



## Movement for Freedom- Statehood Movement in Telangana: A Politico Cultural Perspective

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### **Abstract**

Looking into the history of India we see, it has been marked by several statehood movements at different point of times. Movements so far initiated were usually based on cultural lines. This study will address one such specific to Telangana. Telangana statehood movement reflects the federal spirit of India as right to self-determination is guaranteed and secured to the people of Telangana. This study aims to explore statehood movement from a cultural point of view besides political ones. In other words it brings in fore 'culture' as a major force stimulating Telangana statehood movement. We would also see the hardships of the Telugu people in asserting their interests faced so far. The role of political parties in assuring the needs of the Telugu people will also help us know the political dynamics involved within the politico- cultural framework of Telangana.

**Keywords:** Statehood Movement, Political Parties, Federalism, Culture, Security

### **Introduction**

India has been a land of diverse beliefs, religions and cultures since her birth. She has accommodated interests of various religions, cultures and languages. Many a times, India witnessed series of confrontations from various ethno- religious and cultural communities as they experienced subjugation of their cultures. Years of deprivation, resentment has yielded to protests in many forms. Movements are one of them. In this study, we would see how has the component called culture served as a determining factor of statehood movement in Telangana. The marginalization of Telugu speaking communities residing in erstwhile Andhra Pradesh and their difficulties to adjust within the territorial framework occupies the major part of our discussion. The first phase of Telangana movement started in

1952 and continued till 1960s. The second phase of movement started in 1970s and continued till 19990s. The final phase begun in 2004 and ended in 2014 with the creation of a new state for telugus . This long struggle over years has been marked with bloodsheds, loss of lives of many innocent people. Students were in the forefront who popularized and contributed to the growth of the movement significantly. We would also look into the reasons behind the upsurge of the protests all over Telangana. How have the interplays of politics and economics left the telugus in an entangling situation make us think about the nature, scope and success of the telugu tale of statehood movement indeed.

### **Literature Review**

Prakash V. (2016) in his work titled History of Telangana Movements explicitly deals with political facets attached to this movement.

Reddy Jnampalli. (2021) writes in Mission Telangana about the collective experiences of the journalists during the period of the movement. It is largely a fact finding experiment.

Subrata k Mitra (2017) in his book Politics in India explores the political challenges faced by new states including political instability, violence and many more.

## **Research Objectives**

The research objective of this study is to find out how far the demerger of Telangana justified in securing social cultural and political aspirations of the telugu people. In other words, this work tries to understand the developments of Telugu people in terms of their physical, moral and psychological aspects both on and after the creation of the new state.

## **Research questions**

1. What is statehood movement?
2. How has culture been impacted in the statehood movement of Telangana?
3. Has democratic consolidation taken place in reality in Telangana?
4. Are separatist movements acting always a threat to Unity of India?

## **Research Methodology**

No research can take place without employing a methodology. In this work, a content analysis using qualitative study of data has been made. Several articles, journals have been consulted in this regard for getting a clear picture of the concerned movement.

## **Definition of statehood movement**

Statehood movements commonly refer to systematic endeavour in form of protests or mass gathering to create a new political unit with autonomous administration and greater freedom in terms of governance rule and exercise of power. A demand for separate statehood takes several forms which include- secessionist movement, autonomous movement and separatist movement. Article 3 of the Indian constitution empowers the parliament to decide upon issues relating to the formation of new states. The parliament may by law legislature on following grounds-

1. Form a new state by separation of territory from a state or uniting two more states
2. Increase the area of any state
3. Diminish the area of any state
4. Alter the boundary of the state
5. Alter the name of the state

It is needless to say that, statehood movements are major driving forces to articulate the crisis of the marginalised in any given territory. Any difficulty in making adjustments with culture, identities may result to an upheaval demonstrating griefs, anger and resentments. It is often said that, rebellions help in greater consolidation of democracy thus helping a refinement to occur.

## **Locating Telangana Geographically**

This section highlights a brief profile of Telangana as a region. Telangana has been derived from the word Trilinga Desa. The latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates are 17.12318479.208824. The population is 35.04 lacs. Area of Telangana in square kilometers is 112207. Prior to the demerger from Andhra Pradesh which implies today's Seem Andhra (SOUTHERN COAST OF INDIA) was primarily invested for agricultural production. Her fertile soil produced grains in abundance to meet demands of crops. The productive soil of Telangana not only meets the food requirements of her own region but her surpluses are consumed by Andhra region as well.



