

18. NAKED TRUTH BEHIND THE SEPARATE TELANGANA MOVEMENT

I am witness to the merger of the Hyderabad state with Indian union in the year 1948, after 224 years' rule by the Asafijahi dynasty, the creation of a separate Andhra state by bifurcating the erstwhile Madras province in the year 1953, thanks to the martyrdom of Potti Sreeramulu; and the formation of Andhra Pradesh state on 1-11-1956 based on the 14 point 'gentlemen agreement' entered in to by the leaders of Telangana and Andhra regions as a follow up of the report of the second states' reorganization commission headed by late Justice Fazal Ali.

It will be relevant to have retrospection and recollect that until the reorganization of states, India was in two parts known as British India consisting of 10 provinces and Indian India consisting of 565 states ruled by the native princes, under the suzerainty of British government based on various agreements in between the rulers of the states and the British government. Erstwhile state of Hyderabad, consisting of 8 Telangana districts, 5 districts known as Marathwada and 3 districts known as Karnataka was the biggest of all native states, which was ruled by the Asafjahi dynasty, the last and seventh king being Mir Osman Ali Khan.

Despite the commonality of language(Telugu), history and culture and the contiguity of area, 224 year long separation between Andhra and Telangana, by virtue of being ruled by comparatively liberal British rulers and the autocratic feudals of the Nizam's state and their hirelings had created a big gulf between the two telugu speaking peoples. Such a visibly uneven levels of development, forced the elite of Telangana to make a strong representation to the second S.R.C. about their fear that the comparatively more developed Andhra brotheren, particularly from the coastal region might swamp and exploit the most backward Telangana people, and hence they prayed for continuing the Hyderabad(Telgnana) state. The SRC, in its wisdom, after considered deliberations positively recommended for the continuation of Hyderabad as a separate state until 1962 when its merger with Andhra state could be reconsidered if the two third elected members of Telangana so desire. This recommendation was broadly agreeable to the central leadership consisting of Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru(PM) Maulana Abdulkalam Axad(the Minister for education) Sardar Vallabhai Patel(the Deputy Prime Minister) and Mr.Gobind Vallabh Pant(the Home Minister). Late Sri Sardar K.M.Paniker a famous historian and a member of the second SRC had appended his minute of dissent to the main report stating that Hyderabad state(Telangana) be continued as a separate state, unequivocally declaring that smaller states will be the best units for good administration and speedy

development. Inside the state of Hyderabad Sri Boorgula Ramakrishna Rao, the then Chief Minister of the state, Sri K.V.Ranga Reddy and Dr.M.Chenna Reddy ministers had made strong representation for continuing the Hyderabad state as it was. The then united CPI, alone, wanted Visalandhra with the slogan of “peoples rule in greater Andhra”. Next only to congress, the CPI was organizationally very strong both in Telangana and Andhra areas with a large following.

Then started the pressurization of centre by the Andhra congress leadership to disregard the recommendation of the SRC and instead agree to the formation of the linguistic state of Andhra Pradesh. Panditji had a soft corner for linguistic reorganization of states which by then was felt to be far better than multilingual and unwieldy composite states. He was also influenced by the Russian pattern of linguistic states. This situation was very skilfully utilized by the Andhra congress leadership. Telangana congress leadership could not compete with their Andhra counter parts. Ultimately the central home minister Sri Govind Vallabhpant got convinced of a larger state and then succeeded in convincing the central leadership including Panditji himself. CPI’s vehemence behind its dogged propaganda for Visalandhra emanated firstly from its dogmatic Stalinist approach to the question and secondly from its hopes to come to power in AP based on its strength spread over in both the areas. Both have now proved as only illusions. Ultimately Andhra Pradesh state was formed on 1-11-1956 based on a formula of 14 points gentlemen’s agreement which along with others includes strictly adhering to the Mulki rules in service matters, allocation of one third of the states budget for the development of Telananga area and the formation of Telangana regional committee to act as a watch dog and refer to the Governor about any difference with the Government whose decision would be binding on the state government.

Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru the Prime Minister of India who inaugurated the new state had, in his speech referred to the genuine fears of the Telangana people and categorically stated that if the two distinct regions could not get integrated emotionally and the fears of Telangana people persist they will be free to divide and form a separate state. The trouble started from the day one after the inauguration. Gentlemen’s agreement was honoured more in profession than in practice, ultimately it was given a decent burial. In every meeting of the T.R.C the problems arising out of government’s failure to implement the agreements on service matters, budgetary allocations and other developmental issues were raised and the reports with concrete instances were submitted to the government for quick solution. The state government neither solved any issue nor it referred any matter to the Governor for arbitration, ultimately reducing the regional committee and the role of the Governor to a nullity, not even a formality. Literally, not a single issue was referred to the Governor. Hundreds of questions were raised on the floor of the Assembly with no avail.

The discontentment went on mounting with every passing year and it burst out after twelve years in the year 1969 beginning with the students agitation. Very soon it had spread to all towns involving the services and sections of middle classes. State government headed by the late K.Brahmananda Reddy with the active support of the then Prime Minister Smt.Indira Gandhi had decided to put down the movement with iron hand. Thousands of people were thrown behind bars and hundreds of students and youth were killed by the merciless police and paramilitary forces. Such a genuine movement demanding statehood for Telangana was sought to be exploited by an opportunist section of the state congress leadership for their power politics. The CPI with its considerable following lent its moral support to the cause of the Telangana people and pressurized the state and central governments to implement the agreements entered into and solve the problems short of separation. I was invited to Delhi in the capacity of the leader of the legislature party of the CPI for personal discussion with the then Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi. I took the advice of late Sri Chandra Rajeswara Rao, the then state Secretary of the CPI who had asked me to frankly tell the Prime Minister that it was the congress leadership which had signally failed to implement the solemn promise made to the people of Telangana and on the other hand it was utilising the genuine discontentment of the Telangana youth for settling their inner party scores for political power. He had also advised me to tell the PM not to take for granted the CPI's stand on Visalandhra. As already noted in the book, the PM gave a patient hearing but reiterated her firm decision to put down the violent movement Uprising for a separate Telangana state in 1969 was silenced partly by reiterating the previous promise of honouring all the agreements and partly by making new promises to enhance the powers of the Telangana Regional Committee through a new constitutional amendment known as Prime Minister's eight point formula. The ink had hardly dried up when the movement for separation of Andhra area was started in 1973. Within no time this movement assumed gigantic proportions. The Andhra Ministers had resigned from the cabinet, law and order situation in Andhra area became uncontrollable causing the promulgation of Governor's rule for two years. The immediate provocation behind such a large scale eruption was very clear. The Andhra leadership did not like the Chief Ministership of late Sri P.V.Narasimha Rao, a Telangana leader who had some commitment to the implementation of the Agricultural land ceiling Act. Secondly, probably mainly, the cause was to undo the effect of the fresh judgement of the apex court which clearly over ruled the judgment of the A.P. High Court which declared the "Mulki" rule null and void. The Apex Court's judgment upholding the "Mulki" rule and directing its implementation retrospectively would amount to the large scale removal from service thousands of non mulkies ie., Andhras who had illegally obtained their employment. Madam Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India taking a partial view, lost no time in amending the

constitution to regularize such services and to nullify the very “Mulki” rule. She had also done away with the very Telangana Regional Committee, the powers of which were promised to be increased only four years back to pacify the Telangana uprising of 1969. She now came forward with a six point programme. Abolition of T.R.C, removal of mulki rule gave unbridled powers to the mischief mongers. Maintenance of separate accounts for Telangana and the very accountability was totally stopped. Flood gates were opened for all kinds of injustices to the backward Telangana area. Regional Development Boards and the zonal system for employment created under six point programme with constitutional guarantee have been rendered totally inoperative and ineffective. Again in the early eighties the Telananga services picked up enough courage to force the state government to strictly adhere to the zonal system in appointments, promotions and transfers. Sri N.T.Rama Rao, the then CM, getting satisfied with the enquiry committee reports had issued G.O.No.610 to set right things in the light of six point formula and the zonal system. Even the 610 GO was not implemented. Twenty long years have elapsed, not a single case of correction of the mistake has yet seen the light of the day. Almost all the sufferers have either retired or are no more to see the consequences. A.P. Legislative Assembly had appointed a house committee to examine the implementation of 610 G.O. Ministries have changed, assemblies too have changed new house committees have been formed but their reports are not being submitted to the house.

