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COMMITTEES ON TELANGANA: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Dr. Chakrapani Ghanta

Professor

Department of Sociology

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad, India

Abstract

The constitutional procedure suggests that a separate state can be created in India by introducing an ordinary Bill in Parliament. Still, it took over six decades, and the stalemate continues as the government of India constituted another committee on Telangana. The government recently announced the Committee for Consultations on the Situation in Andhra Pradesh (CCSAP) under the chairmanship of Justice B. N. Srikrishna. After a long and anxious wait following the statements of December 9, 2009, announcing the initiation of the Telangana State formation process and January 5, 2010, forming a committee to go into the matter, which materialized on February 3, the Government of India finally came up with the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Justice B N Sri Krishna Committee on February 12. Even those who welcomed the Constitution of the five-member committee as a necessary step in the democratic process seem to be disappointed with the ToR since the latter is just against the spirit of the Home Minister's statement of December 9. The Justice Srikrishna Committee would be the ninth such body to study the issues raised by the Telangana movement after the States Reorganization Commission (1955). It is not surprising to find widespread skepticism in Telangana about the probable outcome of the current committee.

This article discusses various committees constituted by the government since the first State Reorganization Committee (SRC), 1955, and further examines their reports on the formation of Telangana State. This is a history of the different committees in the context of the current movement to make Telangana a separate state.

Introduction

Nearly a month after holding consultations with eight recognized political parties on the Telangana issue, the government of India constituted a five-member committee "to hold wide-ranging consultations with all sections of the people and all political parties and groups in Andhra Pradesh." The committee will be headed by the former Supreme Court judge, Justice B.N. Srikrishna. The other members of the committee are Professor (Dr.) Ranbir Singh, Vice-Chancellor, National Law University, Delhi; Dr. Abusaleh Shariff, Senior Research Fellow, International Food Policy Research Institute, Delhi; Dr. (Ms.) Ravinder Kaur, Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT, Delhi; and Vinod K. Duggal, former Home Secretary, will also function as its Member-Secretary. Mr. Duggal is also a Justice Punchhi Commission on Centre-State relations member.

Research Dimensions

ISSN: 2249-3867 Volume - 1 | Issue - 1 | January to March 2011

In the last five decades, there have been several scholarly studies, not to speak of many more journalistic pieces, voicing the apprehensions and aspirations of Telangana people and arguing the case for Telangana as a separate state. Even though much has been written on regional inequality, exploitation, discrimination, regional identity, and so on, a systematic study of promises made to Telangana over the last five decades and how they were broken has yet to be undertaken. This is a modest attempt to list out all the promises made to Telangana people in general, farmers, students, employees, and politicians, with a brief note on what happened to each of those promises.

The First SRC (1955)

The States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) was the first official body to express its views on Telangana. The SRC, set up by the Union government in 1953, under the chairmanship of Justice Syed Fazl Ali, with H N Kunzru and K M Panikkar as members, submitted its report on September 30, 1955. After carefully listing the pros and cons of the three options that were available at the time – keeping Hyderabad State as it was, splitting it into three parts based on language but keeping Telugu-speaking areas separate, and combining Telugu-speaking areas with Andhra State – the SRC said in its Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations:

The SRC stated in its report that Hyderabad: Apart from the districts of Raichur and Gulbarga, the Marathwada should also be detached from the Hyderabad State. The residential state, which should continue to be known as Hyderabad, should consist of the Telugu-speaking districts of the present State of Hyderabad, namely, Mahbubnagar, Nalgonda, Warangal (including Khammam), Karimnagar, Adilabad, Nizamabad, Hyderabad, and Medak, along with Bidar district, and the Munagala enclave in the Nalgonda district, belonging to the Krishna district of Andhra. "(SRC 1955)

The Union government disregarded this specific proposal of the SRC and instead requested the leaders of the then-Hyderabad State and Andhra State to agree to a merger to become Andhra Pradesh based on a Gentlemen's Agreement. Even though several leaders from Telangana expressed apprehensions and the SRC report acknowledged them, the Union government acknowledged the arguments of integrationists within Congress and outside in Andhra and Telangana, and a written agreement, followed by legal sanction, was viewed as a means of assuaging anti-unification sentiments. The state of Andhra Pradesh was founded on a conditional agreement, the terms of which were never adhered to, even though various procedures gave the legal agreement status. Neither did the Union administration take any action to address the violations.

