

The Separate State Telangana Movement A - Study

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TELANGANA PROTESTS MOVEMENT - 1969 TO 1985

In 1969: This year saw the first of the protests from the Telangana region. Some students protested “implementation of the safe guards from Andhra Pradesh” while some protested for a “Separate Telangana”. The local newspaper Indian Express reported that the latter group were dominant. According to the 19 January 1969 edition of The Indian Express, the agitation turned violent when a crowd attempted to set fire to a sub-inspector’s residence. 17 were injured in Police firing. Discussions about the promised safe-guards were held. The Telangana Regional Committee was, however, not fully convinced of the outcome. This agitation was met by a counter agitation by the Andhra students accusing the transfer Andhra employees as a discrimination between one region and the other. The transfers were eventually challenged in the high-court.

The army had to be called in. After several days of talks with leaders of both regions, on 12 April 1969, Prime minister came up with an eight-point plan. Telangana leaders rejected the plan and protests continued under the leadership of newly formed political party Telangana Praja Samithi in 1969 asking for the formation of Telangana. Under the Mulki rules in force at the time, anyone who had lived in Hyderabad for 15 years was considered a local, and was thus eligible for certain government posts.

In 1972: When the Supreme Court upheld the Mulki rules the Jai Andhra movement, with the aim of re-forming a separate state of Andhra, was started in Coastal Andhra and Rayalseema regions. The movement lasted for 110 days. The Supreme Court upheld the implementation of Mulki rules. The people from the Andhra region viewed the Mulki rules as “treating them like aliens in their own land”.

In 1973 a political settlement was reached with the Government of India with a Six-Point Formula. It was agreed upon by the leaders of the two regions to prevent any recurrence of such agitations in the future. To avoid legal problems, constitution was amended (32nd amendment) to give the legal sanctity to the Six-point formula.

In 1985, when Telangana employees complained about the violations to six point formula, government enacted government order 610 (GO 610) to correct the violations in recruitment. As Telangana people complained about non implementation of GO 610, in 2001, government constituted Girgiani commission to look into violations.

In 1997, the state unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) passed a resolution seeking a separate Telangana.

In 2000, Congress party MLAs from the Telangana region who supported a separate Telangana state formed the Telangana Congress Legislators Forum and submitted memorandum to their president Sonia Gandhi requesting the support the Telangana state.

A new party called Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS), led by Kalvakuntla Chandrashekar Rao (KCR), was formed in April 2001 with the single-point agenda of creating a separate Telangana state with Hyderabad as its capital.

In 2001, the Congress Working Committee sent a resolution to the NDA government for constituting a second SRC to look into the Telangana state demand. This was rejected by then union home minister L.K. Advani citing that smaller states were neither viable nor conducive to the integrity of the country.

In April 2002, Advani wrote a letter to MP A. Narendra rejecting a proposal to create Telangana state explaining that “regional disparities in economic development could be tackled through planning and efficient use of available resources”. He said that the NDA government, therefore, does “not propose creation of a separate state of Telangana” However in

2012, Advani said that if their then partner cooperated during NDA tenure, a separate state of Telangana could have been created. This was confirmed by the President of the TDP, Chandrababu Naidu, on 1 September 2013 in a public meeting.

In the run-up to the 2004 Assembly & Parliament elections, then Union Home Minister L. K. Advani ruled out inclusion of Telangana in the NDA agenda and said “Unless there is consensus among all political parties in the state and unless that consensus is reflected in a resolution of the state Assembly, we don’t propose to include it in the NDA agenda”

For these elections, the Congress party and the TRS forged an electoral alliance in the Telangana region to consider the demand of separate Telangana State. Congress came to power in the state and formed a coalition government at the centre; TRS joined the coalition after the common minimum program of the coalition government included that the demand for separate Telangana state will be considered after due consultations and consensus.

In February 2009 the state government declared that it had no objection, in principle, to the formation of separate Telangana and that the time had come to move forward decisively on this issue. To resolve related issues, the government constituted a joint house committee. In the lead-up to the 2009 General Elections in India, all the major parties in Andhra Pradesh supported the formation of Telangana.

In the 2009 elections TRS managed to win only 10 assembly seats out of the 45 it contested and only 2 MP seats. Some media analysts thought Telangana sentiment faded.

Within few months of getting re-elected as popular CM, Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy (YSR) died in a helicopter crash in September 2009. This resulted in a leadership crisis within the Congress party and also created a political vacuum in the state. During this time, TRS president K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) raised his pitch for the separate state. On 29 November 2009, he started a fast-unto-death, demanding that the Congress party introduce a Telangana bill in Parliament. Student organizations, employee unions, and various organizations joined the movement. General strikes shut down Telangana on 6 and 7 December. In an all party meeting called by the state government on the night of 7 December to discuss regarding KCR’s fast and how to handle it, all major Opposition parties extended their support

for a separate state for Telangana. The state Congress and its ally Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen have left it to the Congress high command to take a final decision. Minutes of the meeting were faxed to Congress high command.

