



## **THE ROLE OF KONDA LAKSHMAN BAPUJI IN JAI TELANGANA MOVEMENT (1969-1971)**

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Biography is the result of an untiring effort and strenuous research. It is a pioneering task aimed at unraveling something novel erstwhile unknown. Biography shows hidden identities of a person and throws light on his nature, characteristics, ideologies and traits. It exposes a complete picture of a person from different angles and we can assess his personality through a study of a biography.

Biographical study of a political leader finds significant place in the area of research. It yields thorough insights and understanding of the political arena and contemporary thoughts besides upbringing socio-cultural, religious and educational background indelible mark on one's personality. A look into one's biography reveals what one said and did, what one decided on a particular situation, how one reacted to power politics and pressure.

In this study, the observations on the increased use of biography as a scholarly research methodology are integrated with reflections on its theoretical consequences. Centre to this development the shift from is the abstract and structural approaches of the past to the situating of human experience as the starting point of historical interpretation.

### **Review of literature:**

**Yeshwant Saigaonkar's** (2001)<sup>i</sup> book –“*Hyderabad Freedom Struggle*” considered as the essential one in indication of its history. There are six sections in the book, which cover the geographical distribution of Hyderabad State. The second chapter is on Marathi Sahitya Sammelan and Hyderabad State. The third chapter is based on the archival source material and in the fourth chapter, there is a story of the

rise of Kasim Razvi and MIM which he has described as poisons serpent. The fifth chapter is on the Arya Samaj movement. He has pointed that, the Arya Samaj Satyagrah had established a glorious phase in Hyderabad State.

**Swami Ramanand Teeth's (1980)** <sup>ii</sup> *'Memoirs of Hyderabad Freedom Struggle'* deals with first Telangana Movement. Swamiji has covered various important details about the history of the freedom movement. This is his biography as well as the history of the Telangana movement. The book is also translated in Marathi by Bhausahab Deolgaokar titled as Pavan Smruti and P. V. Narshishrao had written the preface for this book. He has narrated that, Gandhiji had given a green signal for using weapons against Razakars when a group of leaders met Gandhiji at Vardha.

**Ambedkar's speech** stanchly influenced her decision to enter politics and social movements. Sadalakshmi was a key figure in the fight for a separate Telangana and later became a prominent leader in Madiga Dandora Samithi, one of the prominent organizations that demanded the sub-categorization of Reservation (Affirmative Action) within Dalits. She actively participated in the Telangana movement by mobilizing women. She gave the slogan "women warriors, arise to speak up" to assert the identity of women and the marginalized (Ibid).

*"My Father Balaiah"* is a biography of an illiterate father, wherein **Y.B. Satyanarayana** chronicles the relentless struggle of three generations of his family, with the desire to make known the inhumanity of untouchability and the acquiescence and internalization of this condition by the Dalits themselves. *"My Father Balaiah"* is a story of great adversity and even greater resilience. Its strength stems from the simplicity with which it is told. The remarkable story of a Dalit family from southern India - Narsaiah, a twenty-one-year-old man, is set to inherit a vast tract of land given to his father by the Nizam, but he loses it to a feudal lord. This precipitates his departure from Vangapally, his ancestral village in Karimnagar District of Telangana the single most significant event that would liberate his family and future generations from caste oppression. Years later, it saves his son Balaiah from the fate that most Dalits face: humiliation and bonded labour.

### **Biography Of Konda Laxman Bapuji**



In November 2008, Konda Laxman Bapuji, then member of the Telangana Sadhana Samithi, announced the demand for a separate Telangana state. In the same year, he along with Tulla Devender Goud and several other leaders formed the Nava Telangana Praja Party (NTTP). Their demand was triggered in protest of the Government apathy towards the Telangana people in providing potable water, for drinking and other purposes despite the presence of two major rivers Krishna and Godavari. At the inauguration ceremony of the NTTP, veterans of the Telangana Rebellion of 1969 like Konda Laxman Bapuji who had fought and lost their family members in the rebellion were felicitated. The NTTP also contested the assembly elections in 2009 along with like-minded parties with the objective of creating a separate Telangana state.

Konda Laxman Bapuji kept the fire burning in him even till the last years of his life. In 2012 at the age of 96, he sat for an indefinite fast demanding that the parliament should pass the Telangana bill. Age never acted as a deterrent for this firebrand veteran activist. He participated in and even summoned round-table meetings, padayatras, sadbhavana yatras and all-party meetings to promote the Telangana cause. He was one individual who believed in fighting till the last breath in his body to achieve what he believes is right and he knows should happen. Bapuji's activist heart never stopped beating for the oppressed and neglected class of the society. The Telangana weavers received his sympathy and active support in their cause as well. To protest against the onslaught and unjust practices of mill owners, Bapuji mobilized weavers from across the state and helped them stage a protest for their rights. His was a voice which was heard in every forum. Bapuji's efforts were hugely instrumental in fructifying the dreams envisioned by every mind in Telangana. He died on 21st Sep 2012 at his residence in Hyderabad. Konda Laxman Bapuji is a life well-lived. He has left indelible footprints on Telangana soil which acts as appropriate guidelines for its future generations to tread on and craft their destiny the way he did his own.