Gentlemen's Agreement (1956)

The Union Government did not consider the SRC's advice on merging the Telugu-speaking Districts of Madras State with Telangana to form a Linguistic State. Notwithstanding the SRC's negative comments, the Union government asked the leaders of both States to agree to

Research Dimensions

ISSN: 2249-3867 Volume - 1 | Issue - 1 | January to March 2011

form a unified State of Andhra Pradesh. In the third week of October 1955, several Telangana Congress leaders petitioned Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to support Vishalandhra. Later, the Communist Party also submitted a petition to the state's Governor demanding his support for Vishalandhra. In the last week of October, the chief ministers of Hyderabad State and Andhra State met in Hyderabad to discuss the concerns of Telangana residents regarding the formation of Vishalandhra. On October 28, 1955, the Chief Minister of Hyderabad, for the first time, voiced his support for Vishalandhra. He asserted that the Telangana region would expand more rapidly as a part of Vishalandhra State due to the Andhra people's skillful planning of targeted growth. In its report, the SRC overestimated the potential challenges that could arise from the foundation of Vishalandhra State, he added. On the 8th and 9th of November 1955, the Pradesh Congress Committees (PCC) presidents met in Delhi to debate the SRC's report. At this summit, the formation of Vishalandhra State was decided. The Chief Minister brought up the idea of setting up Vishalandhra in the Hyderabad State Assembly.

The Gentlemen's Agreement of Andhra Pradesh (1956) refers to a gentleman's agreement that was signed between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh leaders before the formation of Andhra Pradesh. The agreement provided safeguards to prevent discrimination against Telangana by the government of Andhra Pradesh.

The following are essential points of agreement:

1. There will be one legislature for the whole of Andhra Pradesh, which will be the sole law-making body for the entire state, and there will be one Governor for the entire state, aided and advised by the Council of Ministers responsible to the State Assembly for the entire field of administration.
2. The Telangana area will be treated as one region for the more convenient transaction of the government's business about some specified matters.
3. For the Telangana region, there will be a Regional Standing Committee of the State Assembly consisting of the members of the State Assembly belonging to that region, including the Ministers from that region but not including the Chief Minister.
4. Legislation relating to specified matters will be referred to the Regional Committee. In respect of specified matters, proposals may also be made by the Regional Committee to the State Government for legislation or about the question of general policy not involving any financial commitments other than expenditure of a routine and incidental character.
5. The government and the State Legislature will generally accept the advice tendered by the Regional Committee. In case of a difference of opinion, reference will be made to the Governor, whose decision will be binding.

As a precursor to that agreement, the Andhra State Assembly, on November 29, 1955, passed a resolution in which it said, "this Assembly would... like to assure the people in Telangana that the development of that area would be deemed to be a special charge and that

Research Dimensions

ISSN: 2249-3867 Volume - 1 | Issue - 1 | January to March 2011

certain priorities and special protection will be given for the improvement of this area (Telangana Region), such as reservation in services and educational institutions based on population."

All the points in the agreement, one after the other, promised a favor or a safeguard to Telangana. Each of them was followed more in either violation or distorted implementation.

The same gentlemen were asked to draft a note on recommended safeguards for the Telangana Region after the Gentlemen's Agreement and this note was written in August 1956. In its ten points, this note addressed the creation of a Regional Standing Committee constituted of the legislators and ministers from the area; the requirement that legislation about nine different issues be listed; domicile regulations; the status of Urdu; the layoff of excess staff in the new state; and the allocation of funds between the Telangana and Andhra regions.

The Andhra Pradesh Regional Committee Order, 1958, was based on the same document, which was introduced into Parliament on August 10, 1956. The ruling stated that "the government and the State Legislature will typically accept the opinion offered by the Regional Committee. The Governor's judgment will be final and binding in the event of a disagreement." However, neither the Governor's intervention nor the Regional Committee's recommendations were followed. However, the absolute protection included in the Gentlemen's Agreement was violated in several ways. Though the government introduced several legislation, orders, and notifications in the last five decades, each successive measure proved that the earlier measures were not implemented. This agreement violation resulted in unrest among Telangana youth and employees in 1969.

