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## REGIONAL DISPARITIES CREEPING INTO JOURNALISM: AN OVERVIEW OF TELANGANA STATEHOOD

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### ABSTRACT:

*Journalism has a great deal of importance influencing the lives of people both globally and locally. Revelation of truth behind the curtain to delivering the news, journalism does everything. This noble journalism has been wickedly used against the people of Telangana in realizing their aspirations of a new state. This movement is not just about creation of a separate state, but about identity, self respect and pride. This paper focuses on how the Andhra dominant media has tried to curb the outpouring emotions of the local Telangana people and portraying a wrong picture of Telugu identity. This also shows how the Telangana journalists fought back and became one of the front runners of Telangana movement.*



**KEYWORDS:** Region, Culture, Politics, Media.

### INTRODUCTION

Telangana movement was a movement of self respect, pride and most of all a movement for identity. It was a mass movement with the common ideals of separate statehood for Telangana aka liberation of Telangana from the clutches of seemandhra dominance. It was a fight for freedom of the motherland. This struggle ever encompasses history which had many scholars, poets, academicians who not everyone putting all their energies for the single cause. To recall some of those, the likes include from Chakali Ailamma, Doddi Komariah to Professor Jaya

Shankar & KCR. Many people have fought valiantly, sacrificed their lives for this noble cause including many unsung heroes. Before the formation of combined state of Andhra Pradesh, people of Telangana revolted against Nizam and successfully ended his rule and aspired to be a separate state in the Indian Union. But the people native of Andhra crushed the spirits of Telangana people, even sidelining the report of Fazal Ali Commission to amass the capital city Hyderabad which is known for its riches and the geographical location. The people of Andhra having already this idea in mind ever didn't

setup a proper capital in Kurnool, instead made a makeshift or 'Camp capital' which can be highlighted by naming those areas of Government functioning as A.Camp, B.Camp etc. which are still landmarks in Kurnool town of Andhra Pradesh.

### MEDIA AND THE TELANGANA MOVEMENT

In order to discuss about the media and its role in Telangana movement, there are few questions that need to be posed.

- Is there a scope of regional disparities in media?
- What is media doing? Is it protecting the interests of

dominant class, or is it working for protecting the interests of oppressed and backward regions?

- What is the role being played by media?

Before finding the answers to these questions, just let us have a look at the journey of press. In the pre independence era, newspapers were born to achieve an outcome called freedom, to rouse the spirit of Nationalism among the masses and turn them against the British, to spread the reforms to eliminate the social inequalities was the work done by the media in Andhra region whereas the press in Telangana had worked for uniting the people against the Nizam and to protect the culture of Telugu. In both the cases the motive for running the press was not PROFIT.

Post-Independence the situation has changed and the profit has become the ulterior motto. Running press has turned into a business and media industry to have become a venture offering huge profits as in liquor or movie industry or pickles industry. Those established players have turned out to be tools to protect their other businesses. The best example being the closure of Udayam daily as soon as it has been transferred into the hands of Magunta family during the prohibition years need not to be explained. Due to the lack of a noble objective, being turned in to be a business etc. media started benefitting the dominant regions, caste and class if not at least protecting their interests.

### **MEDIA AS A WAY OF DOMINATION**

Politics, issues (problems), culture and language are the four key pillars in press which tend to protect the interests of dominant region. These four pillars were used extensively to glorify the dominant coastal Andhra region and underplay the Telangana region. Out of these four pillars politics play a crucial role and therefore media made the dominance of dominant region more dominant, dominating the politics of Telangana region. Media plays a crucial role in providing status to a certain political leaders. Politicians of the dominant region acted as a pressure group to protect the region's interest. It can be seen from the time of formation of Andhra as a separate state. Giving more attention to that pressure group, their actions, their speeches, and media has continuously protected their interests. During the tenure of Marri Chenna Reddy, P.V. Narasimha Rao as Chief Ministers, though they were Chief Ministers they were forced to work according to the interests of that pressure group. To destabilize and smash the career of Tanguturi Anjaiah he has been wrongly portrayed as a joker, as this was nothing to do with him as he had a clean character. Once with the emergence of Telugu Desham Party, a new method called 'Media Management' has cropped up. Where the press had full time active Karyakarthas (workers). The press has begun to lose its freedom and it turned out to be a nightmare, rather than calling it a nightmare better be called a curse to the spirited, independent Journalists of Telangana.