In addition to the above mentioned factors a research into the biography enlightens us about important events and developments of that period. The researcher thus gets an opportunity to delve into the impact, which a political leader inherits and their by he is enabled to assess and add information to the study which he takes up. Thomas Carlyle rightly remarked that the History of the world is nothing but the biography of great men<sup>1</sup>. It means that if we read the biographies of great men, we read the History of the world.

### **Scope of the study**

Mainly my study deals with the incidents which took place in the region and the conditions after the formation of the Andhra Pradesh and with the period of Konda Laxman Bapuji. Sometimes it is essential to study the important events and incidents which related to separate Telangana movement in two phases.

This study analyze the contributions of Konda Laxman Bapuji in various movements like upliftment of backward classes, mobilization of youth and his role in the separate Telangana movement.

### **JAI TELANGANA MOVEMENT AND THE ROLE OF KONDA LAKSHMAN BAPUJI IN IT -1969-1971**

In 1968, University students union elections, Telangana agitators supported Mallikarjun was elected as General Secretary. In these elections, even though separate Telangana state issue did not arise. However, safeguarding of Telangana rights dominated. In these circumstances Konda Laxman Bapuji and Konda Venkata Ranga Reddy as ministers played an active role in safeguarding the interests of Telangana Region for which they were treated with contempt by the vested interested Andhras. However among the people of Telangana feelings of regional discrimination was worsening on various accounts,- particularly the injustices in respect of jobs in government and public undertakings such injustices in the public undertakings establishments in Kothagudem coal mines, power generation unit at Palwancha have spread an agitation in the year 1968. This agitation due to bad behavior of Andhras, particularly Police soon took a shape of peoples movement and spread like fire throughout Telangana and became more intensive and severe an account of Andhra Police bias and cruelty in dealing with this agitation and the provocative statements of some Andhra leaders. Konda Laxman Bapuji used to openly condemn such provocations even though he was member of Kasu Brahmananda Reddy's council of ministers.

All the people's organizations in Telangana have resolved for separate Telangana. All the educational institutions and courts are closed. At the same time some young intellectuals have launched Telangana Praja Samithi. Madan Mohan, an advocate without any political affiliations was elected as its first president. This Samithi has organised

meetings in several towns in Telangana, the state government feeling that law and order is disturbed in Telangana due to strikes, resentments and violations have taken the help of Central Reserve Police to control the situation. The movement has taken a serious turn. Dr. Marri Chenna Reddy, then a minister of the central government had to resign from it due to the court's decision on corrupt practices in his election to Legislative Assembly. For this future he found the Telangana movement a good green posture and joined it and maneuvered to take up the leadership of Telangana movement from Madan Mohan, who was the President of the Telangana Praja Samithi.

By March 1969, no leaders of any important political parties participated actively in separate Telangana movement. As soon as the movement started, the first congress leader who joined the movement resigning from State council of ministers was Konda Laxman Bapuji. He started Telangana congress committee along with some congress leaders and independent M.L.As. Inaugural session was started by Konda Venkata Ranga Reddy, the Deputy Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. It was a great historical event in the Telangana movement. Due to eminent political leaders formed Telangana movement, differences arose in their organisation, Dr. Marri Chenna Reddy and Konda Laxman Bapuji have remained as two Chief opponents. They cherished caste bias and personally disliked each other as Dr. Chenna Reddy entertained Reddy inclination and Konda Laxman Bapuji cherished love towards weaver's community. Konda Laxman Bapuji has informed that Kasu Brahmananda Reddy was confident that Konda Laxman Bapuji and Dr. Chenna Reddy cannot work together in the Telangana movement due to their caste bias. He confided to his close associates that there was no question of the success of the movement and danger to his position as long as they both do not work together. He was doubly sure of this state of affairs.

As a result of Telangana movement Kasu Brahmananda Reddy had to resign from his position as Chief Minister on behalf of the high command of the Congress committee, Umashankar Dixit the then Home Minister of the Indian union and C. Subrahmanian former Finance Minister of the government of India came to Hyderabad to ascertain the views of the Congress legislators in respect of the new leader to be elected in the vacant place of Kasu Brahmananda Reddy. They came with the idea of securing support of Dixit sponsored candidate P.V. Narsimha Rao. They elicited the views of the various individual

legislators. In his term Konda Laxman Bapuji made his observation very firmly on the plus as well as the minus points of P.V. Narsimha Rao. Dixit was displeased at the expression of minus points. However Konda Laxman Bapuji urged that views showed is conveyed to Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

Ultimately P.V. Narsimha Rao was elected as the leader of the Congress Legislative Party. While leaving for Delhi to consult the Congress high command in respect of the formation of his ministry, P.V. Narsimha Rao included Konda Laxman Bapuji name, but on the advice of Dixit, his name was deleted. Earlier by Reddies, now by Brahmans, injustice was done to Konda Laxman Bapuji.

