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SAMAIKYANDHRA MOVEMENT: A STRUGGLE FOR UNITED ANDHRA PRADESH (2009-2014)

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ABSTRACT

Before its bifurcation, Andhra Pradesh was formed in 1956 by merging the Andhra State (created in 1953 from Madras Presidency) with the Telangana region, which was a part of Hyderabad State. The formation followed the recommendations of the States Reorganization Commission (SRC). However, the SRC had cautioned against merging Telangana with Andhra due to socio-economic and cultural differences. Despite these concerns, the demand for a linguistic state prevailed, leading to the formation of Andhra Pradesh. The Samaikyandhra Movement (2009–2014) was a mass agitation demanding the retention of a united Andhra Pradesh, opposing the proposed bifurcation that eventually led to the creation of Telangana. The movement was marked by widespread protests, political turbulence, and emotional appeals from people across coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema. It emerged as a reaction to the announcement made by the Union Government of India on December 9, 2009, regarding the initiation of the process for forming the separate state of Telangana. The demand for a separate Telangana state had been on-going for decades, citing regional underdevelopment and political neglect. However, people from the Andhra and Rayalaseema regions feared that bifurcation would lead to economic setbacks, especially concerning Hyderabad, which had grown into a major economic hub over the years. The concerns included loss of employment opportunities, water-sharing disputes, and apprehensions over investments in Hyderabad, a city developed with resources from all regions of Andhra Pradesh. The Samaikyandhra Movement was a significant chapter in Andhra Pradesh's history, highlighting regional aspirations, economic concerns, and political dynamics. While the movement ultimately did not succeed in preventing bifurcation, it demonstrated the deep-rooted emotional and economic attachment of the people to a united Andhra Pradesh. The impact of bifurcation continues to shape the politics and development of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana today.

INTRODUCTION

The Samaikyandhra Movement (2009-2014) was a significant socio-political agitation in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh opposing the bifurcation of the state to create Telangana. The movement was driven by concerns over economic, political, and emotional factors, as people from coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema feared loss of Hyderabad, economic instability, and regional imbalance. The movement spanned across political parties, student organizations, and various social groups, resulting in strikes, protests, and widespread civil unrest. Despite massive opposition, the Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act, 2014 was passed, leading to the creation of Telangana on June 2, 2014.

BACKGROUND OF THE SAMAIKYANDHRA MOVEMENT

Historical Context

Andhra Pradesh was formed in 1956 by merging the Telangana region (formerly part of Hyderabad State) with Andhra State (which was carved out of Madras State in 1953). Leaders like PottiSriramulu had led the movement for a separate Andhra state, culminating in Andhra Pradesh's formation. However, demands for a separate Telangana continued, citing economic disparities and regional neglect.

Key Concerns of Samaikyandhra Protesters

- Hyderabad Issue – Hyderabad, the capital, was a major revenue generator and employment hub. Protesters feared economic losses if Telangana was separated.
- Water Resources – Krishna and Godavari rivers' water-sharing became a major issue between Andhra, Telangana, and Rayalaseema.
- Employment and Education – Concerns over reservations, job losses, and seat allocation in universities.
- Political Stability – Bifurcation led to political realignments, affecting parties like Congress, TDP, and YSRCP.

TRIGGERING EVENTS: 2009-2010

K. Chandrashekar Rao's Fast-Unto-Death (December 2009)

K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR), leader of the Telangana RashtraSamithi (TRS), launched a fast-unto-death demanding Telangana statehood. Massive protests erupted in Telangana, forcing the UPA government to announce the initiation of the Telangana state formation process on December 9, 2009.

Backlash and Start of Samaikyandhra Movement

Following the announcement, protests erupted in Andhra and Rayalaseema demanding the revocation of the decision. Mass resignations of MLAs, MLCs, and MPs from Andhra and Rayalaseema put pressure on the central government.

Sri Krishna Committee (2010)

The Sri Krishna Committee was formed to assess the viability of Telangana and possible alternatives. The committee report (December 2010) suggested keeping Andhra Pradesh united with constitutional safeguards for Telangana or bifurcation with Hyderabad as a Union Territory. However, the report failed to satisfy either camp, intensifying protests.

