

CHAPTER - V

KALA VENKATA RAO -THE GIANT OF KONASEEMA POLITICS

Kala Venkata Rao was one of the great political leaders from South India. He was a man of upright character, full of public spirit with noble intentions and always believed in the virtue of dedicated and selfless service. He was strong and sturdy in personal appearance. He was endowed with keen political insight and exhibited extraordinary political skills and craftsmanship. He was one of the top leaders of Andhra Pradesh and served the country in various capacities.

EARLY LIFE AND INFLUENCES

The study of a political leader calls for a study of his adolescence and adulthood, especially traumatic events or personality crises that may have significantly influenced his subsequent behaviour. It is therefore relevant to make a brief examination of Venkata Rao's childhood and adolescence, in order to explain how they influenced his subsequent behaviour and thinking.

Kala Venkata Rao was born on the 7th July, 1900 at Mukkamala village of Ambajipeta Mandal, in Konaseema. His ancestors migrated to Undi from Kalidindi village of Krishna District. His grand-father Ayyagari sastry who was a native of Undi village of West Godavari District moved to Nadipudi village of the same district by adoption. His father Brahmayya and his mother venkamma belonged to a middle class

Brahmin family of cultivators. Brahmayya, the father of Kala Venkata Rao settled at Mukkamala at his maternal grand father's house after his mother's death. Kala's mother Venkamma died when he was just three years old. His aunt, Sreedhara subbamma, loved him very much and she took care of him. He had his primary education at his native place, Mukkamala and secondary education at Middle School, Pulletikurru and Board High School, Amalapuram.² During this period, he used to read news papers and journals like Andhra Patrika, Krishna Patrika, etc. in Bala Bharati Library at Mukkamala. He was greatly influenced by these news papers and journals.³ He married, Rajeswaramma, daughter of Duvvuri Venkateswarlu, village Munsiff (village officer) of Mukkamala on the 20th April, 1914. His father-in-law was a great patriot, philanthropist and gentleman. Kala joined

Intermediate class in Maharaja's College, Vizianagaram in July, 1917. He passed Intermediate and joined B.A. in the same college during the academic year 1919-20. Kala Venkata Rao arranged a farewell party to the fellow students in March, 1920. Veluvali Veera Raghavaswami, a class-mate of Kala Venkata Rao wrote a poem "The fools of victor Town" criticising the British Government and recited it in the party. The Principal, who was an English man could not tolerate this. He suspended Kala Venkata Rao and 6 other students. After the student's agitation, the Principal revoked the suspension of the other students but Kala Venkata Rao was sent out of the College as he happened to be the

ring-leader of anti-British feelings in the college. Thereupon Kala did not waste his time and joined senior B.A. class at Noble College, Machilipatnam. While he was studying in Noble College, he attended the meetings of the political leaders. He was greatly influenced by the speeches of prominent freedom fighters like Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Mutnuri Krishna Rao Pantulu and Cherukuvada Narasimham Pantulu.⁴ Mahatma Gandhi also visited these parts of Andhra region and made a fervent appeal for what was then called triple boycott. Those were the days of non-co-operation movement. Mahatma Gandhi gave a call for the boycott of law courts, educational institutions and legislative bodies. Kala Venkata Rao, who was bubbling with enthusiasm responded to this call. He gave up his studies and jumped into the fray.⁵

In him, was there a happy blend of twin virtues of sacrifice and study. When his declaration of giving up of his education in a meeting held at Buttayipeta Hall in Machilipatnam on the 7th February, 1921, Pen Dhora, the Principal of the Noble College wrote a letter to Kala's father asking him to send his boy to College for the remaining 7 days so as to complete his B.A., course. On receiving this letter, his father was very happy to know his son's entrance into the freedom struggle and he advised the Principal to encourage his son.⁶ Kala Venkata Rao received such an encouragement and support from his father. For him country is more important than studies. In fact many of his friends requested him to just complete his term of 7 more

days but he had to choose either the college or ⁷ command of the Mahatma and he preferred the latter. He became one of the vigorous exponents of the Gandhian Movement. He suffered imprisonment several times during the freedom struggle at the ⁸ cost of his health. He took the degree of Samaj Vidya Visharada (Bachelor of Social Sciences) in 1923 from the ⁹ Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Ahmedabad, established by Sardar Patel.

THE MAKING OF A POLITICIAN

Kala used to tell his friends that his father-in-law was responsible for his entrance into politics. Kala Venkata Rao was introduced to the practical politics of the province by ¹⁰ his father-in-law and he came to know many Andhra leaders. While studying S.S.L.C. class in Board High School, Amalapuram, he began his political activities. He worked as an election agent to his father-in-law who contested in the Taluk Board elections. A meeting of the East Godavari District students' union was held at Amalapuram in April 1917. Kala Venkata Rao was responsible for the successful ¹¹ conduct of the meeting by guiding the voluteers.

He attended the 4th Andhra Conference held at Kakinada along with his brother-in-law, Mrutyunjaya Somayajulu alias Babayya. A stream of his friends used to meet him at his residence for his guidance. People found in him a great leader even at the tender age of 17 years. He was very much ¹² interested in Social Service from the beginning. While he

was studying Intermediate at Maharaja's College, Vizianagaram, he participated in Municipal election campaign in support of his teacher, Prof. M.Venkatarangaiya, who was elected. With this experience, he contested in Students' Union election of Maharaja's College and got elected Secretary of the Students' Union in 1918. He attended the East Godavari District Conference as a leader of volunteers held at Razole in 1919. He held the post of the Secretary of the Students' Union again while studying the degree class.

Kala Venkata Rao attended all India Congress Committee meeting held at Vijayawada in 1921 as a Volunteer. He was appointed as lieutenant of left petrol. He had the opportunity of seeing national leaders at that meeting. He discharged his duties to the satisfaction of one and all. Admission of new members, collection of Tilak Swarajya fund etc. were organized by Kala Venkata Rao. ¹³ When he saw Mahatma Gandhi approaching the meeting, he felt just like ¹⁴ Prahalada had darsana of Lord Narasimhaswamy.

After he had given up his education, he got acquaintance with the East Godavari leaders like B.Sambhamurthy, Dr.B.Subrahmanyam, V.Satyanarayana and J. Ramachandra Rao. Very soon he became one of the important leaders of the East Godavari District. P. Gurumurthy, M.Tirumala Rao and M.Annapurnayya were his friends. He started Swayam Sevak Sangh and membership increased day by day. The members used to respect Kala Venkata Rao just like the members of

Ramadandu respected their leader Duggirala
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Gopalakrishnayya. It was under the leadership of Kala
Venkata Rao, Freedom Movement was organized in Konaseema.
Since 1921 he had been an active participant in the struggle
for freedom and Social reforms. Under the congress banner,
he was one of the founders of the Gouthami Satyagraha Ashram
at Seetanagaram, which was established for the promotion of
Social reforms in Andhra. He preached equality of all
religions and worked for the eradication of untouchability
through the Ashram. He helped Pattabhi Sitaramayya in
founding many basic schools in Godavari districts and also
established several Khadi Centres in the Andhra region.
Gradually, by dint of his ability and steadfast work, he
began to occupy important positions not only in Congress but
also in the Co-operative movement. He rose to the much
coveted position of the General Secretary of the Congress
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while Dr.Pattabhi Sitaramayya was its President.