The next day when Konda Laxman Bapuji met Dixit, to his surprise Dixit sorrowfully refused to Konda Laxman Bapuji talk with Mrs. Indira Gandhid on the previous night and tried to explain that he had not played any negative role against him as was alleged. Shankar Dayal Sharma, the General Secretary of the All India Congress Committee made a public announcement at Hyderabad in respect of some of the designate members of the Pradesh Congress Working Committee as well as the election committee. Konda Laxman Bapuji's name was found in the high a both the committees. But Umashankar Dixit got Konda Laxman Bapuji's name deleted from both the lists. So far state politics was in the hands of Reddy community. However Dixit being a Brahman exposed P.V. Narsimha Rao as a potential candidate for the position of Chief Minister. Konda Laxman Bapuji has remarked that since he belonged to a backward community, Dixit wanted him to distance him from active politic of the state.

### **Konda Laxman Bapuji: Separate Telangana Movement**

Soon after completion of police action in Hyderabad in September 1948, the slogan of United Andhra has been strengthened in Sarkar districts of Andhra region. Ayyadevara Kaleshwara Rao has established United Andhra Mahasabha in Vijayawada in November 1949. This organization has masterminded unification of Andhra and Telangana regions. Kaleshwar Rao has suggested the United Andhra formula at the All India Congress Summit held at Bangalore in July 1951. However the Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has remarked the suggestion as "Loose Talk". On the other hand Communist Party has unleashed Armed Struggle inTelanganga region and has spread the

slogan of "Democracy in United Andhra". The architect of this slogan Puchalapally Sundaraiah has spread the concept of one notion, one language and one state.

Later several Communist and Congress leaders competed with each other to retain their superiority and have spread United Andhra slogan. In 1937 Professor Mamidipudi Venkata Rangaiah has suggested formation of United Andhra at a convocation meeting. Vavilala Gopala Krishnaiah has published a book "Vishalandra" in 1940. After formation Andhra State in 1953 also leaders from Andhra have endeavoured for United Andhra. They have also suggested to the central congress leaders that in order to curb communist power in Telangana region, formation of United Andhra is the only recourse. However States Re-organization Committee constituted in 1953 December has dismissed the slogan of United Andhra. Justice Syed Fazul Ali, Hridayanath Kunjru, K.M. Panikkar were members of this SRC. Andhra leaders have raised their curtain again for United Andhra. This Committee has visited Hyderabad in 1954 and has taken the opinion of different organizations and people. They have analysed the situation and have clarified that Telangana region should be retained status quo with a new nomenclature Hyderabad State. They have opined that though people from Andhra are craving for merger of Telangana in Andhra, people of Telangana are not in favour this proposition. Some Andhra leaders have felt that even though unification is desirable, if it is realized through the resolution of Telangana people it would be appropriate. In this matter final word would be rested with the people of Telangana. In this context after 1962 general elections, after 5 years of SRC recommendations, 2/3 of the M.L.As have agreed for unification and have voted for United Andhra State.

Leaders like K. V. Ranga Reddy, Dr. Marri Chenna Reddy have complimented State Reorganization Committee's recommendations. These leaders opposed the views of Konda Laxman Bapuji, who supported United Andhra. The concept of United Andhra has become a hot topic for discussion. Seven District Congress Committees out of 10 districts in Telangana were in favour of formation of United Andhra. When this proposal come up for discussion in Hyderabad Legislative Assembly 147 out 174 M.L.As have expressed this opinion. 103 members have supported United Andhra whereas only 29 supported formation of separate Telangana State; remaining 15 members have remained neutral. Konda Laxman Bapuji joined the bandwagon that supported United Andhra. K. V.

Ranga Reddy and Dr. Marri Chenna Reddy went to Delhi and argued with Vallabh Panth, the Home Minister that there were diversities between Andhra and Telangana regions and that Telangana region would be suppressed if Andhra and Telangana were merged. He did not understand the seriousness of the issue, but the Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru did not favour United Andhra. In October 1953 while speaking with the journalists he remarked that behind the concept of United Andhra, there is a hidden desire to infiltrate and to dominate over Telangana. The then Pradesh Congress President Swamy Ramananda Thirtha, Konda Laxman Bapuji ,V.B. Rajuand P.V.Narsimham Rao have favored merger of Telangana in Andhra.<sup>iii</sup>

### **Nehru's indication for separation:**

In these circumstances the common people, students and intellectuals have rejected merger of Telangana in Andhra. However Congress leaders from Andhra region have given assurances freely and generously and have successfully managed the central leaders to think in their lines. They have threatened the central leaders that if Telangana State is formed, it would be deemed as Southern Pakistan. In this context Congress high command has considered diffusion of misunderstanding between the two regions. Lastly in a meeting held in a village in Nizamabad district between Andhra and Telangana leaders they arrived at a consensus and consequently Central government has resolved to merge these two regions. Due to pressure of Andhra leaders Pandi Nehru has visited the region and pacified the leaders who opposed the merger. He in the course of endeavoring to arrive at an accord between the leaders of the two regions has said, "The central leaders are performing a marriage and if the husband and wife lived harmoniously with love and affection, they would continue as married couple for life long. Otherwise they would have to go for a divorce."<sup>iv</sup>