Phases of the Samaikyandhra Movement (2011-2013)

The Samaikyandhra Movement was a major political and social movement in Andhra Pradesh, India that opposed the bifurcation of the state and the formation of Telangana. The movement lasted from 2009 to 2014, but the period between 2011 and 2013 was particularly intense, with widespread protests, strikes, and political manoeuvring. This article covers the major events, phases, and impacts of the Samaikyandhra Movement from 2011 to 2013 in detail.

The Samaikyandhra Movement was triggered by the announcement made by the Union Government on December 9, 2009, regarding the formation of a separate Telangana state. The declaration led to massive protests in the Seemandhra region (Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema), as people feared that their economic, political, and employment interests would be affected if Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated.

After initial protests in 2010, the movement continued into 2011–2013, gaining momentum with increased participation from political parties, government employees, students, and the general public.

2011-2012: Widespread Protests and Political Realignments

- Mass rallies, hunger strikes, and bandhs across Andhra and Rayalaseema regions.
- Students, government employees, and political leaders participated actively.

POLITICAL PARTIES REMAINED DIVIDED:

- TDP and Congress struggled with internal factionalism.
- YSR Congress (formed in 2011) under Jagan Mohan Reddy supported Samaikyandhra.

- The central government remained non-committal, leading to frustration in both regions.

2013: Intensification of Agitation

In July 2013, the Congress Working Committee (CWC) formally approved the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh. Massive protests in Andhra and Rayalaseema led to resignations of public representatives and government employees going on indefinite strikes. APNGOs (Andhra Pradesh Non-Gazetted Officers) Association played a crucial role, organizing rallies, human chains, and shutdowns.

BACKGROUND OF THE SAMAIKYANDHRA MOVEMENT

Phases of the Samaikyandhra Movement (2011-2013)

Phase 1: The Aftermath of 2010 (2011- Early 2012)

By 2011, the Telangana agitation had gained strength, and Telangana supporters continued their demand for a separate state. The Sri Krishna Committee report was submitted on December 30, 2010, offering multiple solutions for the Telangana issue. However, it did not satisfy either the Telangana activists or Samaikyandhra supporters. In 2011, various leaders from Seemandhra, including MPs, MLAs, and student organizations, intensified their protests against bifurcation.

Political parties were divided on the issue, with Congress facing internal conflicts, while TDP (Telugu Desam Party) and YSR Congress tried to balance their stance. The demand for a United Andhra Pradesh continued with sporadic protests and strikes across the Seemandhra region.

Phase 2: Resignations and Political Turmoil (Mid-2012 - Early 2013)

In mid-2012, many leaders from Andhra and Rayalaseema regions resigned from their political positions as a mark of protest against the proposed bifurcation. The YSR Congress Party, led by Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, supported the united Andhra cause, gaining massive support in the region. Government employees and students staged protests demanding an undivided Andhra Pradesh. The Congress government at the Center remained indecisive, further fueling anger in the Seemandhra region. October 2012: The Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Bill was not officially introduced, but rumors of an impending decision increased tensions.

Phase 3: Large-Scale Protests and Bandhs (Mid-2013 - End of 2013)

July 30, 2013: The Union Government officially announced its decision to bifurcate Andhra Pradesh and form Telangana. This led to massive strikes, protests, and demonstrations across Seemandhra. Government

employees, students, teachers, lawyers, and various organizations called for an indefinite strike under the banner of the Samaikyandhra Joint Action Committee (JAC).

August-September 2013

Public transport (APSRTC) came to a standstill, affecting normal life in Seemandhra. Educational institutions and businesses were shut down for weeks. Protests in Tirupati, Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, and Anantapur turned violent, with people burning effigies of political leaders. Electricity employees launched a strike, causing power cuts and blackouts in many districts. Railway stations and highways were blocked by protestors.

October 2013

The Andhra Pradesh Non-Gazetted Officers' Association (APNGOs) led a large-scale protest in Hyderabad. Several Congress leaders from Seemandhra resigned from their posts, including state ministers and MPs. YSR Congress and TDP leaders criticized the Congress government, with Chandrababu Naidu launching a protest against bifurcation.

November-December 2013

The Union Cabinet approved the Telangana Bill, further escalating tensions. Protests continued in Seemandhra, with relay hunger strikes, marches, and violent clashes with the police. Leaders from Seemandhra demanded a special financial package and guarantees for the development of their region if the state was divided.