HIS SERVICE TO THE CONGRESS ORGANIZATION

He always worked untiringly for the growth of the congress
Party. His association with the Congress has been long and
intimate. His keen intelligence, devotion to duty and
capacity for hard work were a source of great strength to the
Congress particularly in Andhra Pradesh. 17
B.S.Murthy, the
Deputy Minister, Government of India, who belonged to
Prakasam group said that Kala Venkata Rao's loyalty to the
party was all pervading and it could easily be said that he

was to the Andhra Congress what Sardar Patel had been to the
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Indian National Congress.

P. Ranga Reddy said that he was a stalwart among
Congressmen who had risen to the position of General
Secretary in the organization from the lowest rung by dint of
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hard work, sacrifice and suffering in freedom battle.

According to S. Nijalingappa, he was an organizer par
excellence. It was due to the unqualified efforts and sacrifice
and organizing capacity of Kala Venkata Rao that the Congress
in Andhra had contributed so much towards the success of the
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freedom struggle throughout.

He was elected to Taluk and District Congress Committees
in 1921. A convention was held at Kakinada in which Kala
Venkata Rao moved a resolution to boycott the visit of the
Prince of Wales. He also supported Purna Swarajya resolution.
He was elected to the State Congress Committee and other
subordinate committees in 1923. He was also elected
Secretary to Amalapuram Town Congress Committee. He made
arrangements for the Congress meeting held at Kakinada in
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1923.

He was elected Secretary District Congress Committee in
1924. He attended All India Congress meeting held at Belgam
presided over by Mahatama Gandhi. Elections for Taluk Board
were held in 1925. It was because of Kala Venkata Rao's

leadership, Congress got all the six seats in erstwhile Amalapuram Taluk. Congress secured 7 seats out of 12 seats contested for Amalapuram Union Board. On his request Mahatma Gandhi visited Konaseema in May, 1929.²²

Kala Venkata Rao was elected to All India Congress Committee in 1929. He attended the All India Congress meeting held at Lahore presided over by Jawaharlal Nehru in December, 1929. He also attended the Ahmadabad Congress meeting held on 21st March 1930 which endorsed the resolution about salt Satyagraha passed by the working committee on 14th February. He spoke in a meeting held at Bombay presided over by Jamanlal Bajaj. He was elected to District Congress Committee as one of the Secretaries in 1930. He organized Salt Satyagraha movement in East Godavari District.²³

He was elected Secretary to District Congress Committee once again in 1931. He attended Karachi Congress meeting presided over by Sardar Patel. While he was at Karachi, he read in the news paper that people were fired at Vadapalli chariat festival. He immediately rushed to the spot. He helped not only bereaved families but also 36 innocent patriots who were arrested by giving necessary legal aid and released them.²⁴

The State Congress Committee was reorganized in 1934. K. Nageswara Rao Pantulu and A. Kaleswara Rao were elected the President and the Secretary respectively and Kala Venkata Rao was elected Joint Secretary. In 1935, leadership of State

Congress Committee changed. Tangututi Prakasam Pantulu was elected President and Balusu Samba Murthy was elected Secretary. Kala Venkata Rao continued to be the Joint Secretary. It was only because of the efforts of Kala Venkata Rao, that Congress secured majority of seats in West Godavari District Board. He performed the duties of the Secretary for about 5 months when Sambamurthy was seriously ill.

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He was elected to the All India Congress Committee and attended the meeting held at Bombay in 1937. He also attended the All India Congress meeting held at Calcutta in May 1939. The State Congress Committee again elected Kala Venkata Rao one of the Joint Secretaries in 1939. Elections for district Boards were held in 1939 and it was because of his efforts, Congress got 42 seats, out of 52 seats.

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In 1940, there was a rift among Congress leaders in the District Board elections in Krishna District. The State Congress Committee appointed a review Sub-committee consisting of Kala Venkata Rao and Subbarami Reddy to iron out the differences among the leaders. Again he was elected Secretary to the State Congress Committee at a meeting held at Machilipatam defeating Kommareddy Satyanarayana. He was also elected to all India Congress Committee. Elections for the Madras Legislative Council were held in 1940. Congress secured all the seats in Andhra except in Krishna District. Kala Venkata Rao visited all the Districts to supervise and prepare the list of members participating in the Individual

Satyagraha movement in 1940. He was twice²⁷ arrested and released on January 10, 1942.

After attending the All India Congress meeting held at Warda on January 13, 1942, he took oath of office as the Secretary of the State Congress Committee. He issued a show cause notice to Bulusu Sambamurthy for his activities against Alahabad resolution. The State Congress Committee meeting was held at Amalapuram on June 18, 1942. Later it met at Madras to examine the disciplinary action to be taken against Bulusu Sambamurthy. Bulusu Sambamurthy resigned from²⁸ the membership and speakership of legislative assembly.

Kala Venkata Rao was responsible for the drafting of the famous Andhra Circular in July 1942. He was arrested on August 12, 1942. T.Prakasam Pantulu advised Kala to deny the²⁹ drafting of Andhra Circular. He did not accept his advice. He was detained under the preventive detention Act from 1942³⁰ to 1945. He was the General Secretary of the Andhra Provincial Congress from 1939 to 1946. N. Sanjeeva Reddy, the first Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh recalled Kala Venkata Rao's important role in the 1942 movement and said, if the Congress in Andhra worked so well during those historic days, it was he who was chiefly responsible. In this context his name was mentioned even in the British³¹ parliament. He was appointed General Secretary of All India Congress Committee in January 1949 by its President, Pattabhi Sitaramayya. He resigned from the post of Revenue

Minister in preference to the post of General Secretary. The resignation was accepted by the Governor to take effect from the afternoon of January 24, 1949. In this connection, Pala Venkata Rao made a statement in the Legislative assembly. His devotion to Congress was remarkable. For him party is more important than anything else. After paying his gratitude to the Hon. the Premier who had given the chance of being a minister incharge of the land revenue portfolio for twenty two months, he emphasised that the Congress had to guide the destinies of this country and there was no other institution so widely organized and with such great ideals and with such a big programme as the one adumbrated by the greatest man ever born in the world, Mahatma Gandhi. Therefore he advised whether one was a minister or not, it was the duty of every Congress man to undertake the service. According to him, service was the ideal of the Congress, it must be service inside the Legislative Assembly or outside. ³² They could not make a distinction between the two.

