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## Participation of dalit-bahujans in contemporary Telangana movement

Durgam Bhaskar

Research Scholar, Department of History, Osmania University, Hyderabad, Telangana, India

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### Abstract

The movement for the formation of Telangana state revealed the interrelationship between region, caste and power. The emergence of Telangana is unique in the sense that it raises a number of issues concerning dynamics of regional social formation, and power structure. Unlike in many states in India, the former state of Andhra Pradesh represented a unique feature of regional specificity of caste formation and dominance patterns. In this context this paper is an attempt to examine the factors which contributed for Telangana people's active participation in the contemporary Telangana movement and with what vision and values they fought for the separate state. It also analyzes the role of Dalit-bahujans in contemporary Telangana movement, who have been neglected and undermined by existing literature and political structure.

**Keywords:** caste formation, marginalization, Osmania University joint action committee, state formation, Telangana dhoom-dhaam

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### Introduction

Since 1956 till the creation of the new state of Telangana in 2014, the political push for a separate Telangana was a continuous activity. Until 1956, Telangana was a part of the ancient princely state of Hyderabad. Andhra Pradesh was formed by joining the states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. With the foundation of the new state of Telangana, there is a pressing need to examine the situation, origins and evolution of a movement for separate state of Telangana and to locate the contributions of Dalit-bahujans in this movement; and how and why people from these communities came forward to be in the forefront of this movement. Harsha Mogiligundla (2018) <sup>[1]</sup> stated that "the formation of Telangana as a separate state was substantive for the people to exercise their political power in order to protect not just their economic interests but also dignity, self-respect and distinct culture. The Telangana movement can be seen as a fight against the hegemonic domination of Andhra culture. This is just not a demand for a separate state and recognition of Telangana culture. It is a fight against the power politics of dominant feudal castes. If the caste issues are left unaddressed, the crux of Telangana problem remains untouched". However, the Telangana people's movement is rooted in a historical context and a developmental model that the Indian rulers have been pursuing. The regional disparities-economic, social, cultural are a part of this process. After formation of the linguistic state, every economic or developmental mode-be it green revolution are neo-liberal globalization-ended up with sharpening of the differences and widening of the disparities. Added to it is the reckless urbanization leading to imbalanced and unplanned growth of the city of Hyderabad. This city is geographically in backward Telangana region but attracted a lot of capital investment giving rise to endemic claims on the city. This entire direction of development sharpened multi layered contradictions. The ongoing movement is a search for some resolution of the contradictions without the necessary political creativity or capacity in responding to the challenge. This is the dialectic of development one discerns in one of the ongoing movement in a backward region of India. Thus, the economic development of Telangana suffered immensely due to the prevalence of feudalism and the rule of the Nizam. There were tremendous sacrifices of Telangana peasantry in the armed struggle. As many as four thousand left party workers and farmers were killed about 10,000 communist cadres were kept in detention camps and jails for three to four years.

Telangana region is the only place in India which survived for more than 600 years of feudal culture. Telangana being a backward region it has undergone several people's social and radical movements such as Adi- Hindu movement, Arya samaj reformist movement and Armed struggle during 1946-1951 and in 1970's Naxalite movement. The people of Telangana from the beginning to till today have been struggling for separate state. In 1969 it was betrayed by political parties even though 369 students had scarified their lives for it. It again started in 1990s by apolitical civil societal organizations-intellectuals, poets, singers, writers, journalists, students and many others. Since 2001 Telangana people also have been giving their mandate for separate state in a parliamentary way but they have not get what for they have been fighting. In all the struggles the people are fighting against to internal (within Telangana) and external domination and hegemony.

The Dalits and other marginalized people within the movement started questioning the upper caste's hegemonic nature like 'why for Telangana state?' And 'for whom the Telangana state formation?' why because they don't want to be ditched again like, after the 60 years of independence also Dalits are living outside the village and

