayanagar and the Qutubshahi dynasty of Golkonda. During 1800 A.D. Nizam Nawab Ali gave three districts Kadapa, Kurnool, and Bellary to the East India Company. Hence,

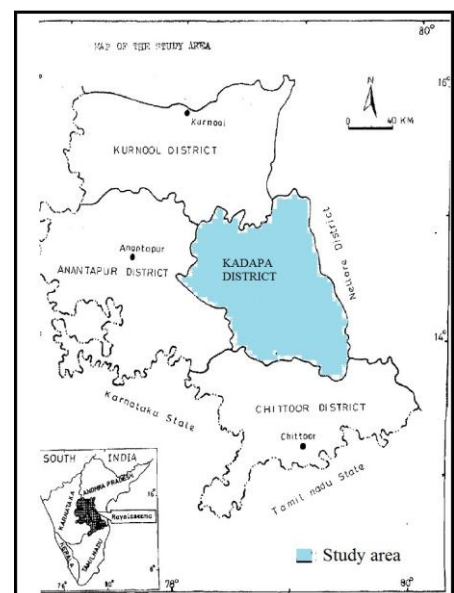


Figure 3: Map of Kadapa District

these three districts came to be known as ceded districts. Later, Bellary district was transferred to Karnataka state (SRC, 1956). The boundaries of the Kadapa district have been reconstituted many a time by adding or subtracting taluks. From 1985, the district consisted of 15 taluks and 50 mandals.

Table 10: Demographic Details of Kadapa district

S.No.	Description	Population
1.	Rural	1903337 (66.03 %)
2.	Urban	979132 (33.97%)
3.	Total population	2882469 (100%)
4.	SC Population	453700.6260 (15.74%)
5.	ST Population	68026.2684 (2.36%)

Source: Census data 2011

As seen in Table 10, the district has a population of 2,882,469 persons with a breakup of 66.03% rural, while the urban population is 33.97%. The Scheduled Caste population in the district forms 15.74% of the total population, while Scheduled Tribe accounts for 2.36%. The density of population is 188 per sq.km, and sex ratio is 984 females per 1000 males (Census, 2011). Kadapa town is the district headquarters with a population of 344078 in 2011. The literacy rate of the district is 67.30, with 77.78 for males and 56.77 for females. Literacy rate in Kadapa district has been found higher than the state average (Census, 2011).

The major economic resources of Kadapa district are minerals, rich forest area, crops and its location that is on the Mumbai-Chennai route. The Kadapa ryots are hardy farmers, and alluvial soil in their valley produces productive crops. In the Kadapa valley especially the soil is very rich, and grains of all kind are produced. Seven to twenty-seven varieties of crops are grown, making the villages self-sufficient. Quite often the villagers can spare their surplus produce for free feeding at temples and on festive occasions. Farmers produce millets and paddy, Jonnalu (sorghum), wheat, green gram, gingelly,

Bengal gram, red gram, horse gram, cotton, turmeric, cumin, chilly, vegetables, onion and garlic. Besides these crops, banana, various varieties of orange, pomegranate, betel nuts, betel leaves, lemon, jackfruit, and other garden products were common in all parts of the district (District Hand Book, 2013).

3.4.2 Factionalism in Kadapa

Kadapa district is selected for a focus in the present study mainly because it is a part of Rayalaseema which had the Palegarhs institution providing the historical background for factionalism in the pre-Independence India. Many Palegarhs families lived in this district when it was a part of the Vijayanagara Kingdom and Madras presidency. This provides the appropriate backdrop to understand factionalism in a longer time frame. There are many faction villages which have experience intense factionalism. This district for many years as per records ranks highest in number (646) of murders in the State. The factions, in general, are armed factions. It is politically, a significant place as it has thrown up a Chief Minister and many ministers who have been beneficiaries of factionalism. This provides an opportunity to understand linkages between politics, caste, elections and their interaction with factionalism. Proddatur, Jammalamadugu, Pulivendula, and Kamalapuram are notorious faction mandals in the district. In Kadapa district, Reddis, are the dominant castes in the villages, with Yadavs, Chakali, and Mangali the backward castes. Mala and Madiga are the lower castes or SCs. There are reports of Reddis practicing untouchability in the faction villages. According to records, four mandals Kamalapuram, Proddatur, Jammalamadugu, and Pulivendula are witnessing notorious factionalism in the district. In Kadapa, the faction leaders are from Reddy caste only (Balagopal, 1996).

Kadapa has a known history for the operation of factions. “Factions are political conflict groups. The factions are not corporate groups because they are independent in doing their business and agricultural activities” (Nicholas, 1965:27). These features of factions outlined by Nicholas can be observed in Kadapa. Factions do not own property jointly. A faction group member is recruited by the leader based on diverse interests and desires. Members are from lower castes, who will work based on traditional bondage

relation with the upper caste leader. The leader of the faction has the freedom to use a wide range of maneuvers in pursuing his groups ends.

Oscar Lewis (1954) identified certain originating causes for factions, for example, quarrels over the inheritance of land, adoption of sons, house sites, irrigation rights, murders to be the factors which led people to come into conflict with each other to attain their goals. One finds that most of these factors are operating in Kadapa. After the emergence of Panchayat Raj system, the local body elections created conflict among the villagers. They divided into groups to get power and resources. As the result of which dominant caste groups have emerged as rival groups in order to capture power at the village level.

Village supremacy is another cause for factions in Kadapa district. Traditionally, the dominant caste in the region are Reddis, who wish to retain their supremacy, as they have been getting the benefits that go with power positions. The newly emerging groups who were earlier denied to occupy power position, now want to possess it and consequently, the conflict is inevitable, and it ultimately leads to the birth of more factions. Another important cause for the origin of faction is the enjoyment of irrigation rights. This may be because land is the primary source of income for the people of this area. Sharing common irrigation facilities has led has to quarrels which become the basis for the birth of factions. Apart from these, disputes over house sites and building of roads in the village (roads leading to their fields) also are causes for factional violence.

3.4.3 Nature of Factions in Kadapa

The factional leaders in Kadapa district mostly belong to one particular caste group – the Reddis. The degree of rivalry between the factional leaders is highly situational and manifests in the following manner. A person from the Reddy community who feels threatened by the growing dominance and political power of another Reddy in the village, will fight him by organizing a faction of his own. As each Reddy grows in his stature of cornering political power and economic wealth, the faction rivalry also grows. A Reddy who happens to enter the state politics will have a rivalry with another Reddy from the constituency who poses a threat to his candidature either from the same party or from the

opposition party. One can conclude that the factionalism is mostly intra-caste in nature across the region.

There has been one case of inter-caste factionalism in Kadapa. Rayachoti taluk had witnessed inter-caste faction feuds, a rivalry between Baliya and Reddis. Though the district was dominated by Reddis, they were opposed by Baliyas in Rayachoti taluk. This rivalry between two castes was raised during elections in the 1990s (Balagopal, 1996).

As a dominant caste, the Reddis dominate the numerous villages in the district of Kadapa. In the countryside, the Reddis dominate a set of contiguous or closely related villages. Usually, single surname groups of the Reddis control several villages. A branch of the surname group resides in each village, and the superiority of the head of the group over the people in the village was recognized. As it operates in most of the villages, the dominance of Reddis is an inheritance from a period since the martial caste protected other castes when there was continual warfare between local rulers and alien invaders (as they struggled for territory, tribute, and supporters). In such a situation, a local social structure was developed, which centered around the dominant caste or Reddy; or the dominant family or families of Reddis (Reddy, 2003).

When the British came to power in 1800 A. D., the relationship between caste and politics took a new turn. The Brahmins responded earliest to the opportunities for western education and became a powerfully politicized group. With success on the part of the Brahmins, the members of the other high castes, like the Reddis, Kammas, and Baliya in the area responded with resentment, felt relative deprivation, and developed antagonism. Then these cultivator castes involved themselves in the politicization process and formed into powerful elite castes. Since then Reddis have dominated in all the places, i.e., numerically, economically and politically, over all other caste groups. This situation brought a scramble for power and authority between the cultivator castes in rural as well as urban areas. The Reddis have continued to dominate the scene even in the post-independence era (Reddy, 2003).

In effect, the politics of the village, the city, and the region have remained in the hands of the powerful, dominant caste of Reddis, who exert control over the lives of

villagers. The leaders' have gathered a host of followers around them, using ties associated with kinship, caste economics, and friendship to recruit their followers. The leader provides money on loan to his followers, lends support to his followers in the event of quarrels, and protects his followers in person and their property from others. In the event of a conflict among his followers, the leaders play the role of judge and lawgiver. The followers depend on their leader for loans of cash during times of hardship. With the help of the leader, the followers' sons and relatives procure jobs. The leader helps them in getting bank loans, and fertilizer loans and in procuring such other benefits from the government welfare schemes meant for the alleviation of poverty (Reddy, 2003).

Factionalism and fragmentation have taken place within the dominant caste of Reddis and multi-caste, and multi-factorial alignments have developed. Lower castes are often brought in to support the Reddy leaders and to strengthen the factions. The rise of one factional leader is viewed with alarm by the other factional leaders, who may send their followers to rob his house, beat up his supporters or assassinate him in the street when he is walking or in the vehicle in which he is traveling. One factional leader forms alliances with other factional leaders, often by mutual understanding and reciprocal relations in the event of conflict and support. The factional leaders receive the adulation and support accorded to a benevolent ruler (Reddy, 2003).