He sacrificed the post of minister to serve the Indian National Congress, the mother institution. In the words of Pattabhi "It was really great thing to give up the post of revenue minister to hold the post of General Secretary of the ³³ All India National Congress. From January, 1949 to September, 1951, he was the General Secretary of the Indian National Congress. As General Secretary, his talents were recognised by the leaders of all political parties. He

played a dominant role in the political arena in Andhra and he exhibited his sagacity as the General Secretary of the Congress.
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As the Secretary of AICC, Kala Venkata Rao made an indelible imprint on the issues of: 1) Co-ordination between the Congress Party and the Government. (2) The central control over the provincial units of the Congress Party in order to enforce discipline and check the rise of factionalism in the party. He drafted detailed and systematic notes on these issues. He advocated a clear role for the working committee and Parliamentary Board of the AICC in the affairs relating to party government co-ordination, and the central control of party over the provincial units.

Through the notes, he suggested that an annual meeting of the Council of Ministers and office-bearers of the party on the eve of the budget session of the legislature should be held for discussion on all important proposals of legislation in the year. This must be followed up by monthly meetings to review the co-ordination between the party and government. He suggested that the party is solely concerned with policy formulation and it should not interfere with the day-to-day administration of the government. He also argued that the Parliamentary Board should oversee the affairs of the party units in the provinces and check the spread of factionalism. These proposals of Kala Venkata Rao were considered and accepted by the AICC, but were not put into practice due to

the hard realities of power politics of congress system. Professor Stanely A.Kochanek aptly observed that the systematic thinking of Kala Venkata Rao on these issues "even today this approach is considered to be one of the best means of party government coordination".³⁵

When he was the Health Minister of Madras State in September, 1951, he also held the office of the Vice-President of Andhra Congress Committee which he resigned in March, 1954 because of disagreement with the Government's decision permitting Statewide tapping of Neera.³⁶

A GOOD PARLIAMENTARIAN

He was a great parliamentarian being a member of the Legislative Assembly and the parliament. As a legislator, he was very effective. He was elected to the Madras legislative assembly from Amalapuram General Rural Constituency in 1937. He took oath of office on July 14th, 1937 in the first session of the First legislative Assembly under the Government of India Act, 1935.³⁷ He was the first member to put a question in the first session of Madras legislative assembly. His question was about the reduction of the water cess in respect of lands under the Polavaram Island project in Konaseema.³⁸ He participated in the discussion on the Budget in the first session. He supported the Budget and explained the policy of Government clearly. The opposition attacked the Budget from four points of view, namely, hand

spinning, prohibition, land revenue and salaries. Speaking on these four points, Kala Venkata Rao argued that it was the responsibility of the Government to provide some kind of employment that was within the reach of the common man, to the man who was able to render some little help unto himself. The spinning wheel brought light where there was no illumination and gave him food everyday where there was not even a morsel of food. He added that hand spinning was the only panacea for the evils that existed that day in our country. As regards prohibition he said that there was no doubt that the scheme of prohibition would succeed even in its first attempt on the 1st of October. And the fear that had been entertained in some quarters that as a result of that policy, the toddy drawers would become gangsters; if not employed had no basis and even assuming that some of them would resort to illicit distillation, there would be Congress gun men with Gandhi Caps and sweet tongues to check any lapses in the matter and work for the success of the policy of prohibition. Next, he referred to the question of land revenue. It had been stated by the opposition that the provision of 75 lakhs remission was not sufficient to meet the conditions in the country. He questioned the opposition if the premier had ever said that it was sufficient and premier himself stated that he had under his consideration proposals for exploiting alternative source of revenue. They were many and the chief of them was to tax the Zamindars. Rack-renting in Zamindar areas should go and new sources of

revenue should also be found from these Zamindari areas. Therefore Kala Venkata Rao said that their future programme would be based on helping the agriculturists. Then he referred the question of the rural indebtedness. He said that with a new orientation of the policy of co-operation, they could achieve much in the redemption of rural indebtedness and he hoped that it would be done. Lastly, he brought to the notice of the house a few local grievances pertaining to his district. He mentioned the question of the Polavaram Island project and requested the premier to see that tax was reduced in that area to the normal delta rate, viz., Rupees five. Then he mentioned about the Torrigadda project. It was a stream that came from the hills and discharge in the Godavari when the river was in floods, the flood water would go on through this opening and the water of combined rivers would submerge 40 villages in and around Torrigadda. From 1872 the Government had been making efforts to have an outflow sluice. But for various reasons it did not materialise, Kala Venkata Rao requested that under the Madras Famine Code some help might be rendered to them. ³⁹

He brought to the notice of the Madras legislative assembly a number of issues during 1937-39 also concerning the proposals for taking over the control of Rameswaram channel in the East Godavari district, reduction of water rate in the Godavari delta, Recruitment of Commissioner of Municipalities from the ranks of district Panchayat officers and district Board Secretaries, proposal to strengthen the

flood bank surrounding the Peravaram village, construction of a tidal lock near Gopayalanka in the Godavari Central delta, measures for the revitalization of the co-operation movement, Representations regarding the construction of a reservoir in the upper Godavari region, reamalgamation of the group-III District Boards, progress of the scheme of the construction of a bridge across the Godavari at Alamuru, land revenue remission on dry lands in East Godavari, relief measures proposed to be given to the Ryots affected by floods and cyclone in the lankas in East Godavari, creation of linguistic provinces etc. were some of the proposals raised ⁴⁰ by him in the Legislature.

He made many suggestions to the Government by participating in the general discussions of the Budget for 1938-39. He suggested that progressive taxation should be the wisper for the future. He also suggested a 'turn over' tax on all foreign goods sold in the Madras Presidency and tax on inherited wealth. As famine was raging in Rayalaseema, he appealed some permanent relief be afforded to that area. Before closing his speech, he mentioned a few local grievances in his district. He drew the attention of the Revenue Minister to the need for remission of water rate in the Krishna and Godavari anicut systems. He made a request again about the Island Polavaram Project In Konaseema. That project was opened in 1929 and it was estimated to irrigate an area of 17,500 acres and the water rate was fixed as high

as rupees ten and a half. After three years, the cultivable area fell down and came to 7,000 acres. Then the Government found out the mistake and decreased the tax to rupees seven and a half. The poor people there were unable to pay even the revised tax as the land being saline in nature. Further-more, it was a far higher rate than the rate collected in the delta. Kala Venkata Rao argued and appealed on behalf of the poor people of the Island Polavaram to reduce the tax to rupees six and a-quarter i.e., the post settlement rate that was in vogue in all the deltas of the area. Then he mentioned the Coringa project. He said that this project was sanctioned as early as 1914 but the war intervened and so it was abandoned at that stage. It was a productive project and would yield a good return to Government, and he hoped that the Minister for public works would touch upon that. Then he added that there were other small schemes like the Peravaram high level channel project with rotation supply of water with Kanur; water supply schemes for Sankaraguptam, Antervedi and Tadikonda and the construction of few tidal locks and other projects. He hoped that the Minister for Public works would undertake these works also.