striving for the power. As Harsha (2018) stated, “from 1952 to 1956, both in Hyderabad State and Andhra State, the political power was shared among only two or three dominant feudal caste groups. Even after 1956, the scenario was the same, only two or three dominant caste groups formed the government in Andhra Pradesh. Initially, it was Brahmins followed by Reddys, Velamas and Kammas who have been enjoying the political power. The Reddys, as a caste, held sway over chief ministership for 32 years, the Kammas for 16 years, the Brahmins for five years, the Velamas for four years and the Scheduled castes only for two years. There was no chief minister from BC’s, ST’s, Muslims, Kapus, Vaishyas”. As seen in the history of the Telangana movement as well, Dalit-bahujans were at the forefront of student activism at large and actively engaged in appropriating other movements and their discourses. In the university campuses of OU, KU and EFLU, despite their differing status, Dalit-bahujan student activism was argumentative and dominant. These students activism elaborated its frame from social justice to the counter-culture movement, which enabled it to attain broader resonance and gain dominance and power to shape the social space and public debates. As a result, caste question, and Dalit-Bahujan culture temporarily took Centre stage in everyday campus life, making even others speak in Dalit and bahujan terms. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar being a political and secular visionary had discussed and written at length on smaller states and their relevance in India. For him the smaller states would provide a space to marginalized castes in negation to make the ruling party to become democratic in ruling process and working for their own political power along with the upper castes in India. In this manner the people of Telangana in general, Dalit-bahujans in particular are striving to get rid of these binary dominations. The above different theoretical perspectives raised certain questions and established the position that occupied by Dalit-bahujans in Telangana Movement. The massive participation of Dalit-bahujans led to the changes in the political agenda of Telangana and positive response from the marginalized and democratic groups at global level. This means that the movement which aims to challenge the dominative character of any ideology was not confined within boundaries. This study here is going to examine how the Telangana people are taking part separate Telangana movement and looking for democratic rights rather than the temporary compensative one.

With the inspiration of the historical Telangana peasants movement the separate statehood of Telangana movement which has begun in 1969 and still continuing as peoples movement is reflection of its own people’s long standing demand. It is a self-respect movement in terms of socio - economic, cultural and political sphere from politically dominated ruling class of Coastal Andhra. It has been continuing since five decades or so. In this movement all sections especially the weaker sections- Adivasi, Dalit Bahujans and Minorities are playing a crucial role along with the upper castes. In the initial stages of the movement, one can trace that even the civil societies were influenced by dominant castes. And hence, they worked as organizations reinforcing the dominant power structure. Eventually, the deprived sections of these organizations recognized this and gradually shifted their focus from issues of water and irrigation to caste and cultural question. Gradually, caste-based divisions in the civil societies started dismantling due to the strong left-wing emerging both in radical and parliamentary terms. Writers, revolutionary singers like Gadar and academicians like Prof. Jayashankar, Prof. Kodandaram, Konda Lakshman Bapuji with their works strengthened the movement.

In this context the main objective of my study here is to examine the consequences which made Telangana people to take part in the movement actively and what vision and values they are fighting for the separate state cause. The second objective is to critically study the role of Dalit-bahujans and their vision which perhaps a democratic and an egalitarian one in Telangana movement, who were undermined in the history of Telangana Armed struggles. It is true that in Telangana, the Dalit-bahujan caste consciousness was growing, even before Telangana merged in to Andhra Pradesh. Because of the Telangana Armed Struggle a class consciousness was formed. But subsequent particularly in the 1980s and 90s, the Dalit-bahujans organized themselves in to the independent caste identity movement which slowly created a consciousness of community identity and spread the consciousness about the need for reservations. Due to various struggle led by the Dalit-Bahujans which led to contributed to strengthen and increasing the caste awareness among various Dalit-bahujans.

### **Caste Hegemony and Telangana**

The movement for Telangana and the formation of Telangana State revealed the interrelationship between region, caste and power. The emergence of Telangana is unique in the sense that it raises a number of issues concerning dynamics of regional social formation, and power structure. Unlike in many States in India, the former State of Andhra Pradesh represented a unique feature of regional specificity of caste formation and dominance patterns. For instance, the non-brahmin (Sudra) Upper Caste like Reddies are concentrated in Telangana and Rayalaseema, while the other dominant upper caste-the Kammas are concentrated in the coastal/delta region. Similarly the Velama caste is mainly found in Telangana; the present Chief Minister of Telangana belongs to this caste. In political terms also, the dominant ruling elite belonged to the Seemandhra region, while the Telangana political leadership was subordinated to them until recently. The Reddy ruling elite primarily drawn from Rayalaseem districts monopolied the political power till 1983, but after the formation of Telugu Desam Party the Kammas exercised political domination. Between 1952 and 2013, Reddies became Chief Minister 17 times, Kammas 6 times, Brahmins 4 times, Velamas once, and SC once <sup>[2]</sup>. However, BCs, Minorities Women and Adivasis never got a chance till today. Similarly, The M.L.As and M.Ps from Telangana are mainly from the Reddy and Velama castes, While in Rayalaseem Reddies and in Coastal Andhra Kammas were overwhelmingly represented <sup>[3]</sup>.