All Party Meeting (1969)

The people of Telangana, along with the Regional Committees in the three succeeding legislatures, eagerly anticipated the correct implementation of the Gentlemen's Agreement and the Safeguards and sought to complain whenever they had the chance to point out the breaches and violations. The announcements, provisions, and orders remained on paper and did not transfer into practice, even when the government tried to put them into effect. After more than twelve years of witnessing this, unemployed youth and members of the Telangana Non-Gazetted Officers' Union (NGOs) Union started fighting to protect the safeguards in January 1969. Within three weeks, this movement spread to all Telangana districts and included students, youth, and workers. It has culminated in a movement calling for the division of the state.

In such a tense situation, the government of Andhra Pradesh called for an All-Party Meeting on January 19, 1969, to seek remedial measures. The meeting, attended by 45 legislators, including the chief minister, ministers, and opposition representatives, agreed. At the meeting, it was agreed that "even though it has been the policy of the Andhra Pradesh Government to follow the terms of the Gentlemen's Agreement to the letter, there have been slip-ups."

The agreement at the meeting included a provision: "All non-domicile persons, who have been appointed either directly, by promotion or by transfer to posts reserved under the Andhra

Research Dimensions

ISSN: 2249-3867 Volume - 1 | Issue - 1 | January to March 2011

Pradesh Public Employment (Requirement as to Residence) Rules, 1959 for domiciles of Telangana region will be immediately relieved from service. Qualified candidates will fill the vacant posts with domicile qualifications. In cases where such candidates are unavailable, the posts shall be left unfilled until qualified domicile candidates become available." Action on the above lines will be taken immediately. All non-domi

The All-Party Meeting also suggested an elaborate method to determine the Telangana surpluses and requested the Comptroller and Auditor General to depute a senior officer of the rank of Accountant General to ascertain the Telangana surpluses and give his finding before February 28, 1969. The agreement said the Telangana surpluses would be fully utilized to develop the region during the next five years. Any Telangana surpluses accruing in the future will be worked out at the end of each financial year, and due provision will be made for their utilization in the Telangana region in succeeding years.

However, no other promise of the All-Party Agreement was fulfilled except for issuing an order about non-domicile employees and appointing an officer of CAG to ascertain the Telangana surpluses. Even the two honored promises have ultimately become irrelevant.

G.O. No. 36, (1969)

Following the all-party agreement, the government of Andhra Pradesh passed G. On January 21, 1969, O. No. 36 was issued. The order was to relieve before February 28, 1969, all non-domicile persons appointed on or after November 1, 1956, to specific categories of posts reserved for domiciles of Telangana under the Andhra Pradesh Public Employment (Requirement as to Residence) Rules, 1959. More sophisticated linked activities were already underway at the time, so simply issuing the directive would have been useless. Several lawsuits were filed before the High Court. In their decisions, a single judge in January, a division bench in February, and a majority of the full bench in March not only struck down some provisions of the A.P. Public Employment (Requirement as to Residence) Rules and G.O. but also called into question the legitimacy of the Mulki Rules. The Supreme Court was also involved in this dispute, and on March 28, 1969, a division bench ruled that the order and Section 3 of the Public Employment (Requirement as to Residence) Act, 1957, were illegal.

The government went in for an appeal in the Supreme Court, and the apex court ultimately upheld the Mulki Rules in October 1972; the G. O. No. 36 of 1969 was not implemented, and by that time, it had become superfluous.