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He was again elected to Madras Legislative Assembly from Amalapuram General rural constituency in 1946. While participating in the General discussion on the Budget for the year 1946-47, he mentioned the question of social services. He made a comparative study of importance given to social

services in different countries. He said that in England they would spend as much as 25.95 percent of their State income on Social Services and in Australia 17.5 percent. But in India, they would spend only 8.5 percent of their Revenue on Social Service of every kind. They could spend much of their income on Social Services. He suggested that the additional funds that the Government would provide in the future should go towards the enlargement of the Social Services in the rural areas. He said that he had no objection to industrilization as such; but for the industrilization of the plough he was not prepared. According to him, they must give an instrument perhaps an improved one, but should not mechanize the plough in this country and thereby destroy once and for all the basis of the rural economy.⁴² He was of the opinion that the agrarian policy of the State must combine and solve all the three problems together the problem of tenure, the problem of tenancies and the problem of taxation and unless those were tackled together, there could not be any desirable progress in the agrarian sector in our country. He suggested that there must be revolutionary scheme of land reforms. The first item of the programme of the Minister was to bring about tenancy reform that would be revolutionary in character and lands should be allowed to pass from the actual cultivators to mere rentiers. It was calculated that 70% of the cultivated land in this coutry was being cultivated by people who did not actually own that land. This was a thing

which would require quick reform. Therefore he said that the system of ownership should be made the foundation of rural economy. There must be only the Government and the cultivating tenant and that cultivating tenant should be the owner, the manager and the labourer, all combined into one and agrarian problems could be solved if that was brought about. Then he came to the question of land taxation. Uneconomic holdings should be exempted from taxes and the principle of progressive taxation should be introduced into the system. Regarding lanka lands, he suggested that there should be comparative reduction in rates or bid amounts in case of erosion. He pleaded for a comprehensive legislation for affecting the reforms he had mentioned. As an immediate measure, he suggested the abolition of the Revenue Board's standing orders.

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Regarding irrigation, he suggested a more integrated plan considering Andhra conditions. They were : (1) Vamsadhara and Nagavali group and (2) Godavari, Krishna and Pennar group. He also suggested two big dams at Ramapadasagara site and Sangameswara and a wide and deep canal should also be dug from Godavari and allowed to fall above to Krishna anicut. Similarly there should be also a canal dug from Sangameswara site and allowed to fall in the Pennar above the Nellore anicut, whose shutters could be raised. Then Pennar would be available for total use in Anantapur district. That arrangement was very urgently needed for that district as it

had a very scanty rainfall. Therefore, he suggested that the new constitution must provide for a declaration to the effect that every river is a national or federal property and that no parts can obstruct its multi-purpose utilisation.

He was a gifted debator with prodigious memory and thorough grasp of the subject with almost encyclopaedic knowledge of many matters. During his jail days, he devoted his time to voracious reading and cultivated the habit of preparing elaborate notes. This attitude of his that he was ever a student in life helped him to have a mastery over the subject.

He used to rebut the arguments of the opposition by abundant quotations coupled with ready wit. His speech in the Assembly was full of quotations. He used to quote eminent people. For example, while speaking on the report of the Madras Estates land and Enquiry Committee on January 23, 1939, he quoted from a Rajput song.

"Bhog Ra Dhanni Raj Ho

Bhum Ra Dhanni Ma cho"

"The Government is the owner of the tax and I am the master of the land". Further he quoted Cool broke. Cool broke says in his essays, "The Monarch has not the property of the earth. His earthly power is for the Government of the realm or the collection of taxes". He also quoted Muhomadan authorities "He who has the tribute from the land has no property in it' - Modena Shari Bazz.

'Whoever cultivates land does thereby acquire the property of them' Mohamed in the Heday, fourth chapter.

Kala Venkata Rao emphasised that all these authorities would show that even in the pre-historic periods the proprietorship of the soil vested in the Ryot. He also quoted justice Muttuswami Ayyar 'According to what may be termed the Hindu Common law, a right to the possession of the land is acquired by the first person who makes a beneficial use of the soil'.

That was the state of affairs at the time of the permanent settlement. He therefore contended that the proprietorship
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of the soil vested in the Ryot.

While speaking on the Budget for the year 1946-47, he said that Finance was not merely arithmetic and it had a great policy behind it. In this connection, he quoted Mr. Gladstone, the Prime-Minister of England. Gladstone once stated, "Budget in a thousand ways go to the root of the prosperity of individuals, the relations of classes and the strength of
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nations".

Kala Venkata Rao was elected member of the Constituent Assembly in July 1946 from the Madras Presidency. As a member of the Constituent Assembly, Kala Venkata Rao made some suggestions to the issues relating to the drafting of the constitution. Kala Venkata Rao and Ananthasayanam

Ayyangar worked together in presenting their views for making amendments to the draft constitution. He was very much interested on issues relating to Fundamental rights.⁴⁸

MAIN PILLAR OF EVERY CABINET

Kala Venkata Rao functioned as the main pillar of every Cabinet in which he was a member. He was a popular minister in Madras Presidency. Taminlnadu always used to hail him as versatile minister.⁴⁹ In 1946, he was elected to the Madras legislative assembly from Amalapuram constituency and became the Revenue Minister in 1947 which post he held from March 28, 1947 to January 24, 1949. He held the post of Revenue Minister with great dexterity. During this period, he introduced and successfully piloted the following important bills.

(1) The Madras Estates land (Reduction of Rent) Bill, 1947 :

The bill sought to reduce the rents in Zamindari villages to the level of the Ryotwari rents in the neighbourhood. It was a well known fact that the Zamindars were charging rents at exorbitant rates in almost all the estates throughout the Presidency. He said that it was the duty of the Government to see that these rents were reduced and the Government had decided that the reduction should be to the level of Ryotwari rents in the neighbouring areas. He added that there would have been no necessity to move the bill except for the fact that the bill to abolish the permanent settlement itself

would take a little time to become law and if they waited till that bill became law, the tenants in the Zamindari areas would not get immediate relief.

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(2) The Madras Estates Communal, Forest and private lands (prohibition of Alienation) bill 1947 :

An ordinance in almost similar terms of the bill was promulgated on the 27th June, 1947. The terms of the ordinance were passed into an Act., so as to achieve its objects on the 18th October, 1947.

The need for this Bill arose on account of a large number of complaints that were received against landholders. This bill was practically a temporary one in view of the forthcoming measure relating to the abolition of Zamindaries. This should have effect till the actual abolition of Zamindaries took place and prevented the land holders from forcible occupation and abuse of the communal land and lands defined as forest land, porambokes etc., and also with private lands.

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(3) The Madras Estates (Repeal of the permanent settlement and Conversion into Ryotwari) Bill 1947 :

The main object of the bill was to abolish the Zamindaries and then vest the rights in the Government and then proceed with the settlement, settle the basic annual sum, the compensation payable, its mode of payment, the scale of payment of its apportionment etc.

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(4) The Tungabhadra project (Prevention of speculation in land) Bill 1947 :

This Bill was intended for a particular purpose. The purpose was only to prevent speculation in land. The Bill was intended to control the ownership of land. A provision was made to acquire all land owned by any person in excess of fifty acres purchased after October, 1944.