The separate Telangana movement which has begun in 1969 and still continuing as peoples movement is a reflection of its own people's long standing demand. The 1969 movement was betrayed by political parties even though 369 students had sacrificed their lives for it. Movement for separate Telangana was again started in 1990s by non-political civil societal organizations, intellectuals, poets, singers, writers, artists, journalists, students and many others<sup>[4]</sup>. It is a self-respect movement in terms of socio-economic, cultural and political autonomy from the politically dominant ruling class of Seemandhra region. It has been continuing for more than five decades or so. In this movement all sections, especially the weaker sections - Adivasis, Dalits, Bahujans and Minorities have played a crucial role. Since 2001 Telangana people also have been giving their mandate for separate state in a parliamentary way but they have not got what for they have been fighting<sup>[5]</sup>. In all the struggles the people are fighting against to internal (within Telangana) and external domination and hegemony. The Dalits and other marginalized people within the movement started questioning the upper caste's hegemonic nature like 'why for Telangana state?' And 'for whom is the Telangana state formation?' why because they don't want to be ditched again like in 1969-70, and after the 60 years of independence Dalits are still living outside the village and striving for social justice, dignity and empowerment.

The people of Telangana increasingly became suspicious of the *Seemaandhra* Chief Ministers and their deliberate pro-Andhra policies in every branch of administration. Likewise, the partisan policy implications in terms of the development of irrigation, power, education and employment led to the political agitations in 1969-1971<sup>[6]</sup>. The Telangana movement reflected the growing aspirations of Telangana youth and employees towards equity and proportional representation in the developmental processes. Yet the Telangana political leadership betrayed the cause of the people and resorted to political opportunism and total surrender to the central leadership. The treachery of the Telangana leaders was mainly for personal reasons, as Channareddy the leader of the Telangana Praja Samithi entered into an agreement with Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India. The post-1971 period witnessed the announcement of the six point formula signed on 21<sup>st</sup> September, 1973. Though it was intended to solve the Telangana problem led to its further alienation. Commenting on the weak leadership of Telangana a scholar wrote "Presently a majority of Telangana MPs, MLAs and MLCs are only flunkeys, toadies and lackeys of Andhra leaders. They owe fealty to Andhra leaders rather than the party and electorate. They are not only toothless, faceless, characterless but also doormats of Andhra leaders"<sup>[7]</sup>.