The faction leaders remain outside the bureaucratic government but control it through their economic and political influence. Government officials are expected to come to carry out their assigned tasks with the tacit approval and goodwill of the factional leaders. The factional leaders promote urban facilities like electrification, blacktopped roads, slum improvement, the supply of adequate drinking water, starting a required number of schools and colleges, government hospitals, cinema houses, shops, and markets. Many factional leaders supplement their income by obtaining government contracts for the construction of roads, projects, and buildings. Supervisors, engineers and other officials are bribed to certify the completed projects which are not according to quality standards or which are never finished. Such practices were quite common among factional leaders.

A factional leader got loans sanctioned in the name of his large number of followers and used most of that money for his personal works. What his followers get is only a small portion of the loan, and for repayment, the leader pays what is due from him to the bank, and the remaining amount is repaid by his followers. Likewise, each factional leader gets his work and the work of his supporters also done. Jobs, small contracts, loans from banks, seed and fertilizers from the government are usually of interest to their followers for which they approach their factional leaders. The factional leaders try to fulfill the interest of their followers. They have so much influence with the state and national governments that they place some of their allies as local representatives for the shops that distribute rations to the inhabitants in Kadapa and through them they can gain considerable power and many followers (Reddy, 2003).

3.4.5 Rise of Factionalism in Kadapa

The history of factions in Kadapa district originated predominantly for the dominance and supremacy in the village. Factions in the district before the independence were mainly formed due to property disputes, illicit contracts, and Panchayat elections which turned into more violent form of groups eventually. The faction involve in killing each other and avenging their murdered faction members. They also resort to burning the rivals' crops and houses if the tensions are escalated. According to Rama Krishna Reddy who is one of the participants of my field survey, *"Murders frequently occur in Kadapa district, reasons for these murders are either personal vengeance or disputes relating to land. Mostly land disputes lead to serious lootings"*. Kamalapuram, Proddatur, Jammalamadugu, and Pulivendula are famous for these types of tensions.

Panchayat elections have become the most suitable stage for factional activities. District Board and Taluk Board elections are fought on a non-party basis, however after winning the elections the candidates mostly affiliate themselves with either congress or non-congress party. For instance, "in 1971 elections for taluk boards, there was a contest between YS Raja Reddy supported by CPI and DN Reddy, who was the ZP chairman from Congress Party. This led to political rivalry between Raja Reddy and DN Reddy as DN Reddy won the elections and he became MP of Kadapa (Balagopal, 1996:42)". Since

both of them belonged to the same taluk in Kadapa, the political rivalry got centered in the district. Later, the YS family was able to set up a violent clash in Pulivendula taluk.

The introduction of Panchayat Raj institutions provided one more reason for the continuation and strengthening of on going factions in the region. In the process of acquiring dominance in the region, in the disguise of electoral fights, the policy of physical elimination is also resorted by the faction rivalries. Once a faction member is murdered, the group resort to revenge and involve in the killing the rival group members and the vicious cycle of murdering each other continues. The struggle for political power at panchayat Samithi level intensified and became main reason for continuation of factionalism in the villages. The power struggle from above trickled down to the villages through their henchmen i.e., Panchayat Presidents and the party representatives. In such case, *“Raja Reddy from Pulivendula and Siva Reddy from Jammalamadugu patronized groups in the villages as a part of their power struggle. During this phase, property disputes were lessened due to land ceilings and the factions operated mainly for power. They encouraged one factionist in the village against the other (Balagopal, 1996:42)”*. However, over a period, factionists themselves started to enter the politics directly and became Sarpanches, Presidents of Agricultural and Marketing Societies and also Samithi Presidents. They managed to get elected through the support at the village level and also by using the money and muscle power. Thus the bondage between the politics and the factionalism was born in the Andhra Pradesh Politics. This can be clearly seen in the contemporary politics where large number of the legislators having a factional background.

Addition to the elections, the arrack business played a crucial role in the increase of factions in Kadapa district. For many years, arrack and toddy business was under the sole control of Reddis. However, after TDP came to power in 1983, the Government streamlined arrack business which made it even more profitable by licensing the arrack. Over some time, all faction leaders (Reddis and Kammas) started to involve in arrack business and cornered contracts with the help of their money and muscle power. Rivals in the business were intimidated and prevented from entering the business. Faction leaders who had an understanding among themselves formed a syndicate to get contracts at

cheaper rates. After securing the contract, they used to earn much money by mixing illicit arrack with Government arrack. They successfully obstructed the Government to get its due revenue from arrack by using all manipulative methods. Thus arrack business kept factional politics alive in the district. In 1990's the TDP government banned arrack for some time. Hence the faction leaders conducted their illicit arrack hearths to earn money. They started making money through the importing of arrack from Karnataka. No official could dare to obstruct their illicit arrack business (Balagopal, 1996).

After the emergence of TDP, factions started enjoying the direct patronage of the ruling parties whichever party is in power. The ruling party and the opposition patronize the faction leaders. Earlier they used to be encouraged by two leaders within Congress Party in each constituency. So the patronage of oppositional parties to Congress, when it was a single dominant party, was nominal, but this changed with the emergence of TDP. Faction leaders prevented free voting: as they terrorized the voters and prevented them from going to polling booths to exercise their franchise (APCLC, 1995).

3.4.6 Political parties and Factionalism

In Kadapa, factional politics at the district and also the state level has been linked with four places. The four adjacent mandals (and erstwhile taluks) of Kamalapuram, Proddatur, Pulivendula, and Jammalamadugu located in the north-western part of the district has been noted for intense factional conflicts.

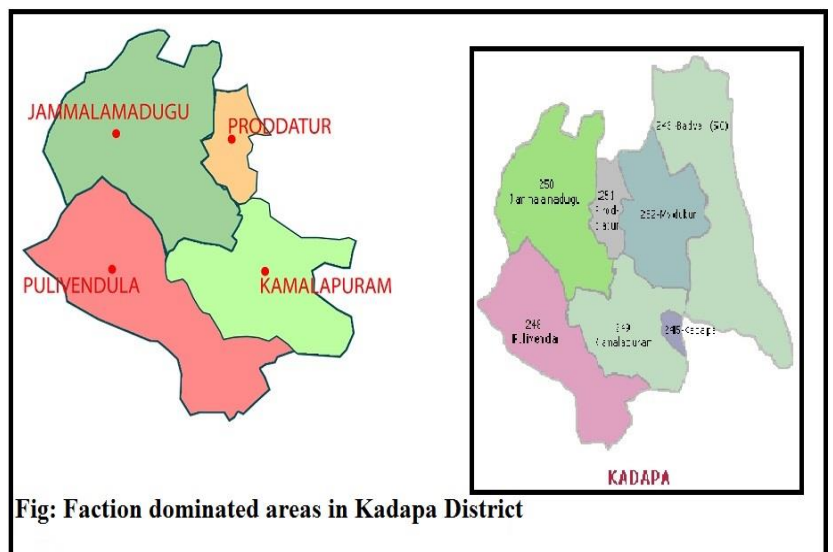


Figure 4: Faction Dominated Areas in Kadapa District

There is a general feeling that the emergence of Telugu Desam party as a potential political rival party to Congress strengthened the political growth of the factionalism. The

emergence of TDP has not brought any political and social change in Kadapa district. The TDP may have brought some sweeping social changes in few areas of the state, but such changes were not found in Kadapa district. There was no new faction face that emerged with the coming of TDP, which has no ideological background at all. Existing faction groups or faction leaders those who could not find political space in Congress joined in TDP. A factionist is always in need of power, supremacy, status, wealth and some political platform. Earlier all belonged to Congress, and now they have found berths in both TDP as well as Congress.

Balagopal (1996) said, in his book '*Kadapa zillalo palegalla rajyam*' (Palegarh rule in Kadapa district), that the faction leaders interfere in all the disputes and favor their fellowmen. They exercise hold over all branches of government machinery and divert all benefits to their followers and deprive others of their legitimate democratic rights. Followers of the faction leader utilize the name of their leader and enforce their jungle law in the villages. Factionists strike terror in the villages, whenever they want mass support for any cause, for example, elections, a celebration of festivals, and grabbing tenders, etc.

After the emergence of TDP, factionalism has become a common phenomenon in villages during Panchayat elections. For example "*a village in Proddatur taluk, had factions since pre-independence days, which continue even to this day. The conflict started during Gram Panchayat elections when a candidate supported by the TDP was pitted against the Sarpanch of the village who had held that post for thirty years* (Gitika, 2005:131)". However, Proddatur, Kamalapuram, Pulivendula and Jammalamadugu factions had started with political ambitions of Reddy leaders. These Reddy leaders were primarily faction leaders in their constituencies. The political career of the leaders started with both Congress and TDP. "*The TDP leader from Proddatur has been seen as a progressive leader with sympathies with the disprivileged and the Congress leader from Pulivendula has been seen as a mass leader concerned with people's welfare, another Reddy leader from Jammalamadugu does not have such pretensions* (Balagopal, 1996:55)". This suggests that there are differences among faction leaders. Several

villages in these constituencies have been noted for rural factions under the control of Reddy patriarchs.

The present generation of faction leaders in Kadapa has, therefore, surpassed the earlier generation of leaders with alternative spheres outside the village society for economic resources and personnel for violence. This new generation leaders, who came up in the '80s effectively bypassed the previous leaders. Later, after the 1971 elections, the competition between new leaders became intense as associated factions and the previous leaders actively supported present generation leaders in the district who were themselves contesting one another economically and politically at the mandal or the village level. With the character of factions turning primarily political, their economic character underwent a considerable amendment with newer avenues of economic gain being unfolded. Whereas this is not true of all the factions, most of the well-known factions related to big leaders at the district and therefore the state level have seen a rise in their economic fortunes, thus making factional activity a money making venture. This has seen the induction of a category of individuals who are branded as criminals and 'rowdies' in common expression into the factional network. Extortion, land grabbing, land settlements, and intimidation of official machinery have become routine. The key positions of public office too started turning into an arena for political differences by these new generation leaders (APCLC, 1995).

