



## Students Perception on the Role of Online Media in Telengana Movement

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The word “Telangana” has attracted the ample attention of the people not only of Andhra Pradesh but also the entire country and across the globe as well. Telangana is one of the three regions of Andhra Pradesh. It was ruled by the Nizams of Hyderabad before it became a part of Indian Union. The Telugu speaking people in Madras state enjoyed some form of democracy since 1920. During this time there were violent Mulki agitation by some Telanganites to send back bureaucrats from Madras state and to strictly implement Mulki rules. Meanwhile, Telugu speaking areas (Andhra region) were carved out of an erstwhile Madras state by popular agitation of leaders like Potti Sri Ramulu to create Andhra state with Kurnool as its capital in 1953. In December 1953, the States Reorganization Commission was appointed to prepare for the creation of states on linguistic lines. The States Reorganization Commission (SRC) was not in favour of an immediate merger of Telangana region with Andhra state, albeit the common languages between the two. The commission proposed that the Telangana region be constituted as a separate state with a provision for unification with Andhra state, after the 1961 general elections, if a resolution could be passed in the Telangana state assembly with a two-third majority of Telangana people were against the merger. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru initially was skeptical of merging Telangana with the Andhra state, fearing a “tint of expansionist imperialism” in it (Rao, K.V.N., 1972). The movement for separate state of Telangana took place in different phases-predominantly in 1952, 1969, 1997, 2001, 2004, 2009 and 2011.

#### 1.1. Grievances of Telangana Proponents

Telangana is the largest single region of the three regions in Andhra Pradesh state covering 41.47 percent of its total area is inhabited by 50.54 percent of the state’s population, contributing about 76 percent to the state’s revenues. The contribution of revenues are 19.86 percent from Central Govt., 61.47 percent (including 37.17% from Hyderabad) from Telangana, 14.71 percent from Andhra and 3.90 percent from Rayalaseema.

Among others, alleged injustices in water, budget allocations, and jobs are grievances cited by Telangana proponents. Telangana supporters cite that the majority of water supply is from the Telangana region, yet irrigation disproportionately benefits the Coastal Andhra region with relative underdevelopment of Telangana. In addition, the share of education funding for Telangana ranges from 9.86 percent in government aided primary schools to government degree colleges which has a share of 37.85 percent. Above numbers includes the expenditure in Capital Hyderabad. In addition, budget allocations to Telangana are generally less than 1/3 of total Andhra Pradesh budget. In addition, there are allegations that the Telangana budget is being misappropriated. Telangana proponents cited that only 20 percent of total Government employees, less than 10 percent employees in secretariat, less than 5 percent of head of the departments in Andhra Pradesh are from Telangana, while those from other regions make up the bulk of employment. Andhra Pradesh was represented by Telangana Chief Ministers for only 6-1/2 years out of over five decades of its existence, with no Chief Minister from the region being in power continuously for more than 2-1/2 years. By establishing hegemony onver state the Andhra elite could divert resources to their region (Kodandaram, M., 2007). The process of development has been disrupted ironically by the policies pursued by

successive governments of Andhra Pradesh. **Jaya Shankar (2004)** presented how Telangana has been subjected to injustice in various fields.

Proponents of a separate Telangana state felt that all the agreements, accords, formulas, plans and assurances on the floor of legislature and Lok Sabha, in last 50+ years, could not be honoured and Telangana was forced to remain neglected, exploited and backward. They alleged that the experiment to remain as one state proved to be a futile exercise therefore. Separation is found to be the best solutions.

### 1.2. Students' Role in Telangana Movement

Throughout the period of separate Telangana agitation the intensity was always caused by the participation of students of Osmania University and Kakatiya University. In December 1968 the students of Osmania University organized a rally to protest against discrimination in government jobs against Telangana people. Keshav Rao Jadhav and Sudershan Singh, both teachers, supported the students. Discontent intensified when some of the guarantees agreed upon were supposed to lapse in January 1969. Student agitation for the proper implementation of the guarantees began at Osmania University in Hyderabad and spread to other parts of the region like wildfire. To fulfill their cause and in order to make their presence felt, a separate body in the name of Telangana students joint action committee was formed so as to mount pressure upon all the political parties not to dilute their demand for a separate statehood. In order to bring their strong demand for a separate statehood for the notice of central leaders of all the political parties, they conducted a series of agitation programs like dharnas, raastha rokhos, bandhs and fast unto death.