Telangana Resources and the Kumar Lalit Committee (1969)

The Telangana Regional Committee (TRC) observed several misappropriations in spending resources per the agreements. Ever since the formation of Andhra Pradesh, there has been a debate on Telangana surpluses, precisely the unspent amount of Telangana and half the overspent amount of Andhra area. The TRC brought up this problem multiple times between 1958 and 1968, and it was only until the ferocious protests of 1969 that the government was

Research Dimensions

ISSN: 2249-3867 Volume - 1 | Issue - 1 | January to March 2011

forced to act. An officer of CAG, Kumar Lalit, was appointed to determine the Telangana surpluses between November 1, 1956, and March 31, 1968. Lalit reported that the surpluses in the revenue account as far as the state excise duties were concerned amounted to about Rs. 102 crores in the Telangana region. Lalit estimated the net surplus on the revenue account to be Rs. 63.92 crores. When the excess expenditure on capital account (including loans and advances) of Rs. 13.66 crores and on corporations of Rs. 12.07 crore were deducted from the initial net surplus, the final figure of net surplus arrived at by Lalit was Rs. 38.20 crore. Even as the differences in the quantum of Telangana surpluses arose, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi made a statement in the Lok Sabha on April 11, 1969, wherein she announced the appointment of a 'high-powered committee to examine varying estimates made of Telangana surpluses' and the Lalit Committee's report was consigned to ignominy.

Eight-Point Formula (1969)

When the Telangana region was burning with an unprecedented popular movement, with educational institutions and government offices remaining closed for months, the Prime Minister's statement, famous as the Eight-Point Formula, was made with the intention of "finding urgent and positive solutions which will further the objective of providing immediate as well as long-term answers to the needs of people in the Telangana region... The overall aim is to ensure that the pace of development and the expansion of employment opportunities in Telangana is accelerated". The statement made several promises regarding determining the Telangana surpluses, implementing accelerated development programs in Telangana, providing appropriate constitutional safeguards in public employment in favor of people belonging to the Telangana region, and periodic review of the problems of the Telangana region. The Prime Minister ended the statement by assuring "the people of Telangana as well as those of other parts of Andhra Pradesh that their genuine problems will receive the continuous and sympathetic attention of the central government." However, despite the Prime Minister's big promises of constant and caring attention, the only thing that came out of his speech was the creation of a committee with three other people and Justice Vasishta Bhargava as its head.

The Committee on Telangana Surpluses (1969)

A committee led by Justice Vasishta Bhargava was established by the Indian government on April 22, 1969, as a follow-up to the Eight-Point Formula to determine Telangana surpluses between November 1, 1956, and March 31, 1968. The committee used the difference between revenue income and revenue expenditure to calculate Telangana's revenue surpluses. Additionally, it was decided that Telangana should pay a fair share of one-third of the state's development costs. If Telangana spent more than its fair share on development, the committee ruled that Telangana's tax surpluses covered the difference. The difference was then added to the revenue surplus of the year to calculate the amount that should have been set aside for the development of Telangana following the Gentlemen's Agreement if, on the other hand, the

Research Dimensions

ISSN: 2249-3867 Volume - 1 | Issue - 1 | January to March 2011

amount spent on Telangana in any year fell short of its fair share. This was the conclusion of the committee. The committee determined the revenue surplus of Telangana—the difference between revenue income and expenditure. It was also decided that Telangana's fair share in the state's development expenditure should be one-third. The committee held that if the amount spent on the development in Telangana exceeded its fair share, it held that this excess was utilized out of the revenue surpluses of Telangana. If, on the other hand, the amount spent on Telangana in any year fell short of its fair share, the committee concluded that Telangana was deprived to that extent of its fair share. The difference was added to the revenue surplus of the year to determine the amount which should have been reserved for the development of Telangana by the Gentlemen's Agreement. Ultimately, the committee determined the unspent Telangana surpluses to be Rs. 28.34 crores from 1956–57 to 1967–68. Despite the Government of India's advice to the Government of A.P. to accept the recommendations of the Bhargava Committee, nobody knows what happened later. Within three years, another formula removed the Telangana Regional Committee and the idea of keeping separate accounts for Telangana, making it impossible to determine the Telangana surplus.

Supreme Court Judgment (1972)

In the meantime, a five-member bench of the Supreme Court delivered a judgment on October 3, 1972 and upheld the validity of the Mulki Rules. "The whole history of the legislation, its object, title, and the preamble to it, point to that conclusion (validity of continuing Mulki Rules). Further, the Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Act, 1956, substituting new article 371 for the old, also shows that it was intended to give special consideration to the Telangana region," said the judgment. However, there were attempts to overturn this decision as a result of political agitation right away. According to Myron Weiner (1988, p. 249), "The Andhra political leadership argued that if the Mulki Rules were enforced and the Andhras were denied employment in the state services in the capital city, there was no longer any reason to keep the state intact, and two separate states should be created." As a result, the Jai Andhra movement and a second phase of the Jai Telangana movement were launched. The movements were so intense that the judgment could not be enforced, and the government had to fall.