Telangana region is the only place in India which survived for more than 600 years of feudal culture. Telangana being a backward region it has undergone several people's social and radical movements such as Adi-Hindu movement, Arya samaj reformist movement and Armed struggle during 1946-1951 and in 1970's Naxalite movement. The people of Telangana from the beginning to till today have been struggling for separate state. In 1969 it was betrayed by political parties even though 369 students had sacrificed their lives for it. It again started in 1990s by apolitical civil societal organizations-intellectuals, poets, singers, writers, journalists, students and many others. Since 2001 Telangana people also have been giving their mandate for separate state in a parliamentary way but they have not get what for they have been fighting. In all the struggles the people are fighting against to internal (within Telangana) and external domination and hegemony. The Dalits and other marginalized people within the movement started questioning the upper caste's hegemonic nature like 'why for Telangana state?' And 'for whom the Telangana state formation?' why because they don't want to be ditched again like, after the 60 years of independence also Dalits are living outside the village and striving for the power. Though the demand for Telangana continues to be raised by some segments of the intelligentsia, it is only since the mid-1990s that we have seen significant exposure and mobilization on this topic, thanks to the activities of CPI (ML) organizations and civil society associations<sup>[8]</sup>. Dr. Jayashanker, Prof. Keshava Rao Jadav, Prabhakar, and his pals Prof. Gaddam Laxman, Harinath, have combed various libraries, especially the Osmania University library, for information on Telangana literature. In Osmania University, Koti Reddy Manohar Reddy founded the Telangana Liberation Students' Organization in 1992. He was a Political Science student at the Arts College. Students who believed that education and job placements in Telangana were primarily occupied by Andhra residents joined the TLSO party and worked alongside Manohar Reddy to correct this injustice. Samidi Jagan Reddy, a journalist working in Udhayam, was an enthusiastic participant who published a book called 'Kakathi.' Maroju Veeranna, M.Sc. in Geophysics from Osmania University's university science college, He was a fantastic singer as well as a fierce orator. He was the PDSU president. He called for reservations and began an agitation against the higher caste countries of 'merit,' who, he said, look down on hard labour. His rendition of 'andukora gutapanduko (Raise the Cudgel)' proved to be a potent weapon, mobilising Telangana residents and laying the groundwork for the Dalit-bahujan struggle in the 1990s. On May 16th, 1999, he was supposedly executed by the government. He was a leader who realized the importance of using revolutionary tactics to the cause of Dalit-bahujans, and he also thought that campaigns against upper caste oppression and caste extinction should take place at the same time. M. Veeranna led the Mandal Commission agitation in 1990-1991. He founded 'Sharamika Bahujana Vimukti,' a Telangana-based organization dedicated to the working class and lower castes. Veeranna founded the 'Communist Party of the United States of India,' and he was instrumental in the formation of the Telangana Mahasabha in 1996. He was successful in rallying individuals from various areas of society as a result of his exposition. The Suryapeta proclamation was made in the Telangana Mahasabha on August 11, 1997, under the leadership of Maroju Veeranna. The discussion on fraud and unfairness in irrigation, agriculture, electricity, employment, and the industrial sector effectively arranged this gathering. A woman farmer's worker attended this high-level meeting. The meeting drew a large number of students from Osmania University and

Kakatiya University, as well as residents from various areas. Maraju Veeranna attempted to unite the Telangana Mahasabha and the Dhalitamahasabha, but the government ran into Maaroju Veeranna, resulting in a huge loss. In 1998, the Telangana Jana Sabha asserted that the desire for a separate Telangana state is a democratic tenet that owes to the democratic ethos. Telangana Jana Sabha has requested that the 610 G.O. be followed, that corporate institutions be prohibited from being established in Telangana, that Telangana culture is preserved, and that Telangana students be provided with work possibilities. Telangana Jana Sabha launched its movement in rural Telangana villages with the "Rachha Banda" programme in response to these challenges. The people of Telangana did not anticipate the geographical Telangana Gaddar predicted, instead preferring people's Telangana and democratic Telangana. It was envisioned that surplus land would be handed to the landless, and the landowners' feudal character would be eradicated. They also said that only via people's movements would Telangana become a reality, and that only then would Dalitbahujans obtain all benefits, including political power. Salary distribution is equal for both men and women. Scheduled Castes/Tribes, Other Backward Caste Communities, and Minorities should all get social justice based on their numbers. Subsequently, K. Chandra Shekar Rao, the Deputy Speaker of the Assembly, resigned and left the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) to resurrect the Telangana movement, which had been dormant since the mass agitation of 1969. He popularized the slogan "self-respect" and "self-rule." The Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) was founded in April 2001. The party drew members from both the left and right wings. TRS has concentrated on electoral politics since its inception. Its goal was to win as many legislative and parliamentary seats as possible, and then play a key role in the formation of government at both the state and federal levels. TRS formed a coalition with Congress in 2004 and was successfully included in the creation of Telangana. The Telangana injustices were brought to the forefront by K. Chandrashekar Rao. And he was able to gain assurances from the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government, but he failed to achieve his goal for several years. When the Supreme Court declared Hyderabad a free zone in terms of gaining positions for the police force, KCR saw it as an opportune opportunity to re-launch the agitation. Protests were organized by the Telangana Rashtra Samithi, and KCR went on a hunger strike. However, the students led the protests and sacrificed their life which compelled the Central Government to approve the proposal of the formation of the Telangana. Despite the fact that it reversed course, the uproar reached new heights, and every home in the region became a focal point. Nearly 900 individuals died as a result of mass protests and sacrifices, forcing all parties to unite for a single purpose. Gaddar began a 400-kilometer 'padayatra,' or walkathon, or cultural peace walk, from Manuguru in Khammam district in order to obtain Telangana independence. Throughout the march, he called for a peaceful state. "The People's Telangana and Democratic Telangana," Gaddar contended. Gaddar was able to unify all artists, particularly those from the ST/ST/OBC communities, who formed the 'United Cultural Front,' while Bellaiah Naik formed the 'Telangana Sangarshana Samiti,' which arranged a walkathon. Following the Indian government's retreat, all Coastal Andhra MLAs filed resignations, and rioting occurred in Rayalseema and Andhra. As a result, under the leadership of Kodandaram, K.Chandrashekar Rao, and senior Congress leader K Jana Reddy, the then Home Minister, the 'Telangana Joint Action Committee' was formed. Except for the Telugu Desam Party, every other political party was represented on the 'Telangana Joint Action Committee,' which included government employees, school teachers, factory workers, university students, lawyers, public intellectuals, journalists, poets, cultural organisations, agricultural farmers, and businessmen. As a result, it grew into a large network across Telangana, and with only a single call for a protest, people from all walks of life would join in. In the following three years, the 'Telangana Joint Action Committee' launched road and rail roko, as well as innovative programmes such as 'Vanta-Vaarpu' (cooking on highways), another brand new programme called the 'Million March' (in which a spontaneous crowd threw Andhra icons into tank bund), and the forty-day 'Sakala Janula Samme' (all people's strike) in which all government. Thus, the JAC was instrumental in presenting the facts surrounding the demand for a separate state before Justice Srikrishna Committee as attached with this thesis as annexure <sup>[9]</sup>.