While student politics in Andhra Pradesh is mostly a conglomerated caste-based affair, the whole-hearted involvement of students from all sections in the latest upsurge on the demand for a separate Telangana is a new development. In fact, Telangana students surprised the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) which is spearheading the movement since 2001 itself when they rose in unison in support of K. Chandrasekhara Rao who announced his fast-unto-death for a separate Telangana, and staged violent protests when he was arrested before he could start the fast. As KCR's fast entered the eight day on Sunday, the government has concerned about his health as it is about the volatile situation the students have created in the 10 districts of Telangana region. And, like in 1969, when students got involved in the movement, the epicenter of the uprising this time is the Osmania University in the state capital. In fact, it is the students' agitation that has brought the Telangana movement back into the limelight, even if KCR's fast was the trigger. "Till KCR broke his fast momentarily the pro-Telangana students' protests were in his support. Then things changed dramatically and drastically and students took the lead which was unprecedented," says TRS ideologue Prof K. Jaishankar.

## 2. COMMUNICATION IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

The Telangana stake holders developed a strong that as most of the Telugu News Channels were owned and controlled by industrialists and business tycoons of Seemandhra the Separate Telangana Movement was being properly and truly covered by these channels. As a result a need to start a separate Telugu News Channel was felt. A socio-political movement demands a structural change in the system. It may be organized around a singly issue or set of issues or around a set of shared concerns of a social or community. It aims at convincing the citizens and/or government officers to take action in the issues and concerns which are at the focus of the movement. Political movement is an expression of the struggle of a social group for the political space and benefits (Prabhanjan Kumar Yadav, 2011).

Social movements begin with unequal distributions of wealth, power and privilege, effects of social policy and cultural change or transgression. Aggrieved/ desiring groups may organize to pursue their shared beliefs and interests. For socialization and social change, communication is prerequisite. Social change refers to the notion of social progress or socio-cultural evolution; the philosophical idea that society moves forward by dialectical or evolutionary means.

In order to mobilize support for their causes, social activist strategically draw communication plans to make their demands to be at the forefront of the public debate. To explain the widespread existence of social movements, sometimes members make extreme sacrifice on their behalf. Telangana movement is one among such Socio-Political movements, which used various communication methods to mobilize support for their causes.

### **2.1. Communication Methods Used in Telangana Movement**

To get a momentum to be the Telangana movement and its wide spread, several communication methods and strategies were adopted by various political parties and the organizations. All the possible communication methods-traditional folk and modern mass media, big and little media, print and electronic media, web and wires, vertical and horizontal, linguistic and non-linguistic communication were used optimum. Their potentialities were explored extensively to reach the messages not only the length and breadth of Telangana, but also overseas and across the nations. Now the Telangana movement is in every heart and every hut. This credit goes to each and every person and organization that contributed their best, particularly literary, cultural, legal, socio-political organizations and parties.

### **2.2. Big & Little Media**

The Telangana movement made use of big and little media for its wide spread. This big and little media like Flags, Scarf, Caps, Dress code, Banners, Posters, Pamphlets, Stickers, Flash cards, Play cards, Paintings, Photo exhibitions, Hoardings, Boards, Essay/Elocution/Songs/Quiz competition, Guise or masks, Colour, Flag Foundations, Dappulu, Song & Drama, Commemoration of martyrs, Seminars, Conferences, Workshops, Meetings, Rallies, Dharnas, Bandhs, Suicide Death/Police killings, Paadayatra or Marathon walk were among most effective means of communication media used in Telangana Movement. Particularly the pink or gulal colour used by TRS for its Flags, Flag Foundations, Scarf, Caps, Dress code, Banners, Posters, Pamphlets, Stickers, etc., Indeed, it is found that they made an immense and ever lasting impact on the minds of the people in Telangana.

### **2.3. Oral Communication**

Telangana has a rich tradition of oral communication. The mass communicators in Telangana made use of the oral communication for the dissemination of the intended messages and motivated the people for the practice of the desired action. This face to face communication has high degree of credibility and validity. These interpersonal communication and the interaction among activists are intrinsically satisfying, generating an effective approach. It takes many forms such as sermons, speeches, verses, songs, folk music and drama, etc., Information is disseminated through group discussions. The traveler's tales, fairs and festivals, religious congruencies held periodically at major pilgrim centers such as Sammakka-Sarakka Jatara in Warangal and Lingamantula Jatara in Alagona districts have been popular media of oral communication.

### **2.4. Folk Media**

More than 80 percent of the people in Telangana live in the villages and depend upon the agricultural or agrarian economy. To communicate with the intelligibly, Telangana organizations adopted the folk media which is native and intimate to Telangana folk. Folk arts and literature are integral parts of the Telangana culture. Telangana organizations selected the folk media as right and appropriate channels to communicate with rural masses. The poet-singers and artists of Telangana adopted the folk media as persuasive communication to motivate the people Telangana about the exploitation of Andhras. Through Telangana Dhoom-Dham, they brought awareness among the people at the grass roots level and sent the message to every heart and every hut.

