

C H A P T E R - V I IANDHRA MOVEMENT IN RELATION TO KRISHNA DISTRICT

In the process of the development, the contribution of Krishna District to the Andhra movement is very immense. It is because the then senior political leaders like V. Ramdass Pantulu, M. Krishna Rao, K. Hanumantha Rao, K. Nageswara Rao, Pattabhi Sitaramayya and A. Kaleswara Rao of the Krishna District were not narrow minded people. Their sphere of political outlook was based on wider problems. The political consciousness in Krishna District coupled with the economic well being since the construction of Krishna barrage in 1857 and the natural advantage of the Krishna District being placed in a centrally situated place, hastened the process for the development and organisation of the separate Andhra movement.

In this context the services of Pattabhi Sitaramayya are unforgettable. In the conference held in 1908 in Machilipatnam where the prominent representatives of Telugu speaking people of Telengana, Rayalaseema and Circars districts attended, Pattabhi Sitaramayya played a major role

in that conference.¹ Later Pattabhi Sitaramayya was awakening the political consciousness through a series of his writings, especially after Lord Harding dispatch on 25.8.1911 to the Secretary of state. The ideas expressed in the dispatch was welcome to the protagonists of Andhra Movement.² Encouraged by the dispatch and taking strength from the broad principles enunciated in the dispatch Pattabhi Sitaramayya in an article in August 1912 wrote "If the needs of the government should ever decide upon a decision of Madras presidency, there would be nothing unseemly in the Andhras desiring a separate Andhra province."³ Pattabhi Sitaramayya along with K. Venkatappaiah focussed the attention of the people in general and the delegates of the first Andhra Conference by releasing a pamphlet on the details of geographical factors, historical truths and linguistical homogeneity in support of the demand for the Andhra state.

After the first Andhra conference Pattabhi Sitaramayya moved a resolution for linguistic provinces in the subjects committee meeting of the Bombay congress session in 1915. Though his resolution

had not come for discussion, he did not lose his enthusiasm in his attempt. In 1917 when Mrs. Besant was the president, Pattabhi Sitaramayya with his relentless enthusiasm for the identity of Andhras, and with the support of Lokamanya Tilak, fought tooth and nail and succeeded for the formation of separate Andhra Congress. Pattabhi Sitaramayya waited in deputation on Montague in 1917 for separate provinces on linguistic principle. Pattabhi Sitaramayya was the chief spokesman before South Borough commission and presented many documents in support of separate province.⁴ In 1921 congress session worked out the plan for 21 separate congress circles and was accepted. In 1928 Pattabhi Sitaramayya was the president of the linguistic provinces league.⁵

In 1931 Pattabhi Sitaramayya along with A. Kaleswara Rao met Gandhiji, who was to leave for London in August. Gandhiji then asked him to wait till swaraj is won for separate Andhra province. However Pattabhi Sitaramayya did not lose sight of the larger aspects of the Congress.

When things became out of control, he vehemently condemned the demonstration against C. Raja gopalachary, the then Chief Minister of Madras presidency, in Guntur in July, 1938. But Pattabhi Sitaramayya did not lose his constitutional approach to the Andhra province, he raised the issue in the congress working committee in 1938. While he was the president of Andhra Congress during 1937-39, Pattabhi Sitaramayya got resolutions passed by the provincial congress for the formation of seperate Andhra province.⁶ About six hundred circulars were dispatched to the legislatures, municipal councillors, district board members, banks and insurance companies requesting to use Telugu language in their correspondence. He openly refuted the charge of Tamilians, that seperate Andhra Province would involve additional expenditure, by exposing the fact that the land revenue income of Andhra is higher than Tamilnadu. Leaving aside the narrow mindedness, he toured even the interior parts of Andhra to enlist support for Andhra province. He brushed aside the differences among Andhras and suspicious of the Rayalaseema people

by becoming a principal signatory to the 'Sri Bagh Pact'. This pact was got approved by him in the A.I.C.C.

In 1937 Calcutta session and in 1939 Wardha session the congress approved Pattabhi Sitaramayya's resolution for separate province. He presided over the convention of linguistic provinces held on 8th December 1946 and spoke that the formation of provinces during the time of British is based on irrational distribution of provinces. He pleaded for appointment of a commission for reorganisation of states in the meeting as Chairman of the provincial and union constitutional committee on 12th June, 1947. The commission was appointed which was against the formation of linguistic provinces, but made exception to Andhra province. Then J.V.P. Report came out in favour of Andhra Province without prejudice to Madras city. Pattabhi Sitaramayya favoured for joint capital of Madras City. Prakasam disapproved this. Then a sequence of things followed with the death of Potti Sriramulu, resulting in the formation of Andhra state.

Thus a political leader of Andhra from Krishna District who envisaged Visalandhra at the very beginning of his meeting in 1908, and who fought relentlessly not only in Andhra but also at all India level, stands paramount for the formation of Andhra state in particular and linguistic states in India. Pattabhi Sitaramayya was hailed as "The father of the Andhra province movement".⁷ As "Hindustan Times" wrote "He was one of the pioneers of nationalism in the south."⁸

The other important personality from Krishna District that took active part was A. Kaleswara Rao. He along with M. Krishna Rao and Pattabhi Sitaramayya attended the first Andhra Mahajana Sabha. Later the second conference was held in Vijayawada itself on the invitation of A. Kaleswara Rao and P. Veeraiah. Before this A. Kaleswara Rao organised the Andhra Mahajana Sabha at the taluq and district level and he undertook a tour to the other districts to propagate and popularise his ideas. Reception Committee under the presidentship of Punanam Venkatappaiah, a leading lawyer of Machilipatnam and A. Kaleswara Rao as Chief Secretary, was formed. However he was sick but did not participate in the proceedings.