### **Participation of Dalit-bahujana Sanghala**

The Telangana *Praja Sanghala* sought to consolidate the programme of the people's movement for social justice and inclusive Telangana. However, in the course of Telangana movement in the 1990's various intellectual and political formations like the Telangana Mahasabha, Telangana Jana Sabha, Telangana Information Trust, Telanganalkya Vedika, Centre for Telangana Studies, Peoples Telangana Foundation, and Statement of Agenda for Peoples Telangana, which articulated the social democratic and non-hegemonic aspirations of the people of Telangana is also significant. Mass mobilization by left forces during Warangal Declaration, Bhongiri Sabha, Suryapet Declaration set the agenda for People' Democratic Telangana. Such articulations and mobilisations preceded the formation of the Telangana Rastra Samiti and the political JAC <sup>[10]</sup>. They set the trend and agenda for regional identity mobilizations. Later, it was appropriated by the political parties. In a fundamental sense, the peoples protest politics exposed the manipulations and the compromises of the political leadership of the Telangana movement after 2000. While analysing the nature of the Telangana movement between 2001 and 2011, a perceptible scholar has pointed out the importance of the large scale participation of the downtrodden dalit-bahujanmasses, and their socio-political mobilisation. He remarked that the people's participation converted the regional movement into a democratic movement for more participatory democracy and for the inclusion of lower social groups in the political and administrative structure.

Like in 1969, when students were involved in the movement, the epicenter of the uprising in the later phase of Telangana movement was the Osmania University in the state capital <sup>[11]</sup>. The OU campus became the hotbed of

agitation politics, a battleground and the war zone. The Telangana movement is the first Indian struggle for economic and cultural autonomy. Like many other social -political movements, Telangana movement was also started at Osmania University, where the process of mass education brought many people together. It became center stage for Telangana Students Front (TSF) and Telangana Liberation Students Organization (TELSO) organized demonstrations on and outside the campus. After the formation of TSF by radical leftist group led by Kasim, a number of other student organizations like Telangna Ambedkar Student Federation, by Bandi Bikshapathi, Telangana RashtraVidyarthi Vedika, by Naveen and Prithvi, Telangana Bahujana Vidyarthi Sangam by Papani Nagaraju, and Telangana Vidyarthi Sangham by Rajaram Yadav. These organizations gave new slogans like Dorala Patendla Telangana versus PrjaswamyTelangana, Jai Bheem- Jai Telangana, Telanganaye Mabhavishyat (Telangana is Our Future). The growth of autonomous student movement and its role in keeping up the momentum has been quite significant. Its importance lies in the fact that it exposed the manipulations of the politicians and consolidated the growing will of the masses. The University Students from the two leading Universities in the Telangana region overwhelmingly belonged to the first generation OBC, SC, ST, Minorities and Women. They truly represented the organic linkages with the gross roots aspirations of the lower castes who were the victims of the globalisation agenda pursued by the dominant caste leadership. The student movement of Telangana has become a powerful force to be reckoned with. An examination of various events reveals that the Telangana movement was bolstered with the active participation of students way back in 1969<sup>[12]</sup>. Since then, students have proven to be an asset to spread the movement across the 10 districts of Telangana and making it a truly people's movement. And in 2009, it was the students' call of Chalo Assembly which forced the TRS leader K Chandrasekhar Rao to continue with his hunger strike demanding a separate state. What started as a political move soon turned into a full-fledged movement<sup>[13]</sup>.