### **2.5. Audio Cassettes / CDs**

Telangana movement also depended upon the audio cassettes and CDs to disseminate the movement related speeches and songs. Audio cassettes/CDs are widely heard in buses, cars, autos, lorries and trucks and at tea stalls and all kinds of people have listened to these songs umpteen a time. Some of the songs like Amma Telanganama-aakalikekalaganama, Jaya Jay He Telangana, Mandentapotundu Elamanda, Iddamvidipote-bhoomibaddalavutunda, Avvodivanuv Ayyodivatelangano dikitotipaalodiva and speeches of leaders inspired and motivated the cross sections of Telangana to take part in the movement.

### **2.6. Video / Film**

Video CDs are produced on the present plight of Telangana. The movement related documentary production, distribution has been radically opened by the net, peer to peer software, streaming capability, and most recently by innovations in social software that enable greater ease of use in video

uploading, tagging, rating and sorting and downloading. Latest developments are the ability to shoot and share video clips via mobile phone, and experiments in collaborative editing. Telangana activists also produced Batakamma cinema.

### 2.7. Mobile Phone

Mobile phones are the multimodal tool par excellence. In Telangana movement, SMS has been used to organize mass mobilizations, action alerts, public pressure on elected officials, and win political victories. Ring tones of Telangana songs by mobile service providers like Airtel, have been used to enhance and strengthen popular mobilization. Current developments in the use of mobile phones by Telangana movement include the enhanced ability of phones to create and transmit content other than SMS. High quality photo and video capability in the newest generation of mobile phones has led to several software tools that allow people to publish photos, audio, and videos from mobilizations directly to Telangana movement websites. Bulk SMS are also being sent through mobile.

### 2.8. Social Software or New Media

While the definition of social software is contested, most seem to agree that the category includes software tools that allow participation in collective content production, filtering, modification, commentary, and/or distribution, that facilitate community building through connecting people with similar interests, that allow community standing based on participation, reputation, and trust and that involve bottom-up governance styles. These include blogs, wikis, social network services, social book marketing, and peer-to-peer networks. Telangana movement websites could connect the Telangana people residing across the nations.

### 2.9. Blogs

Telangana movement websites could connect the Telangana people residing across the nations. Regularly updated, personal or journalistic websites have existed, the term blog has grown in popularity.

## 3. SOCIAL NETWORK SERVICES

Another type of social software tool that has been used by Telangana movement is social network services. Social Network sites like Face book, Twitter, Orkut and others operate on the principle of networks of trust, enabling connections between groups of people with similar interests, however esoteric, and links between “friends of friend”. In the erstwhile Hyderabad state, during the Nizam regime there was only a little importance for telugu news papers and magazines, since the Urdu was the official language. Nevertheless very few newspapers and periodicals published from Telangana like Telugu Patrika edited and published by Oddiraju brothers from Warangal, Neelagiri Patrika from Nalagonda, Golconda Patrika from Hyderabad, Warangal, Vani and Jandharma from Warangal, Jeevagadda from Karimnagar and Poddu from Nizamabad could not survive by various reasons, particularly the competition from Seema-Andhra media. Meanwhile several newspapers and magazines were started by the Telangana activist and organizations like “Ma Telangana” a magazine was launched by Telangana Information Trust, Jai Telangana, Mana Telangana, Telangana Times, Golkonda Times. They were either closed down after some time or brought out on and often due to financial troubles. But, the interpersonal communication and the interaction among activists are intrinsically satisfying, generating an effective approach.

There is adequate coverage of Telangana issue by all most all the Telugu Channels though as much as majority of these channels are owned and controlled by industrialists and business tycoons hailing from Seemandhra. Where the coverage was made by the T.V. News channels such as TV9, TV5, NTV, STUDIO-N, MAHA TV, ETV, Gemini News, Sakshi TV was confined to debates, discussions and interviews. However, the National media failed to give a proper coverage to the Telangana issue as a result of which it could not attract as much attention of all the National Political Scenario as it should have in order to find a amicable and acceptable solution to this chronic problem.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The word “Telangana” has attracted the ample attention of the people not only of Andhra Pradesh but also the entire country and across the globe as well. Media played pivotal role in communicating the information to the remote areas. The social networking online media in performing content

management, viz. Big & Little Media, Folk Media, Audio cassettes/CDs, Video/Film, Mobile Phone, Social Software or New Media and blogs has created lot more awareness on Telangana movement. The media including several newspapers and magazines covered positive news for separate state. The online media copiously supported for the formation of separate statehood for Telangana. The social software tools allowed participation in collective content production, filtering, modification, commentary, and/or distribution, that facilitate community building through connecting people with similar interests, that allow community standing based on participation, reputation, and trust and that involve bottom-up governance styles. These include blogs, wikis, social network services, social book marking, and peer-to-peer networks. Telangana movement websites could connect the Telangana people residing across the nations.

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