(5) The Malabar Irrigation works (Construction and levy of Cess) Bill 1947 :

Malabar was a single district and had an area of 5,790 square miles and a population (1941 census) of 39,29,425. The annual average rainfall of the district amounted to about 117.9 inches. But it was a curious thing that this district was deficit in regard to its food requirements. There was one irrigation work worth mentioning in the taluk of Palghat, and this was acquired from a private individual in 1902 for the good sum of Rs. 3,152. It yielded a revenue of about Rs. 240 per annum. Of course it was a good investment but unfortunately for an area of over 5,700 sq.miles and a population of nearly 40 lakhs and with an area where food production was in deficit, and that this safe irrigation alone should exist all these years with no attempt to bring irrigation facilities to that area was rather curious. The bill wanted to improve the position. In the post-war scheme

there was provision for irrigation facilities, major and minor. To execute such works the Government should get certain legal power so that legal obstacles may not stand in the way of constructing dams and other irrigation facilities. 54
So the bill was intended to get such legal powers.

(6) The Madras construction of Buildings on wet land (prohibition) Bill, 1948 :

The object of the bill was to prohibit the construction of building on wet lands which were producing food. The Government was aware that there was housing shortage and there was need to construct new buildings. But while the food situation had not improved, the Government could not allow it to deteriorate. That was why the Government had to give priority to food. The Government had received many applications from every corner of the province for the acquisition of lands for house building. If that was left unchecked, there was the possibility that houses might be built on wet lands which produced food for them. Therefore the Government thought that by some kind of control, they could see that this did not go off at a tangent. That was 55
the purpose of the bill.

(7) The Madras Land Requisition and Acquisition Bill, 1948 :

The purpose of this bill was to acquire certain military lands and military buildings which had since been requisitioned by the Government. Some of them had been

re-requisitioned and some had to be acquired also. The process was not complete and therefore, the government had to take some powers in continuation of the Defence of India Rules. The bill would not apply ordinarily to every body and every place. Two additional purposes were added in that Bill, the housing of Refugees, and the storing of food grains.
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(8) The Madras Irrigation Tanks (Improvement) Bill, 1948 :

This was a bill under which the Government proposed to acquire power to improve and repair all tank-bunds in respect of dilapidated tanks in general. This was one of the few bills which had received much support from all the Members of the House.
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His talent found their full vent in his piloting the Zamindari Abolition Bill, a great land-mark in the history of Indian legislatures. He successfully piloted the Zamindari abolition bill as the Madras Estates (Repeal of the permanent settlement and conversion into Ryotwari) Bill, 1947 first of its kind to receive the Governor General's assent.

Then what is meant by Zamindari system?

During the period of East India Company, Lord Cornwallis introduced the permanent settlement in Bengal in 1793. Under this system, the Zamindars who were only the agents of the Government were declared full proprietors of the areas where they collected land revenue. The land revenue assessment was

fixed at ten eleventh of what the Zamindar collected as rent from the cultivators, the balance going to the Zamindars as remuneration. The system gave an open hand to the Zamindars and land lords to extract the highest possible rent from the cultivators. They in effect became a parasitic class interested only in extracting the maximum rent from the peasants. The system of permanent settlement was also extended to Madras. The attempt ran into difficulties. ⁵⁸

Strong sentiments against the Zamindari system had already grown before independence. In 1928, the All India Congress Committee declared that the abolition of land lordism must occupy a prominent place in their programme. The absentee land lords were accused of being oppressive and in general the high rents charged from the tenants were frittered away on conspicuous consumption rather than help capital formation. In the absence of any State interference, the absentee owners exploited the actual tillers by indulging in rack-renting, evictions and be-gar (services without payments). Abolition of the Zamindari system to be replaced by a system of "land to the tiller" became a part of the national movement for political and economic independence from the alien rule. ⁵⁹

After independence high priority was given to the abolition of intermediary tenures (Zamindars). Accordingly, every state enacted its own legislation to abolish this tenure system on the payment of compensation. Basically,

the law provided for the State take over of the estates of Zamindars on payment of compensation and offering their ownership to cultivators on their payment of fixed sums. ⁶⁰

While speaking on the objectives of the Bill, Kala Venkata Rao said that theirs had been a land of Zamindar's glory and peasant poverty. In the light of social justice, they had to set right that inequality. They must care for that person who produced their food, his family and his social welfare and said that legislation was only the first step in achieving that objective. He said that they must take a number of other steps in order to create a living interest in the man that tilled the lands. In order to achieve that object many statutes had to be brought. He quoted Lord Wavell who said that they must lift the poor man of India from poverty to security from ill-health to vigour and from ignorance to understanding. Kala Venkata Rao added if they wanted to achieve all those objects they must gird up their loins and would do their best for the cause of the tiller of the soil whose welfare was their main concern. They had to march with the times. They were in a social service state and they had to look into the condition of millions of ryots who were toiling under various burdens in various parts of the Madras Presidency. He said that he wanted to reform the system in a manner which would help the common man, the tenant and the first step in their social legislation, was the abolition of Zamindaris. Other measures would follow in due course. He hoped that by that measure they had well and

truelly laid that foundation and therefore the tiller of the soil and the common man, who had been toiling throughout his life would be able to look ahead and be a free and happy man. He said the policy of his Government was not right, not left ⁶¹ but forward.

At the end of the speech on the Bill, he stated that it was a long way from Cornwallis to Kala Venkata Rao; more than 150 years had gone by. That day the permanent settlement was going the way of many age old things which had been tottering on their pedestals. When States went and were going away, estates could not continue to stay in the country and they need not feel sorry for the changes brought by the change of time in the country. They did not have anything against any particular estate. The time was ripe. The old system was going away. ⁶² The bill was passed.

Inspite of the political differences he laid the credit of Zamindari abolition Bill at the feet of his Guruji, T. Prakasam. In his own words "Sir, in this connection, I would like to point out that inspite of the slight political difference which my honourable Guruji Prakasam Garu might have with me, and inspite of the few harsh words that he might have said against me during this one year and odd, I may say that if there is any credit that is given to me by the number of members who spoke during the third reading, I must lay that credit at the feet of my Guruji because I have

been his very close follower for a number of years and I have learnt many things from him. Even during the days of the Estates land Enquiry in 1937, I was with him and had the opportunity of going through a number of records. I was also taken into his confidence with reference to a number of matters concerning this legislation. If I have any ideas with reference to the abolition of the estates and the life, I must say with all my heart that I owe much to him. Therefore, Sir, whatever he might have said against me, I will take it as his blessing and nothing else."

N.Sanjeeva Reddy, the first Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh pointed out "From Cornwallis to Kala was an era thereby epitomising the outstanding contribution made by the deceased statesman in abolishing the vexatious Zamindari system in the composite Madras state."

Kala Venkata Rao resigned from the post of Revenue Minister in preference to the post of General Secretary, All India Congress Committee in January, 1949. The resignation was accepted by the Governor to take effect from the afternoon of 24th January, 1949. The Hon. Premier of Madras State, O.P. Ramaswamy Reddier had addressed a letter of appreciation to the Minister, Sri Kala Venkata Rao and for the benefit of the House, it was read by B. Gopala Reddy in the legislative Assembly in the afternoon of January 24, 1949. The text of the letter is as follows.