In 1914 another important thing to quicken the Andhra feeling was inaugurated. K. Nageswara Rao shifted his weekly paper 'Andhra Patrika' to Madras and converted it into a daily. From 1914 onwards he was attending the Andhra Mahajana Sabha Conferences.

A. Kaleswara Rao participated in the Vth Andhra Mahajana Sabha in Nellore and voted for separation inspite of keen differences. After attending the 6th Conference held at Cuddapah, he went on tour to Chittoor and Nellore and voted for separation inspite of keen differences. Wherever he went he did propagate the idea of separate Andhra province. Along with him the important personalities who toured, besides Pattabhi Sitaramayya were M. Krishna Rao and V. Suryanarayana Rao.

A. Kaleswara Rao was the reception committee president of the special Andhra Mahajana Sabha conference held in Vijayawada in September 1917. A. Venkataramaiah was the secretary of the committee. The next day the committee was held in the house of

A. Kaleswara Rao and among other things it was resolved to represent to Montague and Chemsford the desire of the Andhras.⁹

In September, 1917 the Justice party which was against the attitude of sepearte Andhra, conducted anti-brahmin conference. A. Kaleswara Rao was not in the chair. With his own efforts and with the co-operation of his colleagues, another anti-brahmin conference was conducted. This was against the justice party conference. A. Kaleswara Rao got three resolutions unanimously passed for sepearte Andhra Province.

In the special Conference held in Guntur in 1918, A. Kaleswara Rao attended the meeting and K. Nageswara Rao was the President of the conference.¹⁰

In 1924, Andhra Mahajana Sabha was held under the auspices of K. Rama Linga Reddy. K. Nageswara Rao was awarded the title of 'Desodharaka'.

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In 1937 the silver jubilee of Andhra Mahajana Sabha was held in Vijayawada. Pattabhi Sitaramayya was one of the signatories to the 'Sri Bagh' pact.¹¹ A. Kaleswara Rao did not miss the opportunity of attending the linguistic conference held in Delhi. He attended the A.I.C.C. Committee meeting held secretly and raised the question of Andhra province with Rajendra Prasad. He pursued his action until Rajendra Prasad replied that it is a matter to be discussed with Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhai Patel.

A. Kaleswara Rao prepared the statistical data for presentation to the "Dhar Commission".¹² He being suspicious of witnesses who were not fully desirous of Andhra state, pleaded for inclusion of thirty more witnesses to the 'Dhar Commission'. The list was included. A. Kaleswara Rao told the commission after consulting with his Rayalaseema friends, that a place between Bezwada and Guntur is preferable to location of Andhra Capital. He suggested to place high court headquarters at Anantapur. After that the J.V.P. Report was published, A. Kaleswara Rao took

active part in convening the A.I.C.C. Meeting and resolved to cede the right on Madras City. Here it was suggested that Madras city may be made a special state.

A. Kaleswara Rao along with others, in the meantime formed 'Visalandhra Maha Sabha' on November 26th, 1949. From this time onwards hopes were formed that Andhra would be separated and visalandhra would be formed with Hyderabad as its permanent capital. The Andhra state was finally formed with the sacrifice of Potti Sriramulu in December 1952. On the death of this martyr, in Bezwada agitation mounted and it had gone into the hands of hooligans and goondas who damaged government property worth Rs.2 crores.

Thus all the important personalities in Krishna District immensely contributed for the cause of Andhra province. For instance K. Hanumantha Rao enlightened the public by writing, "Andhra unity is one with the national idea, one in its human bearings, one in the richness of its intellectual

and ethical contents and one also in the ultimate harmony of the spiritual life." It is seen that V. Ramdass Pantulu first raised the resolution for separate Andhra in Bapatla Conference.¹³ Later he raised the problem in the legislative council in 1927 and insisted on it. M. Krishna Rao and Valluri Suryanarayana Rao toured and propagated the ideal. P. Venkatappaiah was the committee president to the second Andhra Mahajana Sabha held in Bezwada in 1914.¹⁴ A. Venkataramanaiah was the active participant and was the reception committee secretary in the special conference held in 1917 in Bezwada.

Gampalagudem Zamindar, Kumara Raja was arrested and imprisoned for one year for his anti-government speeches. Almost all the senior leaders participated in the district. They dominated the Andhra Mahajanasabha conferences, propagated the ideals and took lead in the formation of Andhra state in particular and formation and division of India on the basis of linguistical lines. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, the architect of linguistic provinces

and whose idea "Our motherland presents a composite, homogeneous nationality which like a multi faceted jewel reflecting variegated colours is composed of different cultures reflected through diverse provinces. Unity is not uniformity but harmony in diversity" is to be consolidated to prove the ideal of 'Unity in diversity'.¹⁵

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