3.5 Summary

This chapter argues that the villages have been the cultural roots for factionalism. The traditional factions were principally from Reddis, which arose for controlling the village, land, and resources. Reddis dominate all kinds of socio-economic and political power in the villages in Rayalaseema. Basically, the structure of factions is bottom to top, which means starting from village level to district and state level factions. Earlier the village factions were patronized by Congress. The rural faction leaders work in supporting district and state leaders. Factions in the district started with the political ambitions of Reddy leaders. The main tussle is between Reddis, however, some parts in Kadapa we can observe that there was a rivalry between Balijas or Kapus and Reddis, but this situation changed after the emergence of TDP, which created space for alternative

politics in the region/state. The village factions aligned themselves with the two rival political parties of Congress and TDP. From then factionalism has become an integral part of these two political parties who have used these factions to get support during elections. After 2014, the entry of YSR Congress added another claimant to factional leadership in Rayalaseema. Table 11 presents a comparative picture of some of the leading factions in three districts of Rayalaseema. Chittoor district has managed to stay free of major factional conflicts.

Table 11: Major Factions in Rayalaseema

S.No.	District	Factional groups, caste and political party affiliation				Constituency
1.	Kadapa	Raja Reddy	Indepen dent	DN Reddy	INC	Pulivendula
		Siva Reddy	TDP	Devagudi Reddy	INC	Jammalamadu gu
		Ramana Reddy	TDP	Varada Rajula Reddy	INC	Proddaturu
		Palakondara yudu (Kapu)	TDP	Gadikota Mohan Reddy	INC	Rayachoti
		Raghurami Reddy	TDP	DL Ravindra Reddy	INC	Mydukuru
2.	Anantapur	Paritala (Kamma)	TDP	Suri Reddy	INC	Penugonda
		Kethireddy	TDP	JC Brothers	INC	Tadipatri
3.	Kurnool	Bhuma Reddy	TDP	Gangula Reddy	INC	Allagadda
		Bijjam Reddy	TDP	Katasani Reddy	INC	Panyam
		By Reddy Seshaseyan a Reddy	TDP	Madduri Subbareddy	INC	Nandikotkuru
4.	Chittoor	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Source Compiled by Researcher based on discussions with Respondents

Chapter 4

Factionalism and its Influence on Families in Sambaturu Village

This chapter attempts to understand the nature of factionalism in Sambaturu village and document the experiences and coping mechanisms of families who lost a member to factional killings. For this, data has been collected from 30 respondents from different social backgrounds, including family members of the victims of factional violence.

The objective of the survey was to : (a) study the nature of factionalism and the killings in Sambaturu village in 1998 and 2000, (b) to probe the experiences of family members of victims of factional violence, and , (c) to understand perceptions of men and women in the village who are not part of any factional group. For this, 30 respondents were interviewed in the village from various social background, out of which 7 are women, and 23 are men. Two women are from families of victims of factional killing (who had lost a husband/son to factional violence), one wife and one mother. Rest of the five women respondents are villagers with no direct connection to factions. Among the 23 men, ten are Upper caste Reddis related to factions (6 Putha, and 4 Meegada faction), and 13 men are villagers with no connection to any of the faction (6 Dalits and 7 OBCs). Out of the 30 respondents, 12 were chosen because of direct connections with a faction in the village. Eighteen respondents were chosen with no direct connection with any faction. They were taken as a sample to understand perceptions of villagers on factionalism in Sambaturu. This chapter is based on data on Sambaturu from mandal office records, information collected from Gram Panchayat, focus group discussions with village respondents and interviews with select respondents.

Sambaturu village, chosen for this field study, falls under the jurisdiction of Kamalapuram mandal in Kadapa district of Rayalaseema. Sambaturu is well known for factions as it had a long history since independence. The village is noted for the violent clashes (*godavalu*) between the two factions in the village (*Meegada and Putha factions*). The faction fights between the two Reddy families in Sambaturu village has continued for the last three decades, with the violence continuing from generation to generation,

mostly related to land and political power in the village. This factional violence between the two families in the village has resulted in murders and counter-murders during 1998 and 2000. The factional violence in this taluk has spread to the neighboring mandals of Kadapa district, namely Proddatur, Kadapa, Pulivendula and Jammalamadugu. The nature of violence in these mandals includes mass murders, bomb attacks, arson and loot being the predominant methods used for inflicting loss on the opponents and their properties.

Although violence accompanying group conflicts were common in this region for a long time, its nature and intensity have changed over the years. Until the 1980s, the factional conflicts arose for village supremacy and also, because of family quarrels. However, factionalism has taken a political shape with the emergence of the Telugu Desam Party. This can be inferred from the fact that there were frequent clashes during elections, post TDP entering the scene. Though the faction leaders of the village had no direct access to political power, they were mostly followers of the political leader of their constituency and used to support their leader during elections. There was thus a distinction between a faction leader and a political leader with most faction leaders concentrating their activities within the village or Panchayat. With the emergence of TDP in the region in the 1980s, faction leaders became political leaders.

4.1 Demographic Profile of Sambaturu village:

Sambaturu village, a Panchayat, is situated at a distance of 29 Kilometers from Kadapa, the district headquarter. Sambaturu Village Panchayat comprises of three small Villages, namely, 1) Sambaturu 2) Munukoni palli and 3) Chennam palli. The total geographical area of this village Panchayat covers a jurisdiction of 1800 acres. Sambaturu

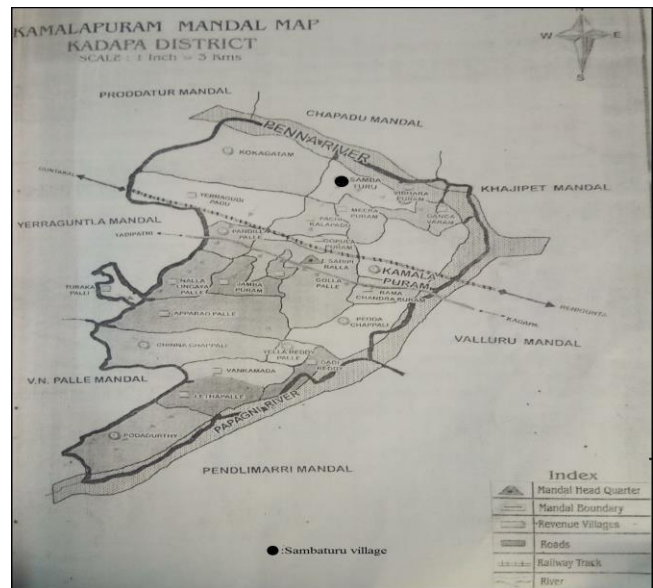


Figure 5: Sambaturu Village in Kamalapuram Mandal

village is surrounded by Chennam palli, Munukonu palli and Penna River in North, Kogatam Village in the west, Nallalingaya palli in south and Kamalapuram in East. According to 2011 Census of India, Sambaturu village has 343 households with a population of 1374.

Table 12: Literacy Rate in Sambaturu Village

Gender	Literates	Percentage of literacy	Illiterates	Percentage of illiterates
Male	453	72.48 %	188	29.32 %
Female	280	46.67 %	361	56.31 %
Total	733	59.84 %	641	41.16 %

Source: Statistical data, Mandal revenue office, Kamalapuram

Literacy plays a vital role in the development of the people and also has an impact on the emergence and determination of leadership. Political awareness, socio-economic conditions of the village can be assessed by their people if they are literates. However, an analysis of Sambaturu village reveals that in the entire village, only 733 persons know how to write and read. Out of which, 453 are male, and 280 are female. The percentage of literacy is only 59.84, and the percentages of male and female literacy are 72.48 % and 46.67 % respectively. The gender gap in literacy is quite high.

4.2 Work force of Sambaturu village

There are two categories of the workforce in the village. They are cultivators and marginal workers. The following table shows the workforce of Sambaturu village.

Table 13: Workforce in Sambaturu Village

Workforce	Men	Women	Total
Cultivators	153	174	327
Marginal workers	49	200	249
Total	202	374	576

Source: Statistical data, Mandal revenue office, Kamalapuram

The above table explains the workforce of Sambaturu village. The educated people usually go to nearby towns to work in different sectors like construction works, clerical jobs, other private jobs and few are into government jobs. The rest of workers either in agricultural fields or household industry. There are 576 main workers, out of which 202 are men, and 374 are women. There are 327 cultivators, out of which 153 are men, and 174 are women. The marginal workers also constitute a good number of people, who work under landowners. Out of 249 marginal workers, 49 are male, and 200 are female. The significant factor in the village is that in case of marginal work, women constitute a higher number compared to men as men are seen more in main work.

4.3 Occupational pattern of Sambaturu village

As stated earlier, agriculture is the main profession among three fourth of the families. In the village, electric supply is provided for both agricultural and domestic purposes. The staple food grains produced on its loamy soil are three varieties of Jonnalalu (sorghum vulgara): such as Volipijonna, Tellajonna, and Pachchajonna; four varieties of paddy, such as, Pishanalulu, Sanangulu, Yarrabakkalu and Yarravodlu; Ragulu, Sajjalu, Barigelu (hog millet), wheat, green gram, gingelly, bengal gram, red gram, horse gram, Alachandalu, cotton, turmeric, Jeelakara (cumin seed), chilly, vegetables, onion and garlic. The farmers in this village keep a portion of their produce with them for their domestic use and sell off the rest for money to meet their other expenses (Source: Mandal Statistics for Local Area Planning, 2011, Kamalapuram).

