

Andhra State, Andhra Pradesh (AP), AP & Telangana

The most significant change in the map of 1954 (from the 1952) is the formation of the Andhra State on October 1, 1953 with the eleven Telegu speaking districts of Madras state. Most people are under the impression that Andhra Pradesh was formed in 1956 after the recommendations of the States Reorganization Commission. Well, in the narrow technical sense they are right for the predecessor state was Andhra state, and did not include Telangana, the Telugu speaking region of the erstwhile Hyderabad state.

But the events which led to the formation of Andhra state actually set in motion the entire process of the linguistic reorganization of states. This was also the first concession wrested by a 'linguistic group' from Central leadership of the Congress, and more specifically Prime Minister Nehru who along with Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel and Pattabhi Seetharamayya had concurred with the recommendations of

the SK Dar committee that the territorial reorganization of states should not be based exclusively on linguistic considerations.

However, passions were running high, and even though the Gandhian Swami Sitaram (Gollapudi Sitaram Sastry) gave up his fast unto death for a separate Telugu speaking state in September 1951 on an appeal by Vinoba Bhave, the die had been cast. In the ensuing General elections of 1952, the Congress party fared rather badly in the Madras State, and was defeated by the Communists in most of the Telugu speaking areas. In a rather undemocratic and arbitrary manner, C Rajagopalachari was nominated to the Legislative Council, and invited to form the government. His attempt to divert the Krishna waters by constructing the Krishna -Pennar project was shot down by the AN Khosla (Expert) committee appointed by the Government of India, who suggested Nandikonda, the site of the present day Nagarjunasagar. This provoked further distrust, and Potti Sriramulu, another self-effacing Gandhian began his fast- unto -death in October,

1952 and breathed his last on 15th December. This led to another bout of violent agitations, and within days (19th of December) the Prime Minister was compelled to announce the formation of Andhra state, but excluding the Madras city, which was keenly contested by the Tamilians. This also marked the genesis of inter- state water disputes, as well as disputes over capitals: a theme which would recur with regular frequency on the political motif of the country. The Government of India also announced the establishment of a States Reorganization Commission with Dr Fazal Ali as the Chairman.

Meanwhile, even though Hyderabad state got a popular government in 1952 under Dr Burgulla Ramakrishna Rao, a distinguished man of letters, the three linguistic groups: Marathi, Kannada and Telugu speaking were all pulling the state in different directions. Also, the 'Mulki' agitation seeking a reservation of jobs for the 'Hyderabadis' was also gaining ground, but the Nizam , as the Rajpramukh from 1950 to 1956 had no moral or political authority over the state of affairs . Dr Burgulla Rao did initiate the process of land reforms and

introduction of Telugu in the Telangana areas, but there was no organic unity in the state, and therefore in 1956, the Dr Fazal Ali Committee recommended that while the Marathi speaking region should be merged with Bombay, Kannada speaking region with Mysore, Telugu speaking region should be merged with Andhra state, but at a later stage. The SRC noted: *'one of the principal causes of opposition to Vishalandhra also seems to be the apprehension felt by the educationally backward people of Telangana that they may be swamped and exploited by the more advanced people of coastal areas.* Not only were the two regions far apart in economic development, Telangana was the hinterland to Bombay, and Andhra to Madras. The land tenure and revenue systems differed widely as a result of over a century of different kinds of administrations. However, both had seen communist insurrection, and this was the reason why the Congress High Command was keen on a united state, which would be powerful enough to take on the Communists. Therefore, a Gentlemen's Agreement was signed between the leaders of Andhra and Telangana which included a 60:40 ratio in the Cabinet, the reservation of the post of Deputy CM if the

CM was from Andhra, establishment of a Telangana Regional Council and reservation of posts in public services for the Mulki (erstwhile residents of the Hyderabad). In pursuance of this Agreement, the Public Employment (Requirement as to Residence) Act was passed in 1957.

Meanwhile, the fears of the SRC were not unfounded. The coastal region was quite happy to have Hyderabad as the capital, but as their domination in the Congress party and government was quite pronounced, the terms of the Gentleman's Agreement were ignored, and within a decade, the agitation for a separate Telangana gained popular support. Telangana achieved statehood in 2014, and we shall resume the story when we come to the map of 2014!