Six-Point Formula (1973)

In an attempt to pacify both the Jai Andhra and Jai Telangana movements of 1972–73, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi negotiated with the leaders of both regions and made them issue a statement called the Six-Point Formula. The first five points in the formula were "accelerated development of the backward areas," enabling good preference to be given to local candidates regarding admission to educational institutions. The establishment of a new Central University of Hyderabad to augment the existing educational facilities, giving local candidates "preference to a specified extent in the matter of direct recruitment," the Constitution of a high-power administrative tribunal to deal with the grievances of services," and the sixth point was "the

Research Dimensions

ISSN: 2249-3867 Volume - 1 | Issue - 1 | January to March 2011

above approach would render the continuance of Mulki Rules and Regional Committee unnecessary."

Constitutional Amendment (1973)

The statement of objects and reasons of the Constitution (Thirty-Second) Amendment Act, 1973, clearly mentioned why such legislation was needed. The provisions of clause (1) of Article 371 of the Constitution were intended to give effect to certain features of these safeguards. The Public Employment (Requirement as to Residence) Act, 1957, was enacted, among other things, to provide employment opportunities for residents of the Telangana area. However, the Supreme Court ruled in 1969 that the relevant provision of the Act was unconstitutional insofar as it related to the safeguards envisaged for the Telangana area.

Presidential Order (1975)

In exercise of the powers conferred by clauses (1) and (2) of Art. 371-D of the Constitution, the President issued an order concerning the State of Andhra Pradesh, known as the Andhra Pradesh Public Employment (Organisation of Local Cadres and Regulation of Direct Recruitment) Order, 1975. The Presidential Order defined local areas, divided the state into six zones to decide on local cadres, and provided reservations in the matter of direct recruitment.

However, the Presidential Order was misinterpreted wherever it was put into practice from the beginning. While the order was necessitated by the grievance of Telangana people about not getting their rightful share in employment, the order divided the state into six zones, with Telangana being divided into two zones. The order was effectively used against Telangana people if they belonged to one zone and were employed in the other zone. Similarly, while the order reserved a particular share for locals, it was implemented as if it reserved the remaining share for non-locals. Further, the definition of local removed the spirit of the Mulki Rules by diluting the eligibility to be called a local. Using exemptions provided in the Presidential Order for gazetted positions and offices of heads of departments, quite a few non-gazetted posts were elevated, and departments were divided to increase HoDs from 51 to 204. Thus, the Presidential Order, introduced to allay the fears of Telangana, was essentially used to further discriminate against them, and it only exacerbated the apprehensions of Telangana people.

Officers' Committee, (1985)

As a result of the realization of the non-implementation or misinterpreted execution of the Presidential Order, there was much agitation among the employees and unemployed in Telangana, and as a response, the N.T. Rama Rao's government 1984 appointed a committee to look into the anomalies. The committee, consisting of three senior IAS officers under the chairmanship of K Jayabharath Reddy (the other two being K Umapati and C R Kamalanathan), found that 58,962 non-local employees were appointed between 1975 and 1985 in violation of the Presidential Order. The committee also recommended the immediate repatriation of the non-local employees. The government appointed a one-person commission of another retired

Research Dimensions

ISSN: 2249-3867 Volume - 1 | Issue - 1 | January to March 2011

bureaucrat, V. Sundaresan, "to further examine the alleged violations in implementing the Six-Point Formula and to suggest corrective steps, taking into consideration the report of the Officers' Committee."

G.O. No. 610, (1985)

Based on the recommendations of both the committees as well as a representation from the Telangana Non-Gazetted Officers' Union, the government brought in G.O. Among other measures, it clearly stated, "the employees allotted after 18.10.1975 to zones V and VI in violation of local cadres under the Six-Point Formula will be repatriated to their respective zones by 31.3.1986 by creating supernumerary posts wherever necessary." However, after 25 years, the G.O. On paper, there remain at least two dozen other orders, rules, notifications, and half a dozen official and non-official committees, but actual implementation has not occurred.