Since Sambaturu village is not surrounded by forests, the possibility of deforestation and conversion of forest land into agricultural land does not arise. Most of the available land outside cultivation is dry land with no water facilities. Water for agricultural purpose is dependent on seasonal rains. The tube well irrigated land in Sambaturu amounts to 242.81 hectares. There are 8.09 hectares of non-irrigated land in Sambaturu village (Source: Mandal Statistics for Local Area Planning, 2011, Kamalapuram).

4.4 Pattern of Landholding in Sambaturu village:

Reddis hold the majority of the lands in the village. All of them are agricultural families. Other communities like SCs, OBCs possess a small amount of landholding. Tenants are mostly from socially and economically backward classes/castes in the village. Most of the agricultural laborers are working in land holdings owned by Reddis. There are three kinds of Reddy landowners in the village

1. Landowners- directly engaging in agricultural activities.
2. Tenants- who have a small amount of land. Along with that, they take land from their relatives who migrated to cities. The Reddy tenants do not take land for farming outside their caste.
3. Absentee landowners- land is cultivated by their relatives who are in the village. The majority of the absentee Reddy landowners are civil contractors.

Table 14: Distribution of Land Holding in Sambaturu Village

Size	Reddy	OBCs	SC	Others
>10 acres	75%	15 %	0%	0%
<10 acres	25%	85%	100%	0%

Source: Field survey 2018, Sambaturu Gram Panchayat

4.5 Socio-economic Facilities in Sambaturu

The 2011 Census of India gives a detailed picture about the various socio-economic facilities and physical infrastructural amenities available in the village. Sambaturu village has a primary school run by the government of A.P., from first to fifth class. The village does not have a Primary Health Centre and uses the Mandal health center, which is 5 kms away from the village. The village does not have protected water supply, they drink pump water and a few richer families have tap connection.

Communications network is essential to keep the inhabitants of this village informed about all the happenings in the district and as well as in the State. There is a

post office facility in the village. The villagers need to travel 5 kms to the nearest town, Kamalapuram, their taluk Headquarter, for any other modes of communication and other facilities. The village has no market facilities readily available nearby, and people have to travel 5 kms to get their provisions. Transport facilities are very poor in this village. Sambaturu village has a bus stop where ordinary buses halt, and for catching a train, they have to go either 5 kms and reach Kamalapuram to take the train or travel 15 kms to reach Yerraguntla to take a passenger train.

4.6 Socio-Spatial relationships of caste communities

According to the respondents, the village is divided into two parts, one is the main village, and the other is Palem, which villagers call as harijanawada. Reddis and other backward caste settlements are in the main village, and SCs settlements are in the 'Palem.' The spatial segregation along caste lines is clearly seen in the village. The Reddis are the socially, politically and economically well-organized community in the main village and have a high rank in the caste hierarchy. Though SCs are numerically more (90 households) in the village, it is the Reddis who are the dominant caste. Village festivals and cultural activities are conducted by the Reddy family which has the Palegarhs lineage. They call Brahmin priest from nearby towns to conduct festivals and other village ceremonies. Though Reddis are the temple heads, they show respect towards Brahmin priests.

"Earlier, in the village, there was only one temple in upper caste Reddis settlement, now there are two separate temples for both main village and Schedule caste hamlets. SCs were allowed to offer prayers in the temple in their hamlets. However, we find that the Brahmin priests hardly come for festivals and other celebrations in Scheduled caste hamlets. Festivals like Navami, Vinayaka chavithi and other major celebrations would happen in the main village" (Pratap Reddy, MPTC and a member of Putha faction).

In marriage, caste plays a key role in the village. Reddis and BCs do not encourage inter-caste marriages. Most of the marriages are endogamous. In case anybody gets married outside their caste, it is the Reddis who will call a meeting to decide the

future of the married couple, which could include social boycott of the couple from the village. However, such a situation has not happened in the village so far.

4.7 Caste relations

Sambaturu village is just like any other village in the Rayalaseema region, it is a multi-caste village. There are eight major castes in the village. The Table below shows details of major caste groups and caste wise households.

Table 15: Caste Wise Household details in Sambaturu Village

S.No.	Name of the Caste	No. of Households	Percentage
1.	Reddy	78	22.7 %
2.	Baliaja	4	1.1 %
3.	Yadav	85	24.7 %
4.	Chakali	5	1.4 %
5.	Mangali	1	0.2 %
6.	Doodekula	80	23.3 %
7.	Madiga	87	25.3 %
8.	Mala	3	0.8 %
9.	Total	343	100 %

Source: Statistical Data 2011, Sambaturu Gram Panchayat

The above table presents the caste distribution in Sambaturu village. There are 343 households in Sambaturu, with a total population of about 1374. Eight castes are represented in the village with the following distribution: 78 Reddy, 4 Baliya, 85 Yadav, 5 Chakali, 1 Mangali, 80 Doodekula, 87 Madiga, and 3 Mala families. While the single largest caste group are the Madigas, a SCcommunity, their social power is the weakest.

Table 16: Inter-Caste relationship between the Caste Groups in Sambaturu Village

S. No	Name of the caste	Serves	Is served by
1.	Reddy	None	2,3,4,5,6,7
2.	Baliya	1	3,4,5,6,7
3.	Yadav	1,2	4,5,6,7
4.	Chakali	1,2,3,5	6,7
5.	Doodekula	1,2,3	4,6,7
6.	Madiga	1,2,3,4,5	
7.	Mala	1,2,3,4,5	

Source: Field interviews, 2018

Table 16 gives the traditional pattern of inter dependent relationship between caste groups in Sambaturu village, as reported by the respondents. The Reddis are by tradition agriculturists and own the majority of land in the village which includes both agricultural land and the house sites (the land upon which the houses of the other castes are built). They are the principal Jajmans for the other groups and hence are served by all other castes. According to the traditional mode of ranking in the Varna system, the Brahmans are superior to the Reddis, but in Sambaturu there are no Brahmans. The caste groups of Sambaturu have traditionally been related to one another through the mutual obligations of the Jajmani system.

There are five Chakali (Dhobi) families in the village, and two of the family heads have turned to other occupations such as agricultural labor and the three remaining Dhobi families have Jajmani relations in the village. *“They receive money or grain for their work from each Jajman (Reddy) in a year. They also have inter-service relationships with Doodekula, Yadava, and Balija families in the village”* (Rama Krishna Reddy, Ex Sarpanch of the village and Leader of the Meegada faction). Though the Dhobis were, earlier, dependent completely on their local Jajmans for a living, they now have customers in neighboring villages where there are no Dhobi families. There is only one Barber family, now running a haircut saloon at the village main road. They have an inter-service relationship with all the castes in the village.

Pratap Reddy (an agricultural farmer and Gram Panchayat MPTC, belongs to Putha faction) said that ‘the greatest break with the Jajmani system in Sambaturu village has come from the SCs, traditionally the leather workers of India. They formerly removed their Jajman’s dead cattle, repaired their shoes and other leather objects, and helped them in agricultural work. While the SC population has increased, they are now getting an education and seeking jobs away from their traditional occupation, and some of them have moved out of the village to other occupations’.

However, leather work is still a major traditional occupation for SCs across India, and they are also dependent on the land as agricultural laborers. In this village, most of the SCs work, as agricultural laborers, in the fields of Reddy landlords and some of them depend on leather work. They also cut grass, carry wood, put up tents, carry bundles, act as watchmen and the like for officials; and this work is shared by all the SC families in the village. They collect and dispose the skins of all animals which die in the village. They have developed mutual feelings of hostility with the Reddis in last few decades. During the past 20 years or so with education and political consciousness the SCs seem to have been losing the sense of inferiority associated with their low caste status and untouchability. *“The reason is that as people get an education, some of them get government jobs and others get private jobs in the cities. Most of the educated SCs prefer to move to cities and nearby towns because of the better employment opportunities”* (Siva Reddy, an agricultural farmer belongs to Putha faction).

The SCs have been trying to raise their socio-religious status by following the practices of a higher caste. Their ties with Jajmans have weakened. Gradually they have given up repairing the leather shoes / Chappals and have been slowly limiting their traditional Jajmani obligations. The opportunity to enter schools is now a new channel towards higher status. *‘None of the older SCs in Sambaturu can read or write, but now 85 percent of their children aged 6 to 15 are attending school* (Vishnuvardhan Reddy, an Engineering graduate, son of Siva Reddy who was a member of Putha faction)’. Earlier, the SCs and higher-caste boys could not eat together, but now SCs, OBCs and Reddis sit side by side in the local schools. All these factors have led to a loosening of Jajmani ties and caste obligations.

In Sambaturu we find that it is only the Reddis and SCs who are involved in factionalism. The BCs in the village pose a peculiar challenge to understand their role in factionalism and its related violence. The BCs, unlike the SCs, socially and economically are advanced in nature and are not totally dependent on the Reddis for work. Most of the BCs hold small amount of land. In addition to the lands, they also indulge in their caste occupations which also act as an economic as well as social subsistence for them. They are not ritually impure, which gives them access to do economic transactions with the Reddis and other caste groups in the village and region. Considering these historical, social and economic reasons, it is possible the BCs did not get involved in factionalism. They are known to not support any political party openly, and do not take stands in favour of any of the factional leaders in the village. They maintain cordial relations with both the factions for their economic survival. This is aptly summed up by Yadav, a BC respondent, *“we are not active in politics or elections, though we usually support TDP. For us our community decisions are more important than that of a politician.”*

4.8 Factionalism in Sambaturu village:

The term “faction” refers to the group called ‘*Vargam*’ (group) at the village level in Rayalaseema. Although the constitution of a *Vargam* (group) differs depending on the caste composition in the village, it is primarily a group formed amongst the dominant caste Reddis headed by several oligarchic leaders (*Nayakulu*) who form a fairly stable core. *“Small villages consisting of less than 100 households usually acted as one political*

unit, but in the last five years or so, there has been an increasing tendency for these smaller villages to also be divided into factions of their own” (Lewis, 1954:3). In Sambaturu, the term faction is used specifically to refer to the “political conflicts” between upper caste Reddis.