Fig: 1 Telangana District map

## Contemplating Telangana movement as Cultural movement

The easiest definition of culture is defined as a whole that includes knowledge, beliefs art, morals and customs or any other traits acquired by humans. A critical understanding of culture was put forwarded by US anthropologist Al krober in the book titled CULTURE-A CRITICAL REVIEW OF CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS (1952) where he defines culture in 164 ways ranging from learned behaviour to ideas in mind; a psychic construction, a defense mechanism and so on. Here in case of Telangana we see students are taking the movement forward by organising a 5 day agitation program sloganning GO BACK NON MULKIS. The task of mass mobilization, drawing resources are all carried out by civil societies including teachers and students. The need of a separate state might seem political in character but the flip side of it is entirely cultural. The protest continued till 30<sup>th</sup> August 1952 until the formulation of SRC report. In october 1955 a new state was formed based on linguistic lines.

Another cause of tension between telugu speakers of Andhra region and Telugu speakers of present day Telangana is about dialectics. The standardization of telugu language inflicted hearts of the telugus with griefs. It made them agitated and revolt against the Andhra scholars as they thought this action has lowered the dignity of the language. It has been seen that, the standardized Andhra bhasha got a faster popularity through civil organizations.

## Film and Media Industry-Quest for Telugu in Telangana Medium?

Another important pillar of democracy that shapes the mind of people enables critical thinking and questions the existing social orders is culture industry. In case of Telugu films, there lacked a representation of Telugu speakers. Both government and non-government channels idealized the practice of Andhrite telugu and even promoted widespread usages. Mamamdi Harikrishna in his article writes, Telugu cinemas fundamentally lacks the ability to address the identity issues of the societies.

The magnification of Andhra culture further stifled the tussle between telugu speakers of Andhra and Telangana region.

## **Hyderabad - a dream capital project**

The capital city of any state usually represents the collective interests of all despite differences of beliefs and cultures. Here, in the case of Telangana Hyderabad was chosen as the capital city of the state. It was largely seen that the then existing political parties conceived the capital building project from a neo-liberal perspective. It benefitted Andhra Pradesh the most as Andhra architectures symbols were reflected through the corners of Hyderabad city. Housing MNCS and corporate giants within the fold of Hyderabad elevated the status of Andhra to a large extent. Though the project of joint capital facilitated communication exchange but Telangana remained far behind in terms of access to them.

Therefore, the joint capital project served the interests of Andhra Pradesh to greater degrees lagging Telugu people behind.

## **Telangana as an experimental ground for political parties**

The tendency to extract electoral benefits has time and again attracted political parties of several kinds to contest elections in Telangana. If we read the political scenario we would see that this region had never remained politically silent; the communist led farmer's revolt displayed the earliest form of political uprising. Now we would look into the party combinations within the political spectrums of Telangana

Concerned. Major combination of political parties are

1. Telangana rashtra samiti (TRS)
2. Telangana joint action committee (TJAC)
3. TRS, TJAC alliance
4. TRS, BJP alliance
5. TRS TJAC congress and NDA alliance

Some of the political parties were national, some were regional. TRS was one of the active political parties which demanded the creation of Telangana as a separate state. It became the first political party that won a landslide victory and formed the first government post formation of Telangana in 2014.

## **Establishing democracy and challenges in its implementation**

The political career of Telangana has been marked with fluctuations time and again to meet the needs of changing times. It has never travelled through a single trajectory as demands of people keep changing with time. Many a political parties came to power promising formation of Telangana as a different state. With coming in power, their vows altered. It is only Telugu Desam Party which advocated the need of creation of a separate state for telugu. Soon after assuming power, their priorities changed. They had to work for the interests of Andhra pradesh to remain in power. Never the less, TDP years in Telugu had politics regarded as a milestone in process of establishing democracy in Telangana. With the coming in of Thendamarin Taraka Rama Rao popularly known by NTR the telugu people started to see visible changes. Thereafter it has been Chandrababu Naidu son in law of NTR who took the responsibility to establish a democratic order in Telangana.

## **Key challenges to democracy in Telangana**

Political defection and accountability- Widespread political maneuvering i.e. opposition MLAs joining ruling party without resigning questions the viability of tenth schedule of our constitution.

Administrative and Governance challenge- The creation of a new state posed significant administrative challenges such as redistribution of public assets, division in public sector employment realignment of infrastructure.

Interstate relations and disputes - The River water sharing (krishna and godvari) has been a critical issue between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Telangana's agricultural sector highly dependent on irrigation was significantly affected by water allocation.

## **Socio economic transformations**

After the formation of Telangana, there were efforts to address regional disparities by investing in development of rural areas. However, economic inequalities within Telangana such as between urban and rural centre of Hyderabad remained a challenge.

## **Conclusion**

The formation of Telangana in 2014 as a result of longstanding political, economic and cultural demands has brought opportunities for Telegu people. Years of suppression resulted to the creation of new state. Telangana statehood movement is a story of aspiration, revolution which makes us think how movements act as a driving force to attain a goal of statehood. The story of Telangana provides valuable insights for the other regions in India illustrating both difficulties and opportunities that arise from focused localized governance. Future efforts must be made to make developments more sustainable in nature.

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