Coming to the second aspect of the problems, media lies at forefront in bringing a region's problems as state problems. If the problems of Telangana were to be highlighted, those articles/news were termed as divisive and are likely to spread hatred and enmity between the people. Having a look at the reporting of irrigation projects will clear all the air. If the news about Polavaram or Pulichintala has cropped up it would be printed on the front page, if something related to Telangana though it is of urgent necessity were never given a prime space. Decision making powers of major newspapers being with the journalists of Coastal Andhra, even journalists of Telangana region too even tuned their mindsets even though it is against to their conscience. Even if they take up such issues they won't be printed and moreover they might lose their jobs. If a leader from Telangana opposes Pulichintala, he will be portrayed as a Villain and his act as a crime. If the politicians irrespective of their parties unite and fight for a project, it would be hailed by media and no disciplinary action will be taken against them by their parties. If leaders of Telangana unite, respective parties would take disciplinary actions and these actions of respective parties would be appreciated by media. Telangana had a market for naxalite heroes and papers would be sold as hot cakes if any news related to encounters were to be published. As the demand for those news has reduced now. The focus has turned on to the naxal related news and this was perfectly used to keep the problems of Telangana at the bay. To keep this alive, journalists of coastal Andhra were appointed as desk in charges at various newspaper offices. Even the editorial

board too would mostly comprise of the Andhra Journalists, there by easily, the real problems of Telangana were wickedly drove away. Media has done a lot of damage to the culture of Telangana. Media which takes special interests in presenting the special stories about the poets, reformers, artists of coastal Andhra on their Birth and Death anniversaries never showed any interest with respect to the cultural figures of Telangana. Likes of Sharibullah Khan who stood behind the people of Telangana or about Suravaram Prathapa Reddy who dedicated his entire life for the development of press have never been talked about it.

Media is the main culprit behind the youth of this generation not knowing about the heroes of Telangana Armed Rebellion. Even the poets like Vattikota Alwar Swamy, Dasharathi Rangacharyulu too were never talked about during any of the meetings or essays based on literature. Coming to the aspect of language, Telangana dialect was never used in newspapers. Even it is not used in district tabloids where the common dialect is the main language of conversion. The only incident or the time when media used the Telangana dialect is during the tenure of T. Anjaiah as the CM, where his dialect was turned into a satire and he was wrongly portrayed as a joker, trying to reduce his stature. No language is inferior to other and it is not an unknown fact to the journalists of the coastal Andhra. They always downplayed the language of Telangana and Telugu of coastal regions has been brushed up on the Telangana. Language is just a medium to exchange information. Many Telangana dialect words like puntikura have been totally discarded off. At least those words could have been allowed to be used in mofussil editions.

### **REASONS FOR TELANGANA JOURNALISTS FORMING UNION**

Journalists of Telangana faced two problems during the movement of Telangana. One, they were unable to take a stand against the government. Two, they also can not favour the rulers defying their conscience. For their livelihood the press ended up favouring the dominant regions lobby. With advent of student's agitation and the participation of masses the journalists have sensed the perfect opportunity that were shivering to return the favour to their motherland they were born in and they formed unions. In future directions like establishing Sri Krishna Committee and other following issues, situations being ripe and the regional patriotism overpowered their inhibitions and the journalists got divided on regional basis which was actually inevitable. The shackles of Andhra dominance over them was broken by themselves. This move was actually a historic move as this risked their affiliation to the journalism. Since the formation of Telangana on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2014, they are able to make their impressions on the map of Telangana with pride and cherish the new state formation in which they have taken part.

### **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The Andhra lobby which was dominating the spheres of culture, politics, problems and language has tried its best in downplaying the culture of Telangana and had made the words like puntikura look barbaric to the urban Telangana youth who never heard of it, as it was long back replaced by gongura and it was made a part and parcel of media and the curriculum. This dominant lobby made sure that there is no mention about Telangana and the political history saw the omission of Telangana movement altogether. The misconceptions that the language what the people of Telangana speak is not Telugu and they forcefully made the Telugu of Coastal Andhra as the perfect Telugu and it has been standardized formally by incorporating the same language in writing the textbooks and the language for official use. Neither the history of Telangana, nor the language of Telangana was given its due importance. Never in the history, has Telangana been given its promised rights or its due share in resources.

Denying Telangana of its due share, the surplus from the Telangana region has been drained to the parts of Andhra making it more prosperous. Culturally too the dominance was very clear. Bathukamma was never celebrated in the new millennium with great pomp and gaiety unless the movement for separate Telangana rose. Even the accent of Telangana too was downplayed in the movies by assigning it to comedians and villains making a mockery of our own Telugu. Thus the movement of Telangana which started for its rightful share in Neellu (water), Nidhulu (budgetary

allocations), Niyamakalu (jobs) bore fruits on June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2014 by establishing it as a separate state. It can be called as the longest history of struggle of a state in the history of the world.

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