In the main village, Reddis and some BCs are residing and in Palem part of village live the SCs. This Palem is away from the main village, a pattern seen in most Indian villages. In this multi-caste village, three fourth (78 households) of the population is agrarian upper caste (Reddy) which may be called the dominant caste. Reddis have the greatest socio-politico and economic dominance and influence on the village and the surrounding villages in the entire Kadapa district. The Reddy faction leaders play an active role in political affairs in and around the village and are the main instigators of factional politics in the village. In Sambaturu, the Reddis are divided into two factions, the TDP (Meegada) faction and the Congress (Putha) faction.

According to Rama Krishna Reddy (an agricultural farmer, Ex-Sarpanch of the village and leader of Meegada faction), “the main village area was the center of politics and factional activities. The Congress faction was more or less concentrated in the main village, whereas the TDP faction was predominant in the main village and also in Palem. The Reddis living in the village get support from SCs who are divided in their support to the two factions”.

While geographical or kinship units such as hamlet, lineage or household are not determining factors of factional membership, though they are related and influential. Even though in people’s conversations people living in a hamlet are called hamlet brothers. But this trend is not seen in Sambaturu. *In Sambaturu, we cannot see families of the same lineage belonging to different factions. Whereas in other parts of the district, there might be chances of family members living in the same household but supporting different factions or parties (Praveen Kumar Reddy, Contractor, relative of the leader of Meegada faction).*

Jajmani¹¹ relationships were not binding forces for political support. Reddis often want support from SCs in matters of daily domestic work, political and non-political matters. SCs need support from the Reddis and have taken a submissive attitude towards the dominant communities. Hence, SCs never committed to any one particular faction. It was necessary to maintain good relationships with all of them. *“If a SC member is committed to a particular Vargam (faction), there was danger of exclusion from families belonging to another Vargam (faction) and thus leading to loss of employment or work”* (Siva Reddy, who has considerable influence in matters concerning the village). Such an incident happened in Sambaturu. Some SCs showed commitment towards the Congress Vargam (faction), and as a result, they lost their patrons in the TDP Vargam (faction). This also impacted on the relatives who live in nearby villages, who get drawn into this conflict.

Non-Reddis in the village were not very politically active, and most of them seem to keep on the surface at least, neutral stances about factional politics. Each non-Reddy caste usually acts as one unit in electoral support towards a Vargam (faction). At each election, they secretly pledge support for one Vargam (faction) in return for promises of some benefits. The support, however, never seems to be constant and changes according to the political situation inside and outside the village level, as well as the personal relationships between faction leaders and the respective caste leaders.

People living in neighboring villages surrounding Sambaturu tended to stick together in their support for a particular faction. *“They were very conscious about faction groups and its consequences, so people do not make any commitment to any particular faction, probably in fear of changes in the power situation that would result in discrimination against them if the opposition came to power. At the time of the election, they carefully negotiate with the leaders of both the factions and secretly promise electoral support to one faction”* (Praveen Kumar Reddy, Contractor, relative of member of Meegada faction).

¹¹ Jajmani system, it is system of upper and lower caste relationship in the village.

Some of the main functions of factions are related to the control of the distribution of resources that flow from top to bottom through politico-administrative channels and to the organization of electoral support from bottom to top, to higher level political leaders whose participation in the ruling government ensures a flow of resources to the village level factions. *“Members of the Vargam (faction) whose supporting party is in power at the state government level can expect to get priority in the distribution of politico-administrative benefits, government posts, official contracts, pensions, police support, etc. Moreover, for this reason, the faction functions as the main supporting body of political parties at the time of elections at the village level”* (Sudhakar Reddy, member of Meegada faction). The village faction leaders are very vigilant about political situations at the higher level and are quick to form new personal ties with key politico-administrative figures as and when it is necessary for their respective faction.

The leaders of the village factions play a pivotal role in connecting faction members with higher political leaders - mainly with Members of Parliament (MP), Members of Legislative Assembly (MLA) - and with key offices outside the village - local administrative offices, police, and court - as the need arises. *“The faction leaders often visit Kadapa to meet and discuss various issues with such key persons. The leaders are usually better educated and are capable of helping faction members with various kinds of office work. They arrange for faction members, for example, to apply for various government benefit schemes and loans, register land purchases and sales, contact the police and negotiate court cases”* (Chinna Yella Reddy, Contractor, son of Putha Yella Reddy who was killed in factionalism). Faction members and other villagers depend largely on the leaders for help in these matters. The leaders also work to link their factions with other villagers not belonging to a particular Vargam (faction) and with the population of surrounding smaller villages. They act as political manipulators at times of elections and go around the village trying to convince people to vote for the candidates they support. They usually count on members of the same caste for votes, but convince members of other caste groups in the same village or other village members to support them or their leader.

4.9 The Factional Conflict Incident in Sambaturu

Sambaturu saw two major factional killing incidents in 1998 and 2000. There were two factions in the village, the Meegada (TDP) and Putha (Congress) factions. The Meegada faction was led by Ramakrishna Reddy an agricultural landlord in the village. There were five main leaders of the Meegada faction, namely Late Prabhakar Reddy, who worked as an STO in mandal office; Sudhakar Reddy, a DCC bank supervisor in nearby town Kadapa; Raja Reddy, VRO in the village, Bhaskar Reddy, a bank employee. At the time of the incident, they were all in their fifties, comparatively well-educated and their incomes were well above the average village standard. Putha faction had six main leaders, with Cheppal Reddy the head of the faction, and all of them were contractors and agricultural landlords. The sons of Cheppal Reddy were young active members of the faction in their mid-forties.

The incident in 1998 was triggered when the Putha faction dishonoured Mr. Prabhakar Reddy's (of Meegada faction) reputation by maligning his name through spreading rumors, about misuse of village development funds, corruption in conducting village festivals and dominance and threats during elections. It is common for men in the village to meet and gossip at Rachabanda (a place located at the center of the village used by men as a meeting place discuss village issues) in the village. Group meetings at Rachabanda are attended only by the members of the same faction. It is the place where men exchange information. However, when the matters concern sensitive issues within a faction, it is not possible to talk about them in public. The place for exchanging such confidential information is restricted to the fields of the faction leaders or in the leader's house.

In the year 1998, Panchayat elections were held in the state and R. K. Reddy (Meegada faction) was elected as the Sarpanch of the village and Saraswathamma (W/o Late Prabhakar Reddy, Meegada faction) who was the sister-in-law of R.K Reddy was elected mandal ZPTC member. During the elections, Putha faction attacked and killed Prabhakar Reddy in a bid to control the elections. After the assassination of Prabhakar Reddy, Meegada group filed a case against Putha faction. Because of this court case, the Putha and Meegada groups had to attend the court regularly. After this incident, Meegada

faction tried several times to attack Putha faction, but could not succeed. Meegada faction waited for a chance to kill Putha group members, especially those involved in the attack on Prabhakar Reddy.

Two years after the 1998 incident, Putha group members were traveling to attend the court summons in a government bus. Meegada faction used this opportunity and attacked them with bombs and other weapons. The incident in 2000, took place at Bojjavaripalli, close to Proddatur town where the case hearing had to take place. In this attack, seven members of Putha faction were brutally killed by the Meegada faction. As a result, 36 faction members of both groups were arrested, and all of them were acquitted by the court due to lack of evidence. Later the entire Meegada faction was forced to vacate the village due to police pressure and a threat of revenge from the Putha faction. Since then, the occurrence of factionalism has reduced in Sambaturu. Now the village is under the leadership of Putha faction Reddis (The State of A.P. Rep. By The Public Vs. Meegada Sudhakar Reddy and Others, on 13 March 2008).

4.10 Changing Power relationships

As mentioned earlier, political power in Sambaturu is in the hands of the upper caste Reddis, who were in Congress party earlier. After TDP was formed in 1980s, they were part of both Congress party and TDP. Since then, violence became an instrument to gain political power by cornering an individual or group. The political parties did not try to control factions because they needed this factionalism for their political mileage. The rate of faction clashes increased with the enactment of 73rd and 74th Amendments and there were frequent quarrels over and during Panchayat elections. In village politics, the SCs and OBCs became pawns under the Reddy dominance. 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts created a space for women representation in local body election. Despite reservations in local body elections, women and lower caste people in the village were not politically active. If a Sarpanch or any other position was allocated to the reserved category, the contestant had to show his loyalty towards Reddis. If a non-Reddy person became a Sarpanch, the Reddis would not actively support the Sarpanch until and unless the Sarpanch showed loyalty towards them. In Sambaturu panchayat politics the lower caste people are the ‘de jure’ members, in contrast, Reddis are the ‘de facto’ leaders. In other

words, the entire political power is vested with Reddis of the village and caste distinctions are very sharply drawn.

As discussed earlier, each caste has its inter-caste service relationship. Education, migration and social awareness among the people played an important role in breaking the traditional Jajmani relations in the village. The traditional bondage relationship between Reddis and SCs in the village started to erode slowly after education entered into villages and reservations brought several new employment opportunities for men. SCs then sought work wherever they could, and they did not always look to their Reddis to give them work. Earlier, each Reddy regarded his SC worker as one of his liabilities; now he does not have any responsibility for him. All these social changes led to weakening the traditional bonding relation between the different castes in the village.