" Dear friend,

I cannot tell you without poignant feeling of sorrow. I have reconciled myself to the loss which the Cabinet suffer by the acceptance of your resignation which takes effect from to-day. On behalf of the Cabinet and on my own behalf, I wish to express my great appreciation of the invaluable services you have rendered to the province during the twenty two months you have held office as Minister for land revenue. You have written your name in the imperishable letters in the history of this province by the admirable way in which you have successfully piloted the Zamindari Abolition Bill. With this feather in your cap, you bid fair to win greater distinctions in the wider field of service open to you in your office. While my heart feels the wrench of separation from such a wise and sagacious colleague and esteemed friend, I can only find consolation in the fact that you will hereafter utilise your great talents and abilities for the larger good of the country as a whole. I wish you God speed in your new task. May God grant you strength and wisdom to discharge efficiently the onerous responsibilities of your high office and inspire you to render selfless and devoted service to the country.

With regards.

Yours sincerely,

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Sd/ O.P.Ramaswamy Reddier.

From January, 1949 to September, 1951, he was the General

Secretary of the Indian National Congress. In the next Congress Presidential election held in 1951, Acharya Kripalani and Purushottam Das Tandon contested with each other. It was a keen contest and the two great leaders; Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel were supposed to be the real contestants behind the scenes; propping up their candidates. Many speculations were current in Delhi on the previous night as to how the election result was likely to turn out, and in the end, Purushottam Das Tandon was declared elected. That displeased Jawaharlal so much that he could keep up 'face' only with much self restraint. The strange thing was that while Pattabhi was dropped from the working committee, his protege Kala Venkata Rao was to continue as a General Secretary. A few months after the new President took over, it became known that Jawaharlal could not bear with the Secretaries. So he demanded their resignation, but Tandon did not agree. Thereupon Nehru resigned from the Working Committee. It became necessary for Tandon, the President, to resign so that Nehru could be appeased. Thus, Nehru pitch forked himself into Presidentship; earlier Secretaries who became obnoxious to him were dismissed including Kala Venkata Rao. Immediately after his arrival at Madras, he was offered the post of Health Minister by the Chief Minister, Kumar Raja. He accepted the offer and held the post from September, 1951 to February, 1952. He served on two Committees i.e., as a member of the Select Committee appointed to consider the Madras Forest (Amendment) Bill,

1951 (L.A.Bill No.27 of 1951),⁶⁷ and as a member of Joint
Select Committee appointed to consider the Madras Medical
Registration Amendment Bill, 1951.⁶⁸ As minister for health,
he tried for the development of the Hospitals in the State.
He encouraged post graduate research in three subjects
obstetrics and Gynaecology, Anatomy and Venereal
diseases.⁶⁹ All those students and doctors who were desirous
of doing research work were given facilities for these
post graduate courses.⁷⁰

As a Minister, he had the patience and understanding to
listen to the representations made to him by the opposition
parties.

After independence, the first general elections were held
in 1952. Kala Venkata Rao who contested as a Congress
candidate for the Madras legislative assembly from Amalapu-
ram double member constituency was defeated by N.Ramabhadr
Raju of Kisan Mazdoor Praja party, who belonged to Prakasam
group with a big margin of 52,962 votes. It was the first
and last defeat in his life time. He was not the only candi-
date who was defeated at the polls. The other leaders and
Ministers like B.Gopala Reddy, K.Chandramouli and V.Kurmaiah
were also defeated. N.Sanjeeva Reddy, the President of the
Pradesh Congress Committee met a similar fate in the hands of
his brother-in-law, Tarimala Nagireddy, a prominent leader in
Communist party.⁷¹ The main reason of their defeat was that
they had lost the good-will and confidence of the public

because they had removed Prakasam by sponsoring no-confidence motion without stating any reasons or charges against him, just because they manoeuvred to gain a few more votes. Secondly, Prakasam and others raised against them many serious allegations of misuse of public funds and governmental authority. ⁷² Pattabhi's group came out with all vengeance to bring certain charges against Prakasam. People were fed up with this attitude. Prakasam too was defeated from Madras. Ranga's party Krishikar Lok party lost miserably. Majority of the seats were won by Communists in ⁷³ CIRCAR districts and Congress in Rayalaseema.

Meanwhile Andhra State was formed on the 1st October, 1953 and Tanguturi Prakasam Pantulu became the first Chief Minister of Andhra State. His Government remained in office from October 1, 1953 to November, 1954 until it was removed from office by no confidence motion. Mid term elections were held in June, 1955. Kala Venkata Rao was elected to the legislative Assembly from Kothapeta constituency of Konaseema. Bezawada Gopala Reddy formed the Government on July 1st 1955. Kala Venkata Rao became Minister for planning. He was also allotted Industries and Public ⁷⁴ health. As minister for planning, he drew up a plan for each village though it could not be implemented for various reasons. The plan revealed not only the interest he had in the uplift of rural fold but also his grasp of the problems ⁷⁵ of the poor living in the rural areas. He appealed to all

political parties to co-operate with Government for the successful implementation of the second five year plan. An Advisory body was constituted to advise the Government for State planning, and Rupees 35 crores was allotted for the industries during the second five year plan. Glass factory at Gudur was developed and National extension programme was implemented in 16000 villages.⁷⁶ He said that Government was ready to help those people who came forward with 50 percent of the share capital for the establishment of medium sized industries. He was responsible for the development of Hospitals in the State. He laid foundation stones for a number of Hospitals in the State. Sri Kolluri Subba Rao memorial American Hospital at Amalapuram was one among them.⁷⁷ He increased seats in the medical colleges of Visakhapatnam and Buntur from 85 to 110 and from 50 to 55, respectively. Pathology department was opened in Visakhapatnam medical College. He started three Honorary Medical Units in Visakhapatnam. Under public Health Medical Head, Rupees 8 crores was sanctioned for new schemes. Malaria eradication units were opened in tribal areas. Family planning clinics were opened in a number of places in the State in 1956. He tried to root out corruption in Hospitals.⁷⁸

Andhra Pradesh was formed on November 1st 1956 by the Reorganisation of States Act. N.Sanjeeva Reddy was elected leader of the majority party in the Assembly and formed the government with 13 ministers. Kala Venkata Rao was allotted

Finance, State Insurance, Commercial taxes and land reforms. Although his health was not altogether satisfactory, he agreed to serve in the Cabinet at the request of N.Sanjeeva Reddy, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, and he shouldered a very heavy responsibility.

The Cabinet was reshuffled on March 31st 1958 and Kala Venkata Rao became Revenue Minister. He was allotted Revenue, land reforms and excise. He held this portfolio till his death on the 28th, 1959. He held the portfolios entrusted to him efficiently. He had made deep study of co-operative farming methods adopted by China and systems of land holdings in other parts of the world with a view to accelerate the progress of land reforms in the State. He will always be regarded as one of the pioneers in the sphere of land reforms in South India.