MAJOR POLITICAL AND SOCIAL REACTIONS (2011-2013)

Political Reactions

Indian National Congress (INC)

- The party faced severe backlash from Seemandhra leaders.
- Many Congress MPs from Andhra Pradesh protested in Parliament.
- Chief Minister Kiran Kumar Reddy opposed the bifurcation, resigning in early 2014.

Telugu Desam Party (TDP)

- Initially had a confusing stand but later supported Samaikyandhra protests.
- Chandrababu Naidu went on hunger strikes and campaigned against bifurcation.

YSR Congress Party

- Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy openly supported the united Andhra cause and led protests.
- The party gained support in Seemandhra, while its Telangana wing suffered setbacks.

BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party)

Supported Telangana state formation, leading to resentment in Seemandhra.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

Economic Disruptions

Continuous strikes and protests resulted in economic losses worth thousands of crores. Industries, transport, and tourism were heavily impacted.

Impact on Students and Employment

Schools, colleges, and universities remained closed for several months. Job aspirants, especially for government services, faced delays in recruitment.

Public Infrastructure

Protestors blocked roads, railway tracks, and airports, disrupting normal life.

Conclusion: End of the Movement (2014)

Despite the strong protests in Seemandhra, the Union Government passed the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Bill in February 2014. The bill was approved by both houses of Parliament, and Telangana was officially formed on June 2, 2014. The Samaikyandhra Movement eventually lost momentum, but the resentment towards bifurcation remained. The new state of Andhra Pradesh was left without a capital, leading to further struggles for development.

Legacy of the Samaikyandhra Movement

The movement highlighted the economic and emotional attachment of Seemandhra people to a unified Andhra Pradesh. It led to political shifts, with YSR Congress gaining strength in the 2019 elections. The demand for a special financial package for Andhra Pradesh continued, shaping the political discourse in later years.

Final Thoughts

The Samaikyandhra Movement (2011-2013) was one of the largest statehood-related agitations in India. Though it ultimately failed to prevent bifurcation, it played a crucial role in shaping the political and economic future of the newly formed Andhra Pradesh.

ELECTRICITY EMPLOYEES STRIKE (OCTOBER 2013) CAUSED A POWER CRISIS ACROSS THE STATE.

The Final Year: 2014

AP Reorganization Bill in Parliament (February 2014)

Despite opposition, the Telangana Bill was passed in Lok Sabha (Feb 18, 2014) and Rajya Sabha (Feb 20, 2014) amid chaos. Live telecast was blocked, and the bill was passed through a voice vote, leading to allegations of undemocratic practices.

Aftermath and Protests

- Violent protests, resignations, and shutdowns followed.
- The last CM of united Andhra Pradesh, N. Kiran Kumar Reddy, resigned in protest.
- On June 2, 2014, Telangana was officially created, with Hyderabad as its capital for 10 years (till 2024).

IMPACT OF THE SAMAIKYANDHRA MOVEMENT

Political Impact

- Congress suffered electoral losses in Andhra Pradesh in 2014 elections.
- YSRCP gained popularity, emerging as the main opposition in Andhra Pradesh.
- TDP formed the first government in new Andhra Pradesh, with N. Chandrababu Naidu as CM.

Economic and Social Impact

- Loss of Hyderabad affected the revenue prospects of Andhra Pradesh.
- A new capital, Amaravati, was proposed, leading to land pooling issues.
- Emotional divide and inter-regional tensions between Andhra and Telangana continued.

CONCLUSION

The bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh was a landmark event in Indian politics, driven by decades of socio-economic and political struggles. While Telangana benefited from its existing economic base in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh faced the challenge of rebuilding its administrative and economic framework. The division continues to shape political, economic, and social dynamics in both states. Although the bifurcation was controversial, it highlighted the importance of regional aspirations in a diverse democracy like India. The Samaikyandhra Movement (2009-2014) was a significant struggle that aimed to keep Andhra Pradesh united but ultimately failed due to political pressures and regional aspirations. Though Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated, the movement highlighted concerns about regional development, water sharing, and political representation that continue to shape the two states even today. Despite the separation, both states have moved forward, focusing on development and governance. However, the emotional and economic impacts of bifurcation remain a key part of Andhra Pradesh's political discourse.

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