4.11 Case Study of Sambaturu Village : Socio-economic Profiles of Respondents and Faction victims

Factionalism affected many families in the district. Because of frequent faction clashes, the family members of faction leaders were always in the grip of fear. Their children did not feel free to pursue their education moving out of their village. They remained at home to protect their parents and family. Sometimes the Govt. officials and others were scared of entering the village. They felt insecure if they worked against the will of faction leaders. Faction leaders and members' vehicles moved with fully armed bodyguards and followers.

After a long history of factional clashes with Putha faction, the Meegada faction members were forced to leave Sambaturu and they are now settled in different parts of the Kadapa district. At present, the Putha faction has legitimacy and control over Sambaturu village.

In the following section, the information gathered from the 30 respondents of Sambaturu is presented. The analysis of this data serves two objectives : 1) to provide a glimpse of existing socio-economic conditions in Sambaturu, and 2) more important, to focus on the victims of factional killings and their families in Sambaturu.

Table 17: Caste and Age Profile of the Respondents

S.No.	Caste	The Age Group of Respondents				Gender	
		20-30	31-40	41-50	Above 51	Male	Female
1.	SC	0	6	2	2	6	4
2.	BC	4	2	2	0	7	1
3.	OC	3	2	5	2	10	2
4.	Total	7	10	9	4	23	7

Source: Field survey, 2018

The above Table 17 shows that caste, age and gender profile of the respondents. Of the total 30 respondent, ten belong to SC, eight belong to BCs and 12 to Upper or other castes. Most respondents are below fifty years. Out of 30 respondents, only 7 are females (4- SCs, 2- Reddies and 1- BC). An observation from the field is that SC women appear to have more space and freedom when compared to other women in the village. Though the SC women were scared to share information initially, they opened up and shared their views and experiences after repeated meetings. However, it was difficult to get information from women of other castes.

Table 18: Education level of the Respondents in the Sambaturu Village

S.No.	Level of Education	SC		BC		OC		Total
		M	F	M	F	M	F	
1.	Illiterates	0	4		1	1	2	8
2.	Primary/ Secondary	6	0	4	0	5	0	15
3.	Graduation and Above	0	0	3	0	4	0	7
4.	Total	6	4	7	1	10	2	30

Source: Field survey, 2018

The above Table gives information regarding the educational levels of the respondents in Sambaturu village. All the seven female respondents are not educated. They are usually confined to household activities and agricultural labor in the fields. Out of total respondents, eight are illiterate (1 man and seven women). Twenty-two men are literate, of which seven have completed their graduation.

Table 19: Occupation Details of the Respondents

S.No.	Occupation	Caste			Total
		SC	BC	OC	
1.	Agriculture/ Agricultural labou	10	8	4	22
2.	Business	0	0	3	3
3.	Government Employees	0	0	3	3
4.	Politics	0	0	2	2
5.	Total	10	8	12	30

Source: Field survey, 2018

The above Table 19 explains the primary occupations of the respondents of Sambaturu village. An interesting feature is that most of the SCs are depending on agricultural related labor work and backward caste groups are also dependent on agricultural work. It can be seen that the more preferred occupation is either agriculture on their own landholdings despite meager returns, or working as casual labourers. In Sambaturu village, the largest number of respondents report agriculture as their primary occupation. Only a few Upper caste men are doing businesses like class-1 contractors, and some of them are connected with day to day politics at the village or constituency level. Three respondents (all Upper castes) are working as government employees (school teacher, Mandal officer, and police constable) and they have regular contacts with village elders and common people.

Table 20: Religion of the Respondents in Sambaturu Village

S. No.	Caste	The religion of the respondents			Total
		Hindu	Muslim	Christians	
1	SC	0	0	10	10
2	BC	8	0	0	8
3	OC	12	0	0	12
4	Total	20	0	10	30

Source: Field survey, 2018

Table 20 presents the religion of the respondents of Sambaturu. Twenty respondents belong to Hindu religion and remaining ten respondents belong to Christianity. Though the SCs were born as Hindus, they converted to Christianity as they were influenced by the Christian missionaries which worked for the upliftment of marginalized sections. This conforms to a trend observed in other parts of rural A.P. where SCs have converted to Christianity in large numbers..

Table 21: Land Ownership Details of the Respondents in the Sambaturu Village

S.No.	Caste	Land Ownership (in acres)		Total
		Cultivable	Uncultivable	
1.	SC	1 (0.6 %)	16 (44.4 %)	17 (9.3 %)
2.	BC	25 (17.1 %)	5 (13.8 %)	30 (16.4 %)
3.	OC	120 (82.1 %)	15 (41.6 %)	135 (74.1 %)
4.	Total	146 (100%)	36 (100 %)	182 (100 %)

Source: Field survey, 2018

Table 21 shows the land ownership pattern of the respondents in the village. All caste groups have some land in the village whether it is cultivable or uncultivable land. Scheduled Castes have 1-acre cultivable land and 16 acres of uncultivable land. This uncultivable land was distributed by the Government, which is infertile and not accessible to them for agriculture. OCs and BCs have the highest amount of cultivable land, and these lands are fertile and very accessible to their houses. Moreover, they are also having 20 acres of uncultivable land in the village. Reddis own most land in the village and this helps them to maintain the economic viability and control of factions.

4.12 Reasons and Views on factionalism in the village:

According to most respondents, the following are the reasons for factionalism in the village.

- For political power

- The continued dominance of caste relations
- To gain control over the resources like land and water
- To control other economic activities and Govt. schemes

While these are the generally accepted reasons for factionalism, during interviews, respondents associated with and those not associated with factionalism gave slightly different views as presented in Table 22.

Table 22: Views of respondents on factionalism

Views On	Respondents not associated with factionalism	Respondents associated with factionalism
Factionalism before 2000 incident	Not good	Factionalism benefited those involved in it
Factionalism after 2000 incident	Not good	Those who involved in factionalism realized that it is in fact destroying families
Intervention of Political parties and politics	Yes, factional violence has increased because of political parties	Yes, factional violence has increased because of political parties
Reasons for Factionalism	Land, Elections, Party affiliations and power	Prestige, Family Honour, village development

Source : Field Interviews, 2018

4.13 Profile of Victims of Factionalism in Sambaturu

Table 23: Profile of the Victims of Factionalism

S.No.	Name of the victims	Age	Faction Group / Caste	Political party affiliation	Year of incident	Leader / Follower/ Relatives
1.	Meegada Prabhakar Reddy	55	Meegada/ Reddy	TDP	1998	Leader
2.	Putha Cheppal Reddy	65	Putha/ Reddy	Congress	2000	Leader
3.	Putha Pulla Reddy	35	Putha/ Reddy			Relative
4.	Putha Raghunatha Reddy	30	Putha/ Reddy			Relative
5.	Putha Yella Reddy	50	Putha/ Reddy			Relative
6.	Putha Singa Reddy	25	Putha/ Reddy			Relative
7.	Putha Chinna Yella Reddy	30	Putha/ Reddy			Relative
8.	Moigalla Ramakrishnaiah	55	Putha/ SC			Follower

Source: Field survey, 2018

Above Table shows the details of victims killed by the two factions. There are eight members from both Meegada and Putha groups, who were killed in faction violence during 1998 and 2000. They had different political party affiliations that were trying to control the village. The range of age of faction leaders and members was between 25 to 65 years. Most of the victims hailed from the upper caste Reddis, and one was a SC member of the Putha faction. Factional politics in the village was not new to them as it was continuing from generation to generation.

Literacy of victims (Both Putha and Meegada faction)

Table 24: Education level of factional victims

S.No.	Education	No. of victims	Percentage	Name of the faction
1.	Illiterate	3	37.50 %	Putha
2.	Primary/Secondary	4	62.50 %	Putha
3.	Graduation	1		Meegada

Source: Field survey, 2018

The data shows that Putha faction has lower educational level when compared to Meegada faction. It is evident that even literacy could not prevent them from entering into faction feuds.

Family structure of the victims:

The family structure of victims is divided into two categories- joint and nuclear families that are shown in the following Tables.

Table 25: Family Structure of the Victims of the Factionalism in Sambaturu Village

S.No.	Type of Family	No. of Families	No. of Victims	Faction
1.	Joint Family	2	6	Putha
2.	Nuclear	1	1	
3.	Joint Family	1	1	Meegada
4.	Nuclear	0	0	

Source: Field survey, 2018

The above Table shows that the majority of the victims (7) come from joint families (*at the time of the incident*) and the rest of the victims (1) hail from nuclear families. Victims of factionalism in a village generally belong to a large family where the leader himself was the head of the family. Being a member of a larger family, the head had the advantage of having wider social contacts and support of the other members of the family (for example, siblings or their children). Generally, a larger family may have social prestige by having a large size of annual income, lands, properties, and authority. It is evident that the joint family relationships facilitate factionalism from one generation to another.

Economic profile of the victims:

The economic structure of the victim's family of both factions has been categorized into two classes, poor and rich as shown in the following Table below.

Table 26: Economic Profile of the Victims

S.No.	Financial position	Name	No. of victims	Type of occupation
1.	Poor	Moigalla RamaKrishnaiah (SC/Putha Faction)	1	Daily wage labor
2.	Rich (based on land holding size).	Meegada Prabhakar Reddy	7	Agriculture / Employee
		Putha Cheppal Reddy		
		Putha Pulla Reddy		
		Putha Raghunatha Reddy		
		Putha Yella Reddy		
		Putha Singa Reddy		
		Putha Chinna Yella Reddy		

Source: Field survey, 2018

Table 26 shows that majority of the victims hail from rich agrarian Reddy families and only one of them a SC, was a daily wage labor. The study suggests that power, prestige, and resources continue to be dominating drivers of factionalism in the village. The followers or members of factionalism were often the poor SCs, helpless and trapped in

factional politics. Most of the times, these followers lost their lives in trying to protect their leaders.