### **Konda Laxman Bapuji for President's Rule in Andhra Pradesh:**

Konda Laxman Bapuji opined that the Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee is only interested in Andhra Congressmen and therefore the Telangana Congressmen took a bold decision to form the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee, and appealed to all Telangana Congressmen to strengthen the Congress in Telangana region. It was the Telangana Pradesh Congress, which resolved unanimously at its convention held on the



1<sup>st</sup> June to dismiss the Brahmananda Reddy government and impose the President's role in the State. The Telangana problem is a problem of one and a half crores of Telangana people and that the Chief Minister is not the competent authority to give separate state for them, he said and observed, the people will take it by their own right as it is their birthright to have it.

Konda Laxman Bapuji went along with B. V. Guruswamy and pleaded with Mrs. Indira Gandhi to dismiss Kasu Brahmananda Reddy and to impose President's rule in Andhra Pradesh. Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee has resolved to this effect and the same was conveyed to the Prime Minister. They have discussed with the central leaders for three days. In case President's rule is not imposed they suggested that at least the Chief Minister should be replaced. If action is not taken in those lines there is a danger that Congress Party will disappear in Andhra Pradesh they warned.<sup>150</sup> In those days Chief Minister Kasu Brahmananda Reddy had a meeting with Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister, Mr. Jagjivan Ram, Minister for Food and Agriculture and Mr. Swaran Singh, the Minister for Defence separately and convinced them not to impose President's rule in Andhra Pradesh.

Konda Laxman Bapuji and Guruswamy were tired in their efforts to convince the central leaders. They returned to Hyderabad and appealed to the people of Telangana to observe the Bandh on 16<sup>th</sup> June and show to Kasu Brahmananda Reddy how unitedly they stand together in spite of his provocative actions with the help of the hirelings and goondas as well as the military and the police. Konda Laxman Bapuji also said that if Brahmananda Reddy still Parade himself as the so called well-wisher of Telangana let him agree at least for the opinion poll.

Konda Laxman Bapuji and Dr. Marri Chenna Reddy have decided that Telangana problem should be discussed at all national platforms. Telangana Praja Samithi has resolved to discuss Telangana problem at the AICC meeting to be held at Haryana in 1969. They resolved to send Konda Laxman Bapuji as their representative for the AICC meeting. AICC at first agreed to permit Konda Laxman Bapuji to attend the meeting. At that time AICC was deeply engrossed with group politics and the President Nijalingappa believed that the Chief Minister Kasu Barhmananda Reddy would support him and this

provoked him not to permit Konda Laxman Bapuji to discuss Telangana issue at the AICC. They have eliminated Telangana issue from the agenda.<sup>v</sup>

### **Opinion Poll:**

Konda Laxman Bapuji and Dr. Marri Chenna Reddy were deeply insulted for not discussing the Telangana issue at the AICC meeting and for not forming a separate Telangana State. Thus visited extensively length and breadth of Telangana districts and organized peoples' seminars. They have organized opinion poll to gauge the mind set and feelings of the common people. They have declared that in order to achieve separate Telangana 40 Telangana M.L.As are resigning their membership. To counter these efforts, in the name of United Society, some Telangana leaders who cherished ministerial berths have attended a meeting at Mahabubnagar. Kasu Brahmananda Reddy, The Chief Minister and Kokani Venkatratnam, The President, Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee went there to address the leaders at Mahabubnagar. The students, youth and members of Praja Samithi expressed their resentment by showing black flags. The police opened fire on the agitators, killing three and injuring several of them. Organizers of this meeting distributed money, arranged transport facility and gathered big audience. The Chief Minister's remark of calling the separate Telangana leaders as "Eagles" provoked a massive resentment and he had to close his speech suddenly and abruptly.<sup>vi</sup>

### **Black Flag Day:**

Resenting the indiscriminate firing of police on the Telangana agitators, under the guidance of Dr. Marri Chenna Reddy and Konda Laxman Bapuji the activists of Telangana Praja Samithi and the Students Action Committee have called the people to observe 10<sup>th</sup> July, 1969 as a "Black day" by hoisting black flags on houses, shops and other business establishments and by wearing black arm-bands to protest against the police atrocities during the past three days. The Telangana Praja Samithi and the Students Action Committee have also decided to observe July 12, 1969 as a "Flag Day" by asking the people to hoist the "Telangana Flag." The police foiled the attempt of the Secunderabad Students Action Committee to take out a cycle procession to Raj Bhavan to submit a memorandum to the Governor. To add fuel to the fire Andhra leaders made statements instigating the Telangana agitators, held a meeting of the members of the

Parliament and the State Legislature held at Gandhi Bhavan. Prominent among those Andhra leaders Kakani Venkatratnam, the President of Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee said that what was happening in Telangana could not be called a movement. Venkatratnam said that the agitation was not a people's movement. "How can anyone call stoning of buses and acts of arson by urchins as people's movement" he questioned and also warned that disciplinary action would be taken against these Congressmen who were also associating with movement for separate Telangana. As members of Congress they should dissociate themselves from the violent agitation.<sup>vii</sup>