The student movement also exposed the double standards of the politicians and their compromising stand points. Thus the dominant caste leadership of Telangana felt insecure and was threatened by the massive civil societal support gained by the student communities. Subsequently the vested interests in the political arena resorted to dividing tactics and offering incentives to weaken the growing strength of the united student mobilisation. This is an important aspect of how the political leadership succeeded in appropriating the gains of the mass mobilisation of the students and caste associations represented by the *Prajasanghala* JAC. This movement of the backward calluses is different from the earlier ones.

For the students who played an active role the Osmania University Joint Action Committee (OUJAC), the movement is a perfect example of a people's movement turning political. They maintained that no one can deny as a result of their struggles if the state is formed, the entire credit can't be given to just only to them, but also those students who paved the way for the movement right from 1950's. They also felt they just can't simply claim that it was all due to them only, because they were able to take the movement forward only because the people were also active. too. For the student community, the Telangana movement is no longer one that is just about identity or water, but also about opportunities. Prof Keshav Rao Jadhav, popularly known as Mr. Telangana, says that the student movement has always been a prominent part of Telangana movement since 1957 given they were most affected by discrimination<sup>[14]</sup>. What is the point of having a degree in commerce or PhD if you can't get a government job? If you go to the AP Secretariat, you will realize that most of the employees there are from the Seema-Andhra region. Does this mean that those from Telangana can't even work as Class-IV employees?" he asked. Having been part of the Telangana struggle since 1950's, Jadhav believes nothing less than a new state will remove the sense of discrimination that those from the Telangana region feel. "Those from Telangana are ridiculed for their language, their culture and they are further discriminated against by denying opportunities which are rightfully theirs," he said Durgam Bhaskar, a PhD research scholar and chairman of Telangana Students Joint Action Committee (TSJAC) believes students have invested in the movement in the hope of social justice. He said, "Most of the students who are part of this movement are first generation students, i.e, they are the first ones from their family to even enter a school or college- a clear cut sign of how terrible the situation is in Telangana". I myself stated that another prominent student leader of OUJAC says that if Telangana state is announced and carved, the students have to be given due credit. "Congress and Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) can't take the credit entirely for the success of the movement. They have to acknowledge the students who have consistently supported and taken the movement forward<sup>[15]</sup>. If you ask me 80 % of the movement was a student led people's movement and only 20% was political," he said. There are also students who have given up their careers for the cause of Telangana and the whole-hearted involvement of students from all sections in the latest upsurge on the demand for a separate Telangana is a new development<sup>[16]</sup>. The famous and renowned poet-singers, dancers, writers, artists like Gaddar, Guda Anjaiah, Ande Sri, Gorti Venkanna, Vimalakka, Sandhyakka, Rasamayi BalaKishan, Jayaraj, Deshpati Srinivas, Warangal Srinivas, Bikshapati and others took part in the theTelangana movement and made it a great success. They sang songs decrying the exploitation of the region and its people and sought support of all sections for continuing the agitation until the ultimate goal was achieved. It is not an exaggeration to say that without Dhoom- Dhams and artists participation the Telangana movement would not have been quite successful. The Dhoom-Dham left a tremendous impact and influence on not only people of Telngana but also the counter parts from other regions and the rulers at both Centre and State<sup>[17]</sup>.