Moreover, in many cases, these victims of factionalism are often subjected to large scale violation of human rights. The Schedule Caste followers of a faction leader were denied their basic needs. These followers are forced to lead a life of hopelessness, and they often depend on factional leaders for their livelihood. Apart from that, these followers do not possess any kind of skill or talent either to lead an independent life or to give support to their family and children. So the followers depend on their leader for occupational opportunities to survive in their day to day life. The followers or non-leaders of the faction hail from poor economic backgrounds. *“As long as we work with Reddis, they support us financially and morally. But after any violence incident happened, the entire scenario gets changed. If the Reddy faction, that we are part of, has lost financially because of the fight, then we are left with no financial support and even moral support. No other Reddy is willing to come forward to give us any work. Not even agricultural work. As we do not have our own land to work on, we lack any support to meet our daily needs (SC member of Meegada faction).”*

Marital status of the victims :

The following Table gives information about the marital status of the victims of factionalism in Sambaturu village. There was an equal proportion of married and unmarried victims in the village.

Table 27: Marital Status of the Victims

S.No.	Marital status	No. of victims	Names
1.	Married	4	Meegada Prabhakar Reddy
			Putha Cheppal Reddy
			Putha Yella Reddy
			Moigalla Ramakrishna(Putha)
2.	Unmarried	4	Putha Pulla Reddy
			Putha Raghunatha Reddy
			Putha Singa Reddy
			Putha Chinna Yella Reddy

Source: Field survey, 2018

From the above Table we note that both married and unmarried men were involved in factionalism. Majority of the victims, who are married and victims of factionalism, had responsibilities toward their families and children, but got involved in factional politics of the village. The prestige and family pressure is another reason which may force a person to get involved in these unlawful activities.

4.14 Perceptions of Women in the Faction Family

According to the overall impression regarding factionalism, politics, and division of labor on gender lines in village, the politics of the village belongs to the general public sphere within which men participate, and women are confined to household activities. According to Ramulamma, a widow from the Reddy caste, who lost her sons and husband in factionalism “*women do not participate in politics and factional activities. The house and activities are strictly outlined as per gender and life stage of persons. We cannot imagine women attending faction meetings in the village*”. The public sphere is where men exercise their daily activities sees politics, faction feuds, village meetings, and elections. Much of women’s time is taken up by household activities such as cooking, cleaning, looking after buffalos, and performing rituals at certain times of the year in which women pray for the health and well-being of their husbands and children. A married woman’s primary duty is to keep her husband’s family happy by bearing

children, particularly sons, who continue the lineage, and by feeding members of the family. Women cannot interfere and discuss politics with men of the family.

Though the central subjects in this factional activity are often men, it impacts women immensely in all spheres of her life. So far, studies on factionalism have not shed light on how women are more affected and vulnerable rather than their men partners. Factionalism activity makes women responsible for something that they are not part of. This shows how caste dominance and patriarchal mindset of people are still putting the entire pressure on women.

4.15 Narratives of Women on Factional Violence

Presented below are narratives of two women from Sambaturu, one Reddy and one SC, who lost their male family members to factional violence in 2000. These narratives suggest how strong patriarchal structures continue to be in rural areas, and how it is finally the women, who are the victims, who bear the trauma of factional violence.

Ramulamma (Putha faction- Reddy) -- Ramulamma, who belongs to the Reddy caste (Putha faction), lost her husband and two sons in the factional related violence of 2000. She narrated the following story to express how factional violence changed her life.

“I got married to Chappal Reddy and came to live in this village from my maternal home. After a few years, we were blessed with two sons and two daughters. We own nearly 10 acres of land, which was our main source of income. When it seemed everything was going well for us, the factional related violence happened and destroyed my life and family. We belong to the Putha faction, who opposed the dominance of Meegada faction. Meegada faction members were descendants of Palegarhs and naturally have the advantage of dominance over the village. The Putha faction used to question their dominance and wanted to oppose them in whatsoever way possible. As the clashes got intensified, the Putha faction members, i.e., my husband and others decided to eliminate Meegada faction member. Meegada Prabakar Reddy was considered as key member in the Meegada faction, so the Putha faction eliminated him to

weaken the Meegada faction and establish the Putha faction dominance over the village.

The men do not like women getting involved and advising them on factional related matters. So, we do not have much voice in deciding how far the men can involve themselves in this factional related violence. These decisions are not discussed or shared with us. As it happened, Putha faction members killed Meegada Prabhakar Reddy. To take revenge, the Meegada faction members looked for a chance and after two years of Prabhakar Reddy's death, they killed seven members of the Putha faction while they were traveling in a bus to attend the court proceedings related to the Meegada Prabhakar Reddy case.

I lost my husband and two sons on the same day. Meegada faction members killed three male members of my family. This loss was devastating. I lost all the three male members of my family on a single day. I had to suddenly manage the land and also arrange marriages for my daughters. Now my daughters are married and living in Proddatur. They come often and help me to cultivate something in the land we have. I live alone in this house. I am old and have none to take care of me. All that I wish now is at least if I had a son to take care of me. This factional related violence not only destroyed my family but shattered my life and dreams."

4.15.2 Guramma (relative of the SC member killed by Meegada faction)

Guramma (informant choose to remain anonymous, and name of the informant is changed) is a close relative of the SC member who was killed by Meegada faction in the killings of seven putha members in 2000, murdered in the factional related violence of Sambaturu village. Guramma had observed the events very closely and narrated the story from her viewpoint. This interview was conducted to understand the perception of SC community women about the factional violence. Guramma narrated her story in the following manner.

"I am a relative of the family who is affected by factional violence. The Meegada faction killed seven members of the Putha faction in the year 2000. One of the members who was killed belongs to our caste (SC). The dominance of the

Meegada faction at the village level, such as deciding the village carnivals and settling the conflicts between the villagers and dictating the political affiliation of the villagers was opposed by the Putha faction members. Apart from this, the Meegada faction members were government employees. Meegada Prabakar Reddy's wife was elected as ZPTC of kamalapuram mandal. Their dominance in the political sphere and at the village level was severely opposed by the Putha faction, as a result frequent clashes between these two factions were witnessed in the village.

Both the factions had the support of the SC community. As the Putha faction killed Meegada Prabakar Reddy in 1998, the tensions were escalated. The Meegada faction sought revenge and killed seven members (6 Reddis and 1 SC member) of the Putha faction. The only SC caste member who was killed, was my relative. This particularly affected the family, which was poor and depended on its male head for their survival. The SC families were given help by the Reddis only if they get something out of it. The moment the male member of the SC community was killed, the Reddy family ignored the wellbeing of the SC family. As a result, the wife of the killed member had to struggle and suffer in order to survive. All that she (the wife) wishes now is to educate her children and get them some jobs in the city and move out of this village, far from this factional violence.”

4.16 Summary

One of the major reasons why the physical violence related factions have reduced in Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh is to do with the withdrawal of dominant castes from it. People have kept themselves away from violent factions in the region by realizing the value of money, time and more importantly, loss of loved ones. This has also happened with the withdrawal of dependent castes like SCs and OBCs from becoming members of factions.

Dominant castes have realized that they lost their political and economic base due to factions, and they invented alternative ways to compensate losses. People belonging to dominant caste have altered their options to survive in ways which benefit them. They

have started to gain control on the available natural resources and also continue to dominate the downtrodden caste communities for their political power by cornering government projects, schemes and distributing them to chosen followers. Though the upper caste seems to have changed their accumulation strategies by cornering state benefits, they have realized the importance of support base from other castes to gain political power. Rhetorically they might say things like “we are all equal” “we take care of your interests” in trying to get the political power. However, they decide who gets state benefits thereby having control over them.

The lower caste communities have transformed due to the benefits of reservation and education and the emergence of social movements like MRPS (Madiga Reservation Porata Samiti), and Mala Mahanadu. These movements led SC communities to be exposed to state and national level caste politics. As a result, people became aware about opportunities, employment, and welfare schemes for the community. This led them to lead a life on their own, thereby reducing their dependency on the upper castes. These kinds of changes can also be observed in the OBC communities with their strong caste association activities for community development. Political consciousness among the SCs and OBCs has grown, and this has changed village politics.

Based on these outcomes from the field study, this chapter discusses how the influence of various factions changed the dynamics of power and caste politics. These can be observed through the upper caste community activities in the village and their relationship with the lower caste communities, which have a bearing on how change occurred over the years. One important observation is that upper caste communities, unlike before, show a changed form of assertion of power over lower caste communities, due to the invention of new forms of oppression and exclusionary practices. So, though there is a reduction in the violent factions in the region, the economic and social status of lower caste communities continue to be the same as there is an unequal distribution of resources among the caste communities and an unchanged caste relations.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Rayalseema region in general and Kadapa district in particular are well-known for the violent culture of factionalism. This social evil has created social unrest in the region. Factionalism is an acute rivalry that exists between two groups, families or castes in a village or place resulting in alternate and continued violence between the groups. This phenomenon is peculiar in Kadapa, Kurnool and Anantapur districts of Rayalaseema. This study focused on the formation of factions in a selected village, Sambaturu in Kadapa district. The village study seeks to understand the dynamics of factionalism at a micro level, the profile of victims of factionalism and perceptions of families who lost their son or husband to factionalism. At the micro level, in the villages, factions are formed due to various reasons such as land disputes, for village supremacy and claims over resources.

5.1 Factionalism in the available literature

Several studies have analyzed factions in two ways, namely, factions at village and factions at the regional level. At the village level, it is the competition between groups for power, prestige and supremacy in the village. Whereas in the context of politics it is between the members of a party to occupy the party organization.