### **Chalo Assembly:**

At a juncture when the movement was getting intensified, the Telangana leaders started mudslinging at each other. Internal squabbles and thirst for power made them compete with each other. In order to protect the movement from getting weakened and to disturb the government Konda Laxman Bapuji organized a "Chalo Assembly" programme, leaders like Mrs. Sadalaxmi, Saxena, Jagan Mohan Reddy did not extend their support to Konda Laxman Bapuji. But 'Chalo Assembly' Programme was a great success. Municipality they decided to construct a memorial for the separate state in front of the State Assembly in the Gun park of Hyderabad. However the government handed over the Gun Park to the police to stop construction of the memorial. Konda Laxman Bapuji and Dr. Marri Chenna Reddy reached Gun Park without being noticed by the police. Mr. Laxminarayana, the Mayor of Hyderabad laid the foundation stone to the memorial. The police have removed the foundation stone and have arrested those who have entered the Gun Park. Later the Deputy Mayor Rama Chandraiah has laid the foundation stone for the dead heroes at the Secunderabad Clock Tower Park.<sup>viii</sup>

### **Telangana United Front:**

While on one side Telangana Praja Samithi was organizing movements, on the other side the leaders who came out of Congress Party like Nookala Ramachandra Reddy and V.B. Raju considered achieving Telangana State through democratic way in the Assembly. With the support of separatists from Congress and independent M.L. as Konda Laxman Bapuji formed Telangana United Front and stood as the chief opposition party in the Assembly. Meanwhile All India Congress Committee is disintegrated and Konda

Laxman Bapuji, Dr. Marri Chenna Reddy, V.B. Raju and several separatists in large numbers showed their allegiance to Mrs. Indira Gandhi. Under the auspices of Telangana United Front and leadership of Mrs. Sadalakshmi, Konda Laxman Bapuji and V.B. Raju organized Satyagraha in Hyderabad. It reminded of the scenes of agitation during independence movement. This Satyagraha has spread to all districts in Telangana. Hyderabad reverberated with several incidents. 50,000 Satyagrahis were arrested in Telangana districts. All the jails have been transformed into an eternal ground of fire. The journalists have participated in Satyagraha for the first time.<sup>ix</sup>

### **Resentment with Black Flags to Y.B. Chavan:**

Konda Laxman Bapuji has planned to show their resentment on the occasion of Y.B. Chavan's visit to Hyderabad. In spite of the government's prohibitory orders he has led the procession with black flags. He remarked that they resorted to show their resentment against the misuse of central reserve police and the callous and obstinate attitude of Central government towards Telangana issue. Student unions supported the agitation. But the Student unions remarked that they had nothing to do with Black Flag rally. Konda Laxman Bapuji made a clarion call to all the agitators for achieving separate Telangana to unite under one organization and to merge all the divided forces for a common cause. He desired that Telangana Praja Samithi, Telangana United Front and Telangana Congress should form as one organization. He remarked that through attaining unity they could hero the national leaders and thereby we can achieve separate Telangana can be achieved.<sup>x</sup>

### **Letter to Mrs. Indira Gandhi:**

Konda Laxman Bapuji wrote a letter to Mrs. Indira Gandhi for her undaunted step of introducing and getting it passed the payment of privy purses to the former rulers in the Lok Sabha. Similarly he complimented her for giving the status of statehood to Manipur and Himachal Pradesh. In the same way he requested the Prime Minister to consider the geographically diversified and long-cherished desire of millions of people of Telangana for a separate state.

It may be true, that Telangana region has no leader of national importance and there was prevalence of disunity among Telangana leaders. However the fact remained that the genuine problems were very much in existence and the people of Telangana were depending on the Prime Minister for a bold action aimed at providing a solution to the Telangana tangle to the best satisfaction of the people of the region.

In view of formation of groupism in Telangana Praja Samithi separatist Congress legislators could not elect any one of them as a leader who could unite all the forces. Meanwhile Dr. Marri Chenna Reddy started gaining upper hand in Telangana Praja Samithi. He could not tolerate Konda Laxman Bapuji's rise equally as a leader in Telangana Praja Samithi. So he distanced him from the activities of the Samithi. They both planned their programmes and the dates in different districts. In order to avoid his involvement in the programmes, Dr. Marri Chenna Reddy sent Konda Laxman Bapuji to New Delhi to discuss the Telangana issue.