The year 2009 has again witnessed the upsurge for a separate Telangana state. The movement got electrified with the fast unto death undertaken by the founder of the Telangana Rashtra Samithi, Sri K.Chandra Sekhara Rao M.P. He had taken pains to rouse the Telangana people to fight for their statehood, for the last over a decade. The idea of a separate statehood had not died, it was only lying low, waiting for an opportune time. The historic fact of Telangana having a separate identity self respect is getting reinforced with every passing year under the most unscrupulous policies pursued by the ruling parties, dominated by the economically and politically advanced and power crazy sections of Andhra area. This time the demand for a separate statehood has penetrated very deep, to the grass root levels. Along with the TRS party, the BJP, the TDP, the CPI and a number of civic groups and prominent citizens as also the strong trade unions representing the entire Telangana are joining hands to peacefully but militantly agitate for the achievement of separate statehood for Telangana. Even the congress leaders hailing from Telangana area the MLAs and MPs in particular, seeing the totally changed mood of the people are identifying themselves with this movement. Forces opposing the movement are taking no chances and leaving no stone unturned to disrupt and kill the surging movement by resorting to all kinds of tactics of divide and rule, including repression. Setting up Sree Krishna Commission, delaying the decision making for the last

two years is but an example. The most unhappy situation is that the innocent students and youth, unable to boldly withstand and pick up courage to fight for freedom, are resorting to suicides leaving heart rendering suicide notes. Over seven hundreds sons of soil have already committed suicides. Yet the power mad ruling class has no tears to shed. Yes freedom is not begged, it is won through struggle and sacrifice. It is high time all those who stand for Telangana statehood unite and seize political power from the unwilling hands of the unscrupulous and heartless few, masquerading as the high command.

Decentralisation of power is the call of the time. Every where in the world, empowerment of the common people by all means is catching the imagination of people. Smaller states with local self government institutions fully vested with powers and funds is the requirement for real human development. Democracy denotes power to the working people. The days of imperialism and expansionism are numbered. No power on earth, however strong, can stop the onward march for freedom and socio economic democracy. We shall win!

Though physically unable to partake in the movement personally however much I may wish, I am very happy at the age of 88 years to witness the uncompromising and determined mood of the legendary and heroic people of Telangana. I am specially proud of the Telangana services and their tested leaders who have led a historic general strike comprising of all classes and sections of the Telangana area. There is an apprehension among some Telanganites and an optimism among some statusquoists of Andhra area that the Telangana people will keep up the adage “forgetfulness of the people is proverbial” and the dilly dallying tactics resorted to by the congress high command as also the theory of “two eyes” propounded by the supremo of the TDP will pay good dividends; but as the times have changed, and the people of Telangana, the services and students in particular, despite the waverings and “politricks” of some opportunist political leaders, are dead set for separate statehood and no power on earth can stop the sunrise of democracy and self determination over Telangana. The movement for separation has assumed the proportion of a movement for liberation from the colonial yoke. Statesmanship today demands that the national leaders of all political parties in the country clearly see the writing on the wall that the present globalisation while on one hand has condensed the vast world into a small village from the view point of communication, on the other hand has encouraged the participation of wider sections of people in the administration through democratic decentralization. Demands for separate Telangana state, Vidarbha state and the demand for dividing Utter Pradesh state into four distinct states etc., have emerged as progressive demands for decentralization, a product of peoples’ mature social mindset in a popular democracy. The movement for bifurcation of AP state got further strengthened thanks to the merger of the two strong sentiments of separation from the big brotherly attitude of the rich power monger rulers of Andhra area and the lofty desire for decentralization and good governance in the back drop

of a rising crying need for protection of the identity and promotion of self respect of the people of Telangana.

Dr.Ramesh Chennamaneni, MLA who jumped into politics and got elected from Vemulawada Assembly constituency on TDP ticket in 2009 was the first Telangana legislator who resigned from the party and then from the Assembly protesting against the suicidal “two eyes” theory of the leader of the opposition. Within months of his reelection from the same constituency as TRS candidate, he again resigned his seat in company with ten other TRS members, protesting against centre’s failure to execute its promise, but the Hon’ble Speaker rejected them on grounds of his discretion to do so.