The major focus of the existing studies has been on the formation of faction, growth and their characteristics at village level and political party level. These studies have looked extensively in the line of the following three questions: (i) what are the functions of factions? (ii) How factions are forming and existing? Moreover, (iii) the recruitment of members in a faction? However, one of the limitations of these studies is that the question of intense violence between different factions has not addressed adequately. This study attempted to understand the nature and dimensions of factional violence by taking Rayalaseema and Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh as a case in point.

This study focused on factionalism and politics. Since independence factionalism became part of politics. Political leaders used factionalism to achieve their political aspirations in the region. Conflicts for personal prestige are the dominant characterization of politics in the village that explains factionalism. Caste is an important factor in the formation of factions in the village. The feeling of caste superiority is a natural phenomenon in the villages. In Rayalaseema, the upper caste Reddis are divided into sections like Palegarhs and non-Palegarhs; each of them is claiming superiority over the other. Sometimes the conflict occurs over the lineal descent, the inheritance of property and adoption of a male child for succession.

5.2 History of factionalism in Rayalaseema:

The history of factionalism can be traced back to the Vijayanagara Empire that existed in sixteenth-century AD in South India. The Vijayanagara Empire introduced the Palegarh system to collect the taxes on behalf of the Empire. The Palegarhs had sole power in administering the villages, and they were the head men of the villages. But the Palegarh system is not enough to understand present-day factionalism in the region. One of the other reasons for the existence of factionalism may be the economic backwardness of the region (scarcity of resources). After the decline of the Vijayanagara Empire, this region came under the rule of Nizam of Hyderabad and later was given to British as ceded districts. The Palegarh system was abolished by the British government. Even after the abolition, the system of Palegarhs continued to exist for a long time. After independence, this Palegarh system underwent changes (with the rise of political parties) and developed into factionalism in the district.

Soon after the independence, these Palegarhs started entering into a business like a civil contract, arrack, and toddy business and they played an important role in electoral politics. Most of the leaders from this region became chief ministers and ministers of the State. The advent of Panchayat Raj institutions brought a new momentum in factionalism. Faction leaders started controlling the elections by creating fear among the public using violence. During the post-independence period, Congress was the ruling political party in the state for a long time. At the village level, factions emerged due to various reasons such as controlling village, land disputes and supremacy over others. Sometimes these

faction leaders approached party leaders for legal and political protection. They worked for them and organized people of the villages as vote banks for different political parties.

5.3 Factionalism and Caste:

The dominance of the Reddy caste group in the Rayalaseema region would often be challenged by someone in the village from the same caste group. This would invariably be either a big landowner or an otherwise powerful man, by his closeness to the ruler of the area or the political parties that are dominant in the region. Rayalaseema presents a case of both, intra-caste and inter-caste factionalism, with intra-caste factions being more common.

These dominant caste groups traditionally had a patron-client relationship with the other service providing caste groups of the village. The service providing caste groups such as Mangali (barber), chakali (washermen), Balija and golla (yadavs) are affiliated with the Reddy caste group through an indirect relationship as they have some service to render. However, Mala and Madiga (SC) families who are mostly agricultural labourers, inevitably depend on the landowner for their livelihood. They sell their manual labour unlike the other service providing caste groups in the region. This leads to a close but unequal relationship between these Reddy and SC caste groups in the region. This is also one of the major reasons that, the SC groups get forced into and fall victim to factionalism in Rayalaseema. The SCs are mostly used by the Reddis as pawns in factional conflicts, in settling scores with their rivals.

5.4 Convergence of Factionalism and Politics:

After the emergence of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in the 1980s, the entire factional scenario changed in the district and region as well. Reddy political and factional leaders became part of two parties – Congress and TDP. Leaders who did not get a chance to contest in the elections joined TDP. Since then the rivalry between the two factions got manifested as the rivalry between the two major political parties. The factional leaders who were seeking support from the political leaders started to enter politics and became politicians. The village level leaders had aspired to become mandal level and district level leaders. These village-level faction leaders were patronized by MLAs and MPs for their

continued existence in the politics and to have a base firmly rooted in the villages of the region. The state level leaders used the existing factional conflicts to continue their political hold over the region. This culture of factions led to murders and counter-murders in political parties such as Congress, TDP and the newly established YSRCP. When a political party formed a government, the factional leaders belonging to the ruling party took advantage of their political power and indulged in eliminating their rivals. This also led to many factional leaders frequently shifting their political allegiance to the party in power. This saw an interesting practice in keeping factionalism alive, by regaining power through political parties, using the political strength to keep themselves safe, and eliminating rivals.

5.5 Decline of Factionalism in the Region

It is quite evident from the study that factionalism and political violence are closely associated. They are known to create social unrest and turmoil in Rayalaseema. The micro-level analysis of the situation was carried out by studying Sambaturu village in Kadapa district. The study argues that, land relations play a key role in the structure of factionalism. Patron-client relations between the land owning Reddy caste and landless agricultural labor SC communities reinforces factional feuds in this region, by forcing membership for the factions from SC communities. The leaders and majority of the victims of factionalism were from the socially, economically and politically advantaged sections of the society, i.e., Reddy caste group. However, there are a number of members and victims who are from the lower castes.

The *jajmani* relationship between the Reddy family and the other caste families affiliated to them in the village, has loosened over the last few decades. This is particularly noticed between Reddy and SC families. Modern economic opportunities, various government schemes aimed at empowering the SCs, reservations, aspiration of the SC families to get their children educated and migration to the towns/cities for better future have all helped to empower the SCs to break free of old bondages. Land distribution programs by the government helped the SC families to become independent, at least partially. Various government schemes such as giving loan to start a business or

skill development aimed at improving the lives of SCs also had an impact on the decline of factionalism in the region.

Dalit identity assertion movements such as Madiga Reservation Porata Samithi, Malamahanadu and utilization of positive discrimination policies by the Dalits paved the way for the Dalits to realize that they are being made scapegoats in this political violence in the region. This opening up of new opportunities for the SCs, is one major reason for the decline in size of factions and factionalism in Rayalaseema, as it is no longer easy for the Reddis to force members from the SCs into factions.

5.6 Consequences of Factional Violence

Post-trauma decisions of the victims and their families after violence, not to participate in factionalism was observed in both SC and Reddy families. Reddis do not actually participate in the direct conflict, they merely plan, guide and fund the political violence. It was mostly the SCs who were involved in the action and became victims of killings or got arrested in the police action following the violence. The consequences of factionalism and its adverse effects pushed the lower caste SC families into a deeper crisis when they lost the breadwinner of the family due to factional killings. For the SCs death of an earning male member was critical as they had no other source of income or ancestral property to fall back on and were hence the most vulnerable. For the women who lost men to factional violence, whether they were Reddis or SCs, it was a traumatic experience of suddenly having to take on the role of the male head of family. For SC women, it was even more difficult as the intersections of caste, class with gender, saw them the most disadvantaged.

5.7 Correlating Research Questions with Findings

- ✓ **How does the history of Palegarh system in Rayalaseema region influence the continued occurrence of factionalism?**

Traditionally Palegarhs derived their power and dominance through the zamindar (who were Reddis) and their role in collection of taxes. In this process they also acquired considerable amount of land as private/family property. After independence, the Reddis tried to retain their dominance and power by resorting to factionalism. The opportunity to

participate in the modern democratic political institution paved way for the convergence of factionalism and political violence. Time and again, the Reddis during elections, used the means such as land, violence, regional dominance, political power, economic wealth, in order to keep factionalism alive and going.

✓ **What are the caste dynamics of factionalism in Rayalaseema region?**

Factionalism is mainly perpetrated and maintained by the local dominant caste i.e., Reddy and Kamma (Anantapur district). Though, a few other upper castes (Kapus) were also dragged into factionalism, it was limited to only one part of Kadapa district. The BCs and SCs of Rayalaseema are forced into factions due to the traditional landlord and agricultural laborer relationship in rural areas. The BCs and SCs do enjoy some benefits of being faction members, but are also the most vulnerable victims of factional violence.

✓ **How does socio-economic power intersect with political power in Rayalaseema region?**

Because of the traditional land owning privileges enjoyed by the local dominant castes of the region (Reddis and Kammas), it paved way for them to grab the opportunity cornering all Govt. schemes and contracts for roads, liquor, mining and other economic activities. While this gave the upper castes economic power, participation in the political arena saw them consolidate this power. This was clearly evident from the rush to join mainstream and regional political parties in the region, and led to bitter rivalry between factions belonging to different parties. Their political participation reinforced their continuous economic activities and vice versa.

✓ **How do the families of victims affected by factionalism cope and perceive factionalism?**

Post traumatic decisions of the victims and their families not to participate in factionalism, is observed both, in the SC and the Reddy families. Reddis do not participate in the direct action, they merely plan, guide and fund the political violence. It was mostly the SCs who get involved in the action and fall prey either as victims or get arrested in the police action following political violence. In the case of Sambaturu

village, the killing of a large number of Reddis in factional violence in a single incident, was an exception.

5.8 Concluding Comments

This study was a preliminary exploration into understanding the various aspects of factionalism in Rayalaseema, a region known for its long history of factional violence. While there have been a number of studies on factionalism, most focus on its political dimensions. While this study recognises the importance of the politics of factionalism, it also attempts to draw attention to its socio-economic aspects, particularly trying to understand the nature of factionalism at the village level. It must be admitted that this study is only a small effort in mapping the many facets of factionalism. It is hoped that some of the questions raised in this study will provide directions for further research.

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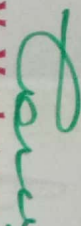
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