By the time he discussed the issue with Babu Jagjivan Ram Telangana Praja Samithi organized peoples Satyagraha on 10<sup>th</sup> October, 1969. Keeping in view Konda Laxman Bapuji, Dr. Marri Chenna Reddy has released a circular that those who did not participate in the Satyagraha would be eliminated from Telangana Praja Samithi. Deeply stirred by the circular, Konda Laxman Bapuji has tendered his resignation from the executive committee of the Samithi to the President Dr. Marri Chenna Reddy. But Dr. Reddy sensing protest from the agitators judiciously wrote a letter to Konda Laxman Bapuji not to press for acceptance of his resignation. Konda Laxman Bapuji in his reply remarked that he was not offered opportunities to work in the Samithi. This way mutual accusations and letters finally resulted in a split in Praja Samithi. Both the leaders went to the extent of criticizing each other and the Newspapers reported their tirade.<sup>xi</sup>

Dr. Marri Chenna Reddy has misused the opportunity; he proved his feudal mentality by not allowing any other leader to grow in Telangana movement. He grabbed Telangana Praja Samithi into his power and virtually made it his personal organization. He misused it for his personal gains. In the name of a movement he tried to attain his political goals. Party positions were given only to his followers. Konda Laxman Bapuji remarked that he could not adjust with Dr. Marri Chenna Reddy who gave importance to

personal gains in the place of regional gains and he come out of Telangana Praja Samithi and exposed his nature to the masses.

### **Chenna Reddy's attitude dangerous to Telangana:**

Dr. Marri Chenna Reddy for his political gains surreptitiously established good relationship with the Prime Minister and started weakening the Telangana movement. As part of his understanding he supported Chief Minister Kasu Brahmandna Reddy's suggested candidate for Medak Zilla Parishad President Ship. Not only that, in Siddipet by election he rejected to see that a common candidate contested for the election. Resenting his rejection several Praja Samithi leaders resigned their membership. In those days Konda Laxman Bapuji was busy rehabilitating flood hit people in Warangal district. Later he started criticizing the harm done by Dr. Marri Chenna Reddy to the Telangana movement. He announced that separate Telangana is the goal of all people of Telangana. He further remarked that 15<sup>th</sup> January should be observed as Telangana day and that looting of the feudals should be rejected.

### **Dislike for making Praja Samithi a Political Party:**

Konda Laxman Bapuji and Sadalakshmi opposed transforming Telangana Praja Samithi into a Political Party. They desired that Samithi should continue as a movement and achieve separate statehood. They felt that transforming Praja Samithi into a party has personal gains to Dr. Marri Chenna Reddy. Several other party leaders who joined Praja Samithi have distanced themselves from the movement after Samithi has transformed into a party. In these circumstances separate state supporters were requested to join Telangana Congress. Not only was that it remarked that Telangana Congress will contest all the Parliament seats in Telangana. Konda Laxman Bapuji, Sadalakshmi and captain Ansari asked Scheduled Castes, Tribes and backward classes to join Telangana Congress and thereby to achieve Telangana State.

To go back a little earlier, Konda Laxman Bapuji was a minister in the Brahmananda Reddy Cabinet when the Telangana agitation started. He played a key role in the formation of the Telangana Congress. He was the first Telangana minister to resign from the cabinet. Initially he was opposed to the slogan of a separate Telangana and

advocated a federal setup for Andhra Pradesh with full autonomy for the Telangana region. The Congress Party, which was opposed to division of the state, also rejected this on the ground that once regional autonomy was granted to the Telangana region, a chain reaction would start throughout the country.

A frustrated Bapuji slowly became a separatist. He convened a meeting of Telangana Congress workers on June 1, 1969. The convention, inaugurated by K.V. Ranga Reddy, -constituted the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee on November 20, 1970. The TPCC was renamed TC (Telangana Congress). It appealed to the people not to join the bandwagon of Telangana Praja Samithi which, it said, was led by a bunch of selfish and over ambitious leaders.

Both the Telangana Congress and Telangana Praja Samithi contested mid-term Lok Sabha elections of 1971. Congress-bashing was not a plank of the Telangana Congress, its only difference with the Congress was its demand for a separate Telangana State, and the Telangana Congress failed to command the support of the people for its candidates. The Telangana Praja Samithi emerged victorious by bagging 10 of the 14 seats it contested in Telangana.

The Congress factions were in the forefront of the agitation throughout the period of agitation. The movement subsided when the factions merged with the Congress. The 1969-71 agitation showed that a particular group realized the need to reassert itself by exploiting issues of mass appeal. At first a particular group withdrew from the parent organization. But the same group rejoined it with more bargaining power on the basis of its strength demonstrated through public support. After elections Dr. Marri Chenna Reddy for his selfish ends merged Telangana Praja Samithi into Congress and thereby separate Telangana movement has failed utterly.<sup>xii</sup>

### **Views of Bapuji on separate Telangana and separate Andhra Movement:**

Separate Telangana movement had its own history whereas separate Andhra movement was abrupt and was the result of reaction of a few land-lords who clubbed with some disgruntled politicians, had successfully fanned the emotions of people of Andhra and Rayalaseema regions. The last agitation for separate Telangana state taken place

during period of 1969-70. And the agitation for separate Andhra State during 1972- 73. He had played a positive role during 1956-57 for merger of Telangana with the Andhra and subsequently. He had to play a big role in support of the demand for separate Telangana state during 1969 and 1971. However in view of the very bad experience in Telangana movement He had to keep myself inactive during the separate Andhra movement in 1972-73. It will be difficult to be very brief in narrating the facts and my views in respect of these two movements. However he tried to narrate the same as briefly as possible. First he was deal with the separate Telangana movement.<sup>xiii</sup>