The BJP's Kakinada Resolution (1998)

While the response of the two political parties that ruled the state was ambiguous, if not dubious, towards redressing the grievances of the Telangana people, the Bharatiya Janata Party raised its hopes of creating three new states. A little earlier, the BJP, in its state executive meeting at Kakinada in 1997 before the election, passed a resolution supporting the creation of Telangana State, and the same was incorporated in its manifesto for the 1998 Lok Sabha elections. It gave an election slogan of "one vote, two states." However, the BJP joined hands with the Telugu Desam Party in the 1999 Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, and the promise of Telangana State was put on the back burner. Even though the BJP-led NDA ruled the country between 1998 and 2004, the BJP never raised the issue of Telangana.

A.P. Legislature House Committee (2001-2006)

Based on a calling attention debate in the A.P. legislative assembly on December 29, 2001, on the implementation of G.O., A House Committee was constituted with R. Prakash Reddy as chairman and 14 legislators as members, and five as special invitees. The committee was given three months. However, the committee submitted its interim report based on the information from 10 departments and state-level employee associations, and the report was tabled in the A.P. legislature on March 17, 2003. The committee's recommendations include the repatriation of the non-locals appointed to the posts earmarked for the locals under the Six Point Formula with immediate effect. This "immediate effect" has not seen the light of day since the committee submitted its second report on November 14, 2003. Again, it recommended the same immediate repatriation, but no action was taken. Then, another House Committee was necessitated since the legislators' term ended in 2004. Again in the new legislature, another House Committee was formed under the chairmanship of N Uttam Kumar Reddy in 2006, and the committee could not function, except by holding a couple of meetings, due to the resignations of some of its members.

Research Dimensions

ISSN: 2249-3867 Volume - 1 | Issue - 1 | January to March 2011

The Girglani Commission (2001)

Following a debate on the implementation of G.O.s, The Government of Andhra Pradesh appointed a one-person Commission with J M Girglani, a retired IAS officer, on June 25, 2001. The committee submitted its interim report on October 6, 2001, and a three-volume, 716-page final report on September 30, 2004.

The Commission recommended that there should be immediate and effective action to end the various deviations so that the Presidential Order would not be subverted deliberately or through unpardonable ignorance in the future. Also, intense deterrent action should be instituted against officials if there is any indication of gross lapse, bias, favoritism, or recalcitrant persistence in deviations. The Commission also noted that a significant cause of the violations of SPF and the Presidential Order had been the absence of any mechanism for either ongoing control or monitoring system or inspections; a lack of a post-factor monitoring system; and the absence of a nodal agency to guide and control the implementation of the Presidential Order. The Commission has suggested that the fundamental safeguard for the Presidential Orders would be to categorically declare through a government order the sanctity and immutability of the local character of a post or category of posts as of 18.10.1975. The Commission has laid out the safety measures framework and suggested short-term and long-term steps.

The government tabled the report in the Assembly on February 16, 2005, and appointed a seven-member Group of Ministers to examine it. The GoM, in turn, appointed a committee of bureaucrats to study the report and identify the key elements. Based on the report of this officers' committee, G.O. was issued when it was pointed out that the G.O. went against the spirit of the Presidential Order. It was repealed through G.O. No. 116. Then the second House Committee was constituted, and when it could not function due to the resignations of some members, G.O. No. 399 was issued in 2007. However, this latest G.O. The President spoke in a diametrically opposite language to the Presidential Order. On the whole, caught in this web of red tape and procrastination, the primary purpose of protecting the interests of locals in employment was lost.

A Congress Election Manifesto (2004)

The popular demand in Telangana for statehood has come in handy for the Congress in its bid to oust the TDP from power in the 2004 elections. Having been outside power for two terms, Congress was willing to do anything to regain power at that time and saw the mood of the people in Telangana. Continuing that mood, the Congress election manifesto of 2004 said: "The Congress Party recognizes the growing emotions and aspirations of the people of Telangana Region."