Among the Telangana artists, Gadar is a unique personality. He is a revolutionary Telugu balladeer and vocal Maoist activist from Telangana. His original name is Gummadi Vittal Rao. He took part in 1969 Telangana agitation. He played an active role in the Jana Natya Mandali. With the resurgence of Telangana movement,

Gaddar supported the cause of Telangana and expressed his solidarity to all those fighting for a separate Telangana state, for social justice and empowerment of masses. Gaddar is the first Telangana public intellectual who established a link between the productive masses and the literary text. His songs cut across the barriers of region, religion, dialect, caste and social status. One of his songs "AmmaTelanganamaAkalikekalgaganama" has been selected as the state song of Telangana. Gaddar's 'PodustunnaPoddumeeda' (Breaking dawn) from the movie *Jai Bolo Telangana*, directed by N Shankar, depicts the region's history and struggle for statehood. Demanding immediate solution to a long-awaited separate Telangana State issue, Gaddar and Jaya Raj launched a *Padayatra* walk from Manugur in Khammam District via Warangal and Karimnagar Districts to Jodeghat in Adilabad District and covered nearly 460 kilometers routes. A large number of artistes, poets, writers and students cutting across the ideological spectrum, took part in the peace march. It was the first major initiative by Gaddar and his supporters for separate Telangana. Thousands of Telangana activists, sympathizers and a huge enthusiastic crowd of general public turned up for not only all through his peace rally but also for the concluding meeting held at Osmania University. The audiences were enthralled by the Telangana cultural front's songs and dance troupes <sup>[18]</sup>.

Since more than 80 percent of the people in Telangana live in the villages and to communicate with them intelligibly cultural organizations and artists have adopted the folk media which is native and intimate to Telangana people. 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 from Telangana adopted the folk media as persuasive communication to motivate the people of Telangana about the exploitation of Andhras <sup>[19]</sup>. 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. The role of Song in Telangana movement Folk songs were first used in Telangana Peasant Armed Struggle. The credit of revolutionizing the folk songs for the wide spread of ideological messages goes to BandiYadagiri, Suddala Hnumanthu, Baddam Ella Reddy, Devarupula Rajaram and others. This inheritance and legacy is being continued by Gaddar and other poet singers. The Telangana Cultural artists could kindle emotional feelings in the minds of people through music, song and dance. Telangana poet-singers and artists have imbibed the cultural inheritance from struggles waged by the people of this region against the exploitation of feudal landlords. No other socio-political movement could produce mass consciousness among the rural people as Telangana movement did. So far thousands of songs were composed and being sung by the people throughout Telangana. In fact, without these songs the Telangana movement could not become effective and popular. Especially, the Songs on martyrs inspired many. Aesthetics and emotions of the people were touched by the song as an effective communication medium.

Telangana Dhoom Dham is a unique cultural platform. It is a congruence of Telangana poet-singers, dancers, artists, who explained through different art forms, particularly through songs how the people of Telangana were being exploited by Andhrates and how they can be liberated from the shackles and clutches of Andhra domination. Rasamayi Bala Kishan and Deshapati Srinivas took lead in organizing Telangana Dhoom Dhams. Dhoom-Dham is platform from which thought-provoking messages were sent. It not only attracted the illiterate masses but all sections of people of Telangana across the world. It created awareness among the masses and motivated them to take part in the movement and make it widespread like wildfire. As part of the ongoing agitation for separate state since 2005-2006 umpteen programs of Telangana Dhoom Dhams were organized not only in every nook and corner of Telangana but else wherever the Telngana people went in search of livelihood like New Jersey, Boston, Dubai, Surat, Bhivandi, Mumbai, Delhi and so on <sup>[19]</sup>.

## Conclusion

To conclude, with the participation of the dalit-bahujans masses the Telangana movement reached to the peak and it also gained uniqueness. In this historical revolt against the upper caste Seemandhra politicians and capitalists' dalitbahujans played an important role. The contemporary student movement for Telangana state is also led mostly by Dalit-bahujans students. But the kind of recognition given to them is inadequate and undemocratic. The most interesting thing is that while the lower castes are using their cultural symbols to achieve a separate Telangana, the members of former feudal families are playing the politics of agitation. We also see a surprising unity between some Reddy and Velama political lords. The whole attempt by these two caste forces is to control the political joint action committee, that is leading the Telangana agitation <sup>[20]</sup>. Some academicians have also been drawn in to mediate between those two otherwise politically warring castes. It is as if the stereotype of future Telangana is being played out - "We will play politics and you should play Dhoom Dham, Bathukamma and drums" And some of these leaders are collecting huge amounts of money, mostly to build their family's "political economy" while distributing pittance to ring leaders from the lower castes. Therefore, to achieve social justice and equal opportunities Dalitbahujans are asking about their share in political, economic and administrative spheres and re-distribution of the natural resources after the state formation.

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