BIFURCATION ANNOUNCEMENT SEPARATE TELANGANA

On 9 December 2009, Union Minister of Home Affairs P. Chidambaram announced that the Indian government would start the process of forming a separate Telangana state, pending the introduction and passage of a separation resolution in the Andhra Pradesh assembly. This resulted in protests across both Andhra and Rayalseema. Students, workers, lawyers & various organizations in the regions launched the Samaikyandhra Movement demanding that the state be kept united. MLAs from these regions also submitted their resignations in protest seeking a reversal of the home minister’s statement.

On 23 December, keeping in view the reactions of people of other regions, the Government of India announced that no action on Telangana will be taken until a consensus is reached by all parties and groups in the state. Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema region MLAs started withdrawing their resignations while MLAs and ministers from Telangana started submitting their resignations, and demanded that the Centre take immediate steps to initiate the process of bifurcating Andhra Pradesh.

A Joint Action Committee (also known as JAC or TJAC) comprising political and non-political groups was formed to lead the demand for separate Telangana with Osmania University professor M Kodandaram Reddy as its convenor.

On 3 February, the government appointed a five-member committee headed by Justice Srikrishna to look into the issue.

SRIKRISHNA COMMITTEE

The Srikrishna Committee headed by former Chief Justice B. N. Srikrishna toured all the regions of state extensively and invited people from all sections of the society to give their opinion on the statehood. It received over one lakh petitions and representations from political parties, organizations, NGOs and individuals. It also held consultations with political

parties and general public while also factoring in the impact of recent developments on different sections of people such as women, children, students, minorities, Other Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

On 16 December 2010, two weeks before the deadline for the submission of the Srikrishna report, TRS organized a public meeting in Warangal. It was estimated that over 2.6 million people attended this meeting. It was reported that even more would have attended, but were stranded due to traffic jams along roads leading to the city.

TRS president K. Chandrasekhar Rao appealed to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to note that the people of Telangana were losing patience. He demanded that the Centre introduce the Bill on Telangana in the next session of Parliament.

Days before the Srikrishna committee submitted its report to the Central government, KCR declared that his party was ready to wash Sonia Gandhi's feet if she agrees to the Telangana demand. He said his party is associated with the movement and was willing to dissolve the party if the state was formed.

SAKALA JANULA SAMME

On 12 September 2011, a day before Sakala Janula Samme (All people's strike), TRS organised a public meeting in Karimnagar which was attended by over a million people including TJAC leaders, BJP and New Democracy party leaders.

Starting 13 September, as part of 'strike by all section of people' supporting Telangana statehood, government employees throughout Telangana stayed out of work, lawyers boycotted courts and 60,000 coal miners of Singareni Collieries (SCCL Ltd.) also joined the strike. Soon government teachers, state road transport corporation employees and state electricity board employees joined the strike.

On a call given by JAC, road blockades on national highways throughout Telangana, rail blockade and the strike of auto rikshaw union were organized on 24 and 25 September causing disruption in transport services. Virtually all sections of people joined this strike. On 30 September, as the strike entered the 18th day, even while Congress central leadership met several Telangana congress leaders, JAC called a bandh in Hyderabad city. On 2 October, JAC leaders, employee unions leaders and TRS leaders including

KCR met Prime minister to explain the situation in Telangana due to the strike and asked to expedite the decision on the statehood demand. The strike has resulted in an unprecedented power crisis in the state with only 223 MU of power generated against the demand of 275MU impacting both the industry and agriculture.

Due to Rail blockade call on 15 October 110 trains were cancelled and 68 trains were diverted by authorities. The railways operated 12 trains and Hyderabad metro trails with full police protection. Telangana protestors tried to have sit in on rail platforms or on railway tracks at various places. Police arrested thousands of protesters including 8 MPs and 4 MLAs. On 16 October public transport employees called off the strike. Within days other unions too called off the strike one after another. After 42 days, on 24 October, remaining employees unions called off the strike. M. Kodandaram said that the strike had impacted the overall thinking of the Centre towards creation of separate State and the movement will continue with other protest activities.

CONCLUSION

The Telangana Movement is people's movement for the creation of a new state of Telangana, from the existing state of Andhra Pradesh in South India. The proposed new state corresponds to the Telugu-speaking portions of the erstwhile princely state of Hyderabad State. The Union Cabinet on 7 February 2014 unilaterally cleared the Bill for the creation of Telangana, clearing the way for its introduction in Parliament. This has been one of the most controversial movements in South India. On 18 February, Lok Sabha passed the Bill with Voice Majority. Subsequently, the bill was passed by Rajya Sabha on 20 February 2014. As per the bill, Hyderabad will be the joint capital of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana for the first 10 years. The appointed day for the creation of Telangana State is 2 June 2014.

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