N.Sanjeeva Reddy, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh while paying tributes to late Kala Venkata Rao in the legislative Assembly on March 28th 1959 mentioned Kala Venkata Rao as 'his friend, philosopher and guide'. He said that he had the proud privilege of having been associated with that colossus for more than two decades and used to marvel at the keenness of his intellect, the brilliance of his analytical arguments and cogency in his thought provoking replies. He introduced the scheme of Zamindari abolition in the Madras State. Each one of the Circulars which used to

emanate from his hands as the Congress General Secretary was the outcome of the detailed and comparative study of the subject. Indeed, some of them had been the subject of discussion even in the Parliament of England. Sanjeeva Reddy likened Kala Venkata Rao to a lodestar and said that he had the rare quality of completing any arduous task entrusted to him with ease and grace, what others should learn from his life was the disciplined way in which he controlled the activities in his life.

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HIS ROLE IN THE FORMATION OF ANDHRA

The part played by Kala Venkata Rao is no less significant in the formation of Andhra State in October, 1953. He joined hands with A.Kaleswara Rao and T.Prakasam pantulu who tried for the formation of Andhra State. These leaders were convinced that interests of Andhras cannot be protected except in a separate State.

While presiding over the Ugadi (Telugu New Year) function organized by the Andhra Association of Secretariat held at Fort St.Jorge Jus theatre on April 11th, 1948 at Madras, Kala Venkata Rao, Revenue Minister of Madras State hoped that the next Ugadi function would be held in Andhra State. While he was speaking on the occasion, he gave the statistics of the Andhras working in Secretariat. Out of 800 employees working in the Secretariat, only 170 employees were Andhras. That was only 26 percent of the total posts. According to the population, Andhras should get at least 40 percent of the

total posts. He supported the reorganisation of States on linguistic lines. ⁸³ His endeavours towards the formation of a linguistic State of Andhra are not to be censured as they were in conformity with the general trend of linguistic regionalism prevalent in India at that time. ⁸⁴

The All India Congress Committee appointed a three man committee consisting of Pattabhi, Patel and Nehru to report on the necessity of the formation of Andhra State. Kala Venkata Rao helped the members of the Committee to prepare the report which was known as J.V.P Report. J.V.P Report suggested that Andhras should give up their claims to Madras if the Andhra province were to be formed. To examine this report a partition committee was appointed. Kala Venkata Rao and T. Prakasam were on the Committee. ⁸⁵ It is quite unfortunate that the two Andhra Leaders, Kala Venkata Rao and T. Prakasam did not have identical views even on vital issues concerning the interests of Andhras in composite Madras State. They used to exhibit their pettyminded group politics on every issue and thereby harmed the interests of their people unwittingly.

Consequently on March 31st, 1949 in the election for leadership of Congress Legislature Party, Kumaraswamy Raja with the support of the Pattabhi group defeated Dr.P. Subbarayan who had the backing of the Prakasam group. Negotiations over the number of places in the first Andhra Ministry to be given to Prakasam group failed. The Andhra

provincial Congress Committee demanded a judicial inquiry into the charges against the Madras Ministers such as Kala Venkata Rao, B.Gopala Reddy and others of Pattabhi group. To complicate the issue further, the Tamilnadu Congress looked at the question as a Tamil versus - Telugu issue, and wanted a probe into all the charges against all the Madras Ministers since 1946.⁸⁶ Forty of the seventy Andhra legislators said to belong to the Pattabhi group and supporters of Kala Venkata Rao requested Nehru and Patel to form the Andhra State by January 26, 1950 and plans were then finalised as to who should be in the new Cabinet; Kala Venkata Rao should be the first Chief Minister of Andhra and S.P.Mukerjee was thought of as the Governor. T.Prakasam Pantulu submitted his dissenting note to the Partition Committee report at this juncture out of fear that if the new province was formed then, his group would lose its hold on both the ministerial and the organizational wings in Andhra. So the whole issue came to be bogged in that dilemma of the Andhra, whether to have the province without Madras or to wait a more favourable opportunity in future. When the Government shelved the issue, Prakasam complained to Patel that Pattabhi and Kala Venkata Rao, the President and Secretary of the Congress respectively were interfering in the Andhra provincial Congress Committee affairs.⁸⁷ Had T.Prakasam accepted the report of the partition committee, Kala Venkata Rao would have become the first Chief Minister of Andhra State.⁸⁸

Kala Venkata Rao mentioned about the Andhra province in the Madras legislative Assembly on March 3rd 1950 while participating in the General discussion on the Budget for the year 1950-51. He said that he had interest in Andhra province personally and also as an Andhra. He regreted that it was very unfortunate due to circumstances beyond their control they had not been able to achieve that on January 26, 1950, and added that it pained them really, and personally speaking he did not feel that there was any justification for the postponement of the formation of the province. Sometimes, it was felt that it would be a moth eaten province that it was being evolved. But he felt that if they wanted to create a province according to the conditions imposed on them by the Government of India and the Working Committee, it was beyond the capacity of anyone big or small to bring into being that province except by compromise. He advised that they must be reasonable and sit round a table and come to some conclusion. The problem was not insoluble if they continue their efforts. With the good-will that was prevailing between them, it would be possible to arrive at a Compromise formula which the Government of India dared not reject. He appealed through the members of the House to the Treasury benches to take such steps as they deem necessary to push on with the work of creating a separate province and satisfy the Government of India about the conditions imposed for the creation of the province. He said that he was

certain that every member of that House would stand behind the Government in order to achieve the object which was dear to one and all of them.

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The advent of the Andhra State and the later formation of a number of new States based more or less on linguistic affinity would not have become possible but for the terrific heart rending and supreme sacrifice made by that noble Andhra, Potti Sreeramulu who fasted unto death in 1952 on the issue. Sreeramulu's death and its immediate sequel compelled the Central Cabinet into hastening to declare its readiness to form the Andhra State and to appoint a Committee to study the whole question of reorganization of States. At last the Andhra State was formed on October 1st 1953.

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CHANAKYA IN ANDHRA POLITICS

Kala Venkata Rao was popularly called by the title of 'Chanakya' in Andhra politics. When the Hindu Correspondent at Makinada told him about it many years ago, Kala Venkata Rao replied that it was not news to him. He said that many friends used to call him to his face by the title of Chanakya. But that he himself did not feel any exultation or shyness when styled "Andhra Chanakya".

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Kala Venkata Rao was a person who knew his job and how to do it. He was proficient in the art of political schemes, intrigues and manipulations. So much so he was known as Apara Chanakya. B. Gopal Reddy, Kala Venkata Rao, K.

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Chandramouli, M. Pallamraju and others who belonged to Pattabhi group did not find berths in ^{the} Madras Ministry headed by T. Prakasam in 1946. B. Gopala Reddy, an important Congress leader of Andhra who aspired for the Chief Ministership tried his best with the help of Kala Venkata Rao to dislodge Prakasam from the State leadership. Finally they had succeeded in removing Prakasam by sponsoring no-confidence motion against his Ministry. The schemes and manipulations of Kala Venkata Rao helped Pattabhi group to dethrone the Prakasam Ministry. While criticising the action of Kala Venkata Rao, Krishna Patrika described it as Vrudda Simham Joolu Lagina Kala (Kala has shaken the mane of the old lion).⁹³ That old lion was no other than Prakasam. Prakasam was known as Andhra Kesari. Kesari is a Telugu word which means lion.