UPA's Common Minimum Programme (2004)

Not only did the Congress make a promise in its election manifesto, it saw to it that its promise entered the UPA's Common Minimum Programme, announced in May 2004, though in a convoluted way. The CMP said: "The UPA government will consider the demand for the

Research Dimensions

ISSN: 2249-3867 Volume - 1 | Issue - 1 | January to March 2011

formation of a Telangana State at an appropriate time after due consultation and consensus." While this statement considered the demand for the formation of a Telangana state conditional on "due consultation and consensus," no action was initiated to do so, except for setting up the Pranab Mukherjee committee. The committee collected the opinions of some political parties, but the whole exercise ended at that.

President's Address (2004)

In his address to the Joint Session of the Indian Parliament on June 7, 2004, President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam said, "The Government will consider the demand for the formation of a Telangana State at an appropriate time after due consultations." This statement preceded a detailed comment on regional imbalances and the need to redress them. About this statement also, even after the President promised to have consultations, no attempt on the part of the government to have consultations was made.

Pranab Mukherjee Committee (2004)

Perhaps as a consequence of the CMP's cautious (dubious?) wording of "consultation and consensus," the UPA constituted a three-member committee under the chairmanship of Pranab Mukherjee in November 2004. The committee was asked to ascertain the views of all political parties about Telangana State formation. Though some of them do not have anything to do with Telangana or Andhra Pradesh, more than two dozen political parties sent their opinions to the committee. Till now, nobody knows what happened to the committee's report.

PRP's *Samajika* Telangana (2008)

The year 2008 saw a new political formation in Andhra Pradesh and many people expected that the new party, under the leadership of a charismatic matinee idol, Chiranjeevi, would destabilize the monopoly of both the entrenched parties and bring in a fresh wind in promises, political stances, and implementation. Quite naturally, the Telangana people sought a categorical assurance from the PrajaRajyam Party for their demand for statehood. At the maiden press conference on August 18, 2008, but supported the Telangana cause at the first public meeting on August 26 by saying the Telangana movement was a self-respect movement. Similarly, he said his party favored a *saamaajika* (social) Telangana during the pre-election road show. Though he did not define it in as many words, several intellectuals who joined his party at that time described it as a pro-Dalit-Bahujan Telangana. However, the PRP changed its stand officially on December 16, 2009, and said it would support the status quo.

TDP's Telangana Resolution (2008)

Ever since it was formed, the Telugu Desam Party was a party of Telugu national unity, and it never entertained any sentiments of deprivation of Telangana or division of the state. The current phase of the Telangana movement began when it was in power between 1994 and 2004, and the party bosses did not even allow the echoes of the movement to reverberate in their party.

Research Dimensions

ISSN: 2249-3867 Volume - 1 | Issue - 1 | January to March 2011

Even on the legislature floor, the speaker belonging to the TDP did not allow the members to use the word Telangana and instead suggested they use "backward area."

At the time of the 2004 elections, the TDP supremo, N. Chandrababu Naidu, challenged Congress to support the State division and tie up with the TRS. He was on record saying that the 2004 election was a referendum between the forces that wanted to divide the state and those that maintained unity. Even in the post-election scenario, the TDP had given its letter against the state division to the Pranab Mukherjee committee.

However, as the 2009 election was approaching, the TDP set up a brainstorming "core committee" consisting of leaders from three regions (Telangana, Coastal Andhra, and Rayalaseema) to study and make a decision on Telangana. The committee examined the issue for five months and finally gave its report to their favor of Telangana. The politbureau discussed the report for four days, and consequently, the TDP was officially resolved. The party president announced the resolution in October 2008, paving the way for an electoral understanding with the TRS. The resolution unambiguously supported the formation of Telangana as a separate state.