One shall have to note the people of Telangana region due to genuine apprehensions were not in favour of merger of and Andhra regions and wanted a separate state for Telangana. Even the Fazal Ali commission on the re-organization of states favoured for valid reasons a separate Telangana state. Under the leadership of Sri Konda Venkata Ranga Reddy and Dr M Chenna Reddy etc. A movement was started in the year 1955 against the merger and in favour of separate Telangana state. At that time supported the cause of merger and for this stand He had to face rough treatment at the hands of the separatists. Ultimately the national leaders arranged some gentlemen's agreement between the Andhra and Telangana leaders safe guarding the Telangana interest. There the leaders of non-merger of movement had agreed to the merger which resulted into formation of Andhra Pradesh state. By and large the Telangana separatists felt let down by their leaders sri Konda Venkat Ranga Reddy and Dr.M.chinna Reddy had secured minstership for themselves in the first council of ministers of Andhra Pradesh.

From the day of formation of Andhra Pradesh the dishonouring of the gentlemen's agreements, although one of the signatories to the gentlemen's agreement. namely Sri Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy was elected as leader of the congress legislative party and who became first chief minister formed the first council of Ministers without honouring the commitment of making a Telangana person as Dy. Chief Minister, soon after the formation of Andhra Pradesh Telangana people started to feel that the Andhra brothers in the Government administration as well as outside were behaving with superiority complex. The Telangana people also stated to experience in justice in services and violation of the gentlemen's agreement. The Telangana surplus funds.



We're being spent for Andhra purpose or for the purposes other than of Telangana development activities. In the year 1960-61, during the Sanjeeviah Ministry of which he was also a member, due to some political rivalry in the Congress and also due to a little bit communal feelings against Sri Sanjeevaiah, some Telangana forces wanted to create some political troubles and they found it conducive to do so, also party under the grab of injustice to Telangana. Thus Sri Achuta Reddy the then chairman of Telangana Regional Committee of the Legislative Assembly brought to the public notice certain injustices being done to Telangana. Feelings of injustice to Telangana were already there among the people, so some agitation trends to come forth. However, the Government issued a White Paper denying the allegations of injustices and assuring of a fair deal with Telangana and making commitment that all the Telangana surplus funds would be spent on Telangana development within the stipulated time. The communal anti forces were not satisfied with it. However, before they could take up perspective step. In 1962 after elections Sri N.Sanjeena Reddy became the Chief Minister in the place of Sri D. Sanjeevaiah.

The Sanjeeva Reddy government did not honour the assurances given by the Sanjeevaiah Government and Injustices were done to Telangana. Due to the personality of Sri Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy and belonged to influential community, there was no initiative what-so-ever to move against the justices to Telangana.

After him Sri Kasu Brahmananda Reddy became the chief minister in the year 1963 or 64. In respect of Telangana the same situation continued But Sri Kasu was more tactful to some extent in dealing with the regional feelings. However, bitterness among the Telangana employees as well as among Andhra employees in Government and Quasi government institutions, were ever increasing due to the feeling of injustice promotions. Fixation of seniority scales of pay, new appointments and postings etc. Thousands of cases were pending with the state government, Central Government, and Courts of law.

Sri Kasu was trying to balance the situation. However with regard to the much one sided appointments of Andhra persons in Kothagudem thermal project, some commission started and in the last months of 1968, suspecting harm to them, the Andhra officers of



the project encouraged some youths to agitate in the Andhra region against the continuation of Telangana Safeguards.

There were two congress groups in Khammam district one called by Sri Seelam Sidda Reddy, the then minister of the state government, and the other by Sri Jalagam Vengal Rao, chairman of the Khammam Zilla parishad. One of the groups encouraged students and youth to undertake fasting in support of Telangana safe guards. This was done solely due to the district political rivalry between the congress groups. The hunger strike was continued for quite a sometime getting wide publicity. To counter this agitation some isolated counter agitations were taking place in Andhra region.

Meanwhile elections of Osmania University students union were held Sri Seelam Sidda Reddy minister and others, on behalf of the chief minister, supported one group. As against this all other splinter groups joined together and got majority in the elections. The minority group to demonstrate its more interest in Telangana cause and that this group alone is capable of getting the government support to safe-guard the Telangana interest, put up a resolution in the first meetings of the union, demanding to continue and strictly implement the Telangana safe-guards. The resolution was conclusive to the students' emotions. The office bearers and members belonging to rival majority group, sensed that the minority might score the point by getting the resolution of Telangana safe-guards passed. Therefore, they managed to create trouble in the meeting and got it dispersed. But the minority group claimed as the resolution was passed. There upon the majority group to snatch away the minority groups possible gain in the public and more so in the students folk, declared as a resolution was passed demanding a separate Telangana State and immediately released it to the press. Both resolutions appeared in the press. This happened in the 2nd week of January, 1968. Both the rival groups cried to mobilise the students in support of their respective stands for continuation and strict and implementation of Telangana safe-guards and for the demand of separate Telangana.