After his removal, T. Prakasam while speaking in the Madras legislative Assembly stated that as he did not accommodate an evil genius in his ministry, he had to lose his Chief Ministership. That evil genius was no other than Kala Venkata Rao. Had T. Prakasam inducted Kala Venkata Rao in his Ministry in the beginning, he would have been a successful Chief Minister in Madras State.⁹⁴

The machinations of Kala Venkata Rao were amply rewarded by Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, the President of the All India Congress Committee by appointing him the General Secretary of Congress in January, 1949. N.G. Ranga, the Kisan leader in

the Congress alleged that Kala Venkata Rao gave up the powerful Revenue Ministership in the hope of dislodging them from the A.P.C.C leadership through his influence and machinations as the General Secretary of AICC. He complained that Dr.Pattabhi and Kala Venkata Rao who had been opposing him and his followers eversince 1931, continued their ⁹⁵ nerve-racking guerilla political warfare against them. Elections for Andhra Congress Committee were held in April, 1951. N.G. Ranga who had already been the President of Pradesh Congress contested again and was opposed by Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy. Kala Venkata Rao could tactfully bring District Congress Committee together in West Godavari District. Kala Venkata Rao and others made promises to people unscrupulously. Kala Venkata Rao stated that he recruited a lakh of people as members of congress party and remitted to the party account a membership fee of four annas each from the amount he collected from the business organizations. The culminating achievement of Kala was that 25 elected members from Guntur who would have supported Ranga group could not take part in that election, owing to the injunction orders obtained by his friends from the Courts. Ranga who was hopeful to win with a majority of 7 votes, had met defeat with a margin of 4 votes. Thus, Kala's game had won the day. Kandula Obul Reddy of Ranga's group could not ⁹⁶ match himself to the machinations of Kala Venkata Rao.

His schemes and manipulations were well known to the people of Andhra again in the next Presidential elections.

Soon after B.Gopalareddy became the Chief Minister in 1955, the President of Andhra Congress was to be elected. Alluri Satyanarayana Raju was the candidate from Sanjeeva Reddy's group and Ranga was the opponent. Ranga was away touring abroad. In spite of G.Lachanna's and K.Obul Reddy's best efforts, Ranga lost the election as B.Gopala Reddy could not assertively help him. Kala Venkata Rao, K.Brahmananda Reddy and K. Chandramouli did see Ranga's defeat with best of their manouvers. Sanjeeva Reddy and Gopala Reddy stayed back from voting. The whole strategy was from Kala Venkata Rao. ⁹⁷

The part played by Kala Venkata Rao in the elections of West Godavari district was unforgettable. There was a keen contest between Badeti Venkata Ramayya of Justice party and Dandu Narayana Raju of Congress. Kala Venkata Rao camped in West Godavari district for three months and by his schemes and manipulations got the Congress candidate Dandu Narayana Raju elected. He came to be known as Chanakya. ⁹⁸

HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF KONASEEMA

The contribution of Kala Venkata Rao to the development of Konaseema is remarkable. He tried for all round development of Konaseema. He promoted political consciousness among the people of Konaseema. It was because of Kala Venkata Rao, Konaseema occupies very important place in the political history of Andhra Pradesh. Amalapuram which is the centre of Konaseema used to be compared to Kumbakonam in the matter of

Machiavellian politics in those days. Kala Venkata Rao strode the political scene like a colossus and enriched the life of the people through his many sided contributions. ¹⁰⁰

After the formation of Rajaji Ministry in Madras in 1937, Kala Venkata Rao visited several places of Konaseema along with Ministers and brought to their notice the grievances of the people. The Rajaji government announced moratorium on Agricultural loans. That action reduced the grievances of the people of this area. Again in 1939, the cyclone damaged the crops in Konaseema. The Government granted some remission of land revenue. In both the cases, Kala Venkata Rao was responsible for all the help they received from the ¹⁰¹ Government.

Kala Venkata Rao would be remembered for ever by the people of Konaseema for his contribution to the improvement of Communication system. Konaseema had remained water locked and unconnected with mainland for a long time. Two important bridges, one at Alamur and another at Siddhantam which were opened in 1967 connected Konaseema with the rest of the district. Kala Venkata Rao was responsible for the ¹⁰² construction of these important bridges.

His service to the people of flood affected areas of Konaseema in 1953 is unforgettable. Ninety five villages of Amalapuram erstwhile taluk were submerged in Godavari flood waters. Two lakh fifteen thousand acres of land was inundated and crops were damaged. When he was at

Ramachandrapuram, he came to know that flood level was raising at Dowlaiswaram anicut and flood water had entered Konaseema. Kala Venkata Rao rushed to Konaseema by crossing Godavari at Kotipalli by boat at the risk of his life on the midnight of August 15th 1953. He got some amount granted by Konaseema Central Bank, Amalapuram for flood victims and visited all the affected areas and food packets were distributed to the victims. He extended all the help needed during this period although he was not in power.

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He had special interest in Co-operative Movement. He was honorary Secretary and President, Sree Konaseema Co-operative Central Bank Ltd., Amalapuram for a long time. He also held important posts like Director, Madras Provincial Co-Operative Union; Andhra Sahakara Sammelan; Member, Madras Committee on Co-Operation 1938-40; President, Madras Co-Operative Bank Ltd., and member of its executive. By using his good offices, he developed Konaseema Co-Operative Central Bank and long term and short-term loans were granted liberally to agriculturists.

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He made efforts for the construction of many projects, canals, locks and drains in the Konaseema Region. He worked for the high level channel projects at Peravaram and Rajawaram, irrigation schemes at Sankaraguptam, Antarvedi, Gangalkurru, Tadikonda, Komaragiripatnam, construction of tidal locks of the Amalapuram and the Mukteswaram canals,

Torrigadda out flow sluice, the paravaram bund and bund from Yenugupalli to Vakalagaruvu, and the drainage schemes for the improvement of the Fanchvati drain, lower Gourika drain, Kunavaram drain, drain above Lolla lock, the Rameswaram drain, etc.,

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The extension of Antarvedi Channel, Sakhinetipalli channel, Pillavari Channel, Munganda Potayalanka channel, Mattaparru Channel, the drain of Razole etc., and other works like Kadali, Kunavaram, Tatipaka, Manapalli, Razole, Sivakodu, Goganamatam, Magatapalli, Mullikipalli, Ponnamanda, Mori, Sakinetipalli, Gudimola Kandrika, Antharvedipalem, Antharvedi Uppalaguptam, Kakkalanka, Vadapalem, were some of his achievements. Thus, he was responsible for bringing about

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3200 acres of land under cultivation.

He was one of the stalwarts in the political field of Andhra Pradesh. He is an unforgettable multifaceted personality. As a man, his integrity was exceptional. He was incorruptible and his private life was impeccable. As a politician he was a model for all states to follow.

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