The Rosaiah Committee (2009)

At a public meeting in March 2009, part of the election campaign, Sonia Gandhi said that Congress does not have an objection to announcing Telangana, provided some critical issues are resolved. Within hours, the state government constituted a joint committee of legislators under the chairmanship of finance minister K Rosaiah. The ToR included examining the concerns of minorities in the proposed Telangana setup, facts relating to employment and resource exploitation, etc., identifying economic issues, the status of the Hyderabad metropolitan area, taking into account the migrant population, issues pertaining to Maoist and terrorist activities in the context of the proposed Telangana setup, working out the modalities for sharing river waters vis-à-vis the existing situation, and working out the modalities for sharing river waters vis-à-vis the

While the ToR covered everything under the sun, the committee was not given any specific time frame. All the opposition parties-TRS, CPM, CPI, and BJP-refused to nominate their representatives to the committee. The committee was constituted by seven legislators from Congress and one from MIM. Four were from Telangana, three from Andhra, and one from Rayalaseema. One does not know what the committee had done, except that the committee's name was used in the election speeches.

Election Manifestos of the major parties (2009)

During the 2009 elections, the Congress Party, the TDP, and its electoral allies promised Telangana State. The Congress reiterated its no-objection to Telangana's stand. It said: "The Congress Party does not have any objection to forming a separate State of Telangana. However,

Research Dimensions

ISSN: 2249-3867 Volume - 1 | Issue - 1 | January to March 2011

at the same time, the Congress Party feels that it has to take a specific path in this regard... after the (Rosaiah) committee submits its report, further action will be taken immediately."

However, the Telangana people thought Congress deceived them by making similar promises and reneging in 2004, and this feeling was translated into an electoral alliance between the TRS and the TDP. The Telugu Desam Party, with the latest resolution in favor of Telangana in its hand, promised in its manifesto: "After a detailed discussion in the Party Politbureau on the report submitted by the core committee appointed by the party on the issue of separate Telangana State formation, respecting the sentiments of Telangana people, the party announced its favorable decision for the formation of separate Telangana. Already the party has conveyed its opinion to the Pranab Mukherjee committee. In this context, immediately after taking over power, the Telugu Desam Party will take all the necessary political and legal measures to create Telangana State."

The PrajaRajyam Party's election manifesto said: "The PrajaRajyam Party is going ahead intending to build a Social Telangana. Respecting the popular will, the PrajaRajyam Party will take all the necessary legislative actions for creating a separate Telangana."

All Party Meeting (2009)

Two independent developments in September and October 2009—the Supreme Court's observation in favor of Hyderabad being a "free zone" and the exposure of the encroachment of lands around Hyderabad assigned to Scheduled Castes by people from coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema—led to anxiety among Telangana people. By November, there were sporadic agitations all over Telangana. Telangana Rashtra Samiti announced that he would sit on a fast-unto-death demanding resolution of these problems and the formation of Telangana State. The fast was scheduled to begin on November 29, and he was obstructed and arrested a few hours before that. He continued his fast in jail and later in a hospital. On December 7, when his health condition was grave, the government invited all the political parties in the state to find a solution. The All Party Meeting resolved that they do not have any objection if a bill is introduced in Parliament to form Telangana State.

However, when the Union Home Minister announced that "the process of Telangana State formation is being initiated" on December 9, all these parties accepted that they divided vertically. Again, the promise given to Telangana was dishonored.

Home Minister's Statement (2009)

In his statement on December 9, 2009, Union Home Minister P Chidambaram made three promises:

- initiating the process of formation of Telangana State
- asking the chief minister of Andhra Pradesh to move a necessary resolution in the State legislature

Research Dimensions

ISSN: 2249-3867 Volume - 1 | Issue - 1 | January to March 2011

- asking the State government to withdraw cases on students and agitators booked between November 29 and December 9, 2009

Of these three promises, the first one is in suspended animation, the second one was not necessary as per the Constitution (of course, the CM on record denied having any such information), and the third one did not take place even after three months.

Conclusion

Indeed, this long tail has many more fatiguing twists than elaborated here, with every turn being a blind curve or ending in a sad note. That's why there is a mass upsurge in Telangana right now, and the people say they do not believe in any other new twist in the tale and seek nothing short of the creation of a State. What is the guarantee that a new promise would be kept, and how long should we wait for another deception after accepting another promise? Telangana people experienced all such delay tactics throughout history. Starting with the first State Reorganization Commission of 1955 to the recent Statement of the Home Minister on December 9, 2009, Telangana got a feeling of betrayal; it is the duty of a democratic government to keep up the hopes of the people. However, people are hopeful that this time they achieve the new state.

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