When the Osmania University students union's majority group raised the slogan of Separate Telangana State, there was no seriousness behind this demand. But the minority group of the union to gain strength among the students planned to launch demonstration

for its demand of continuation of the Telangana safe-guard and strict implementation of the same, and started some sort of agitational activity boasting of having support of political high ups in the Government. To counter it the majority groups also started its agitational activities. To crush the majority group's agitational activities the Government encouraged the minority group to interface and disturb the majority group's activities. In support of the minority group, the Government started to use the Police force against the majority group. This was the greatest mistake that was committed by the Brahmanada Reddy Government. The majority group started to attract more public sympathy, and a feeling committed against Telangana persons and issued a statement of the facts to the press and appealed to the Andhra's to restrain from resorting to violence. My first statement made the Andhra's happy and second statement made them unhappy. He sent my note on both the incidents to the Chief Minister drawing attention to how the police was negligent with regard to the Srisailam incident. On my second statement, Sri Kakani Venkat Ratnam, the then President of the Pradesh Congress Committee made observations in a way provocation the Andhra's and threatening the Telanganites. Already there was a general feeling among the Telangana people of all walks of life that great injustice was being continued to Telangana. Therefore unexpectedly there was a tremendous public response was coming forth to the public meeting that were started to be held in different parts of Telangana. The violent incidents added fuel to the fire and the Telangana agitation started to pick up momentum leading it to be a people's movement. Very soon i.e. on 24 March, a convention was held in the compound of Reddy Hostel at Hyderabad. The Public response to it was unprecedented. Quite a good number of prominent congress leaders including Dr. G.S.Melkote, M.P. & former Minister Smt. T.N.Sada Laxmi, former Minister in the State Government, and other addressed the convention. This convention put a seal on the movement. Openly involving the state level, district level as well as block i.e. Panchayat Samithis level. Responsible public leaders including many Zilla Parishad Chariman and Panchayat Samithi Presidents.

## **Conclusions**

Telangana movement, which caused ripples in the political circles, has suffered a death blow due to political and personal gains of some selfish politicians. However the movement survived internally. The leaders who lost faith of the common people could not

come forward to lead the movement. But employees, students and intellectuals are spearheading the movement in their level. Desire for separate Telangana has revived once again in 1997. Separate Telangana supporters have requested Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee President Mallikarj unto support Telangana Movement on 1997. When he brought this issue to the notice of Congress Party; they have managed to remain in the forefront by forming a separate Telangana co-ordination committee, which adopted a resolution on a separate Telangana at a convention on August 17<sup>th</sup> at the Gandhi Bhavan. In these circumstances Akhila Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad has planned for separate Telangana 'state. Move significantly the Peoples War Group has lent its support to the movement. In its document on Telangana it has made it clear that a working class leadership will lead the movement. Hence leadership cannot be exclusively a Congress privilege. As the movement gains momentum-, the leadership question will be an important issue as people this time will see to it that the movement is not his asked by a few politically inspired people.

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<sup>i</sup> Saigaonkar Yeshwant (2001), *Some Important Chapters in Hyderabad Freedom Struggle*, Manikrao Phulekar

<sup>ii</sup> Teerth Ramanand (1980), *Memoirs of Hyderabad Freedom Struggle*, Popular Publication, Mumbai,

<sup>iii</sup> Sarojini Regani, *The Reminiscence of the Freedom fighters of Andhra Pradesh*,  
A.P. State Archives, Hyderabad. Tape recorded on February 22, 1983.

<sup>iv</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>v</sup> Shobha Gandhi; *Prethyeka Telangana Udhymala Charithra*, Gandhi Publications,  
Hyderabad-2002, P.29.

<sup>vi</sup> Bapuji, Konda Lakshaman; *Telangana Affair*, Jaladrushyam Publications,  
Hyderabad, 1969, P. 1

<sup>vii</sup> Bapuji, Konda Laxman; *Telangana Affair*, Jaladrushyam Publications, Hyderabad,  
1969, P.6

<sup>viii</sup> Keshavrao Jadav, *Telangana Udyamala Charithra (Article)*, *Telangana Pranteeya Asamanatala Abhivrudhi, Simhadri, S., and Vishweshwar Rao, P.L., (Ed.), Centre For Telangana Studies, Hyderabad, 1968, P. 11.*

<sup>ix</sup> Bapuji Konda Laxman *Diamond Jubilee Souvenir*, Hyderabad, P.20.

<sup>x</sup> "Telangana students to go on Sathyagraha" appeared in *Times of India English Daily* on July 3, 1969.



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<sup>xi</sup> Narayan J.P., *Delivering the Himachal K Shah Memorial Lecture on National Integration dated 5<sup>th</sup> July, 1969, English daily on June 7, 1969.*

<sup>xii</sup> Bernstraf Dagmer & Gray Huge, *King Makers; Politicians and Politics in Andhra Pradesh, Har-Anand, New Delhi, 1968P.218.*

<sup>xiii</sup> *An interview by Prof. Sarojini Regani, Konda Laxman Bapuji A Revolutionary on Gandhi Cap. Sanghamitra Publication.2015.*