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On the Telangana Trail

KALPANA KANNABIRAN, SAGARI R RAMDAS, N MADHUSUDHAN, S ASHALATHA, M PAVAN KUMAR

What is Telangana? Why does it stir such powerful sentiments? What are the boundaries between the people and the leadership? In an attempt to understand the multilayered articulation of the demand for a separate Telangana, we decided to speak to a cross section of people on their participation and their aspirations – people across political formations and social backgrounds.

Our travels took us to small farmers, pastoralists, intellectuals, coal miners, schoolteachers, weavers, traders and dhobis; Muslim, adivasi, dalit and student leaders; we attended meetings in adivasi hamlets, in working class urban neighbourhoods and we visited shibirams (tents) across the region and spoke to people on relay hunger strikes.

We see quite clearly the emergence of a new politics that is committed to deliberating over the meanings of democracy and direct action. People's demand for Telangana elaborates a complex set of arguments in relation to investment, employment, education, land, water, and resources. But more importantly it has to do with self-rule, dignity and self-respect, which are the fundamental premises of the Telangana movement. The separate state is seen as only the first step towards democratisation.

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1 'Maadi Maaku Kaavaale'

The movement for a separate Telangana state has forced mainstream political formations at the state and national levels to contend with the multilayered and complex demand for a separate state in an unprecedented fashion.

Maadi maaku kaavaale ("we want what is ours") is the chorus of the movement that reverberates throughout the region – it speaks of the essence of the demand for a separate state. There are memories across the different districts of wounds, of suffering, of futile attempts to suture the wounds.

But there is only one solution. We want what is ours. That will solve *baaraana*. We will have *chaaraana* left to sort out after Telangana comes¹ (Chiguri Ellayya, a Kuruma shepherd, age 96, Medak, 2 January 2010).²

While there has been a vibrant debate in the Telugu print and electronic media, this information and analysis has not reached people in the rest of the country – the English press and media observing a strange silence on what is a popular upsurge in the state. In an attempt to understand the many layers of articulations that go into the making of the demand for a separate Telangana, we decided to travel to each of the 10 districts in Telangana and speak to a cross section of people on their participation and their aspirations – people across political formations and social backgrounds. We present here a brief outline of our conversations on Telangana carried out between 24 December 2009 and 16 February 2010.³

Our travel took us to small farmers and pastoralists in Narsapur in Medak; intellectuals and writers in Karimnagar; coal miners, retrenched colliery workers, schoolteachers, women in urban poor neighbourhoods, Muslim leaders and Gond, Pardhan, Kollam and Nayakpod adivasis in Adilabad; Lambada thandas, Chenchu pentas and persons with disabilities on relay hunger strike in Mahboobnagar; village meetings and rallies by Goud toddy tappers in Motukuru in Nalgonda; interviews with Koya adivasi leaders in Warangal; village visits to scheduled areas around Bhadrachalam in Khammam; meetings with dalit youth and the Osmania University women students in Hyderabad; meetings with teachers, weavers, traders and dhobis in Rudrur in Nizamabad; and meetings with communities affected by the pollution and displacement on the banks of the Musi River in Rangareddy. Apart from this we interviewed a cross section of intellectuals and activists from across the region who are part of the demand for a separate Telangana.

Separate statehood is essentially part of a formal political process. There have been agreements, mergers, movements and sell-outs that have been part of the separate statehood demand where Telangana is concerned from 1953 to the early 1970s.⁴

What we encountered in our travels, however, was a clear articulation by common people of the disastrous consequences of economic, political and cultural hegemony in this region and their resistance to such domination.

This is a struggle for life, for resources, language, culture. It is not merely a fight for territory (Surepally Sujatha, Karimnagar, 6 January 2010).

These lines, in fact, encapsulate the demand for a separate Telangana today. Regional disparities, political-cultural domination, and the development of underdevelopment in Telangana region over several decades have fuelled unrest and widespread anger. At the present moment, however, there has been a marked shift in the articulation of the demand from the “facts and figures” of underdevelopment (part of the Telangana common sense today) to more deeply political questions of self-respect. This resonates with the trajectory of earlier movements in south India that posed the resistance to discrimination in terms of self-respect. This shift in articulation also helps us understand the specificity of the Telangana experience – clearly there is the case of north Coastal Andhra and parts of Rayalaseema as well that reel under the combined forces of state repression/violent factionalism/economic violence.⁵ The demand for Telangana, far from denying deprivations elsewhere, juxtaposes state formation with the opening up of possibilities for more equitable development in the Andhra region.

In both its magnitude and its methods of organising, the movement for “Democratic Telangana”, is radically different from the earlier movement of the late 1960s.⁶ The debate over whether and how the Hyderabad state was merged with Andhra in the 1950s, and the politics of the key players who presided over the merger is overworn. K Muthyam Reddy, who participated in the 1969 struggle and went to jail, where he was appointed “mulakat officer” because jails were overcrowded and understaffed, observes that there is no similarity between the movement then and now. The proliferation of movements after the 1970s pushed a range of issues centre stage. All of these are now getting articulated within the Telangana framework, leading to a greater and more nuanced political awareness (Hyderabad, 3 January 2010). In a similar vein, Innaiah observes that in 1969, there was no articulation of peasant issues at all (Jaffergarh, Warangal, 4 January 2010).

It was important, in our view, to attempt to unravel the character of the struggle. What is Telangana? Why does it stir such powerful sentiment and talk of Telangana ethnicity? What are the different constituencies that are part of the movement for a separate Telangana? What are the boundaries between the people and the leadership? The movement today has raised to the centre the questions of political economy and governance and their impact on lives and livelihoods over six decades.

Telangana is an internal colony. It is economically exploited, socially and culturally suppressed and politically not represented...So you don't have a space within the existing social-political system. And you are on the margins of the economy. This is the core understanding. It translates itself into a simple statement for people across Telangana – “if we must live in our house, and enjoy what is ours, we need Telangana” (M Kodandaram, Hyderabad, 31 December 2009).

The movement has also raised the question of language and culture as linked to lives and livelihood – forging the articulation of a “Telangana identity”. Urdu poet Jameela Nishat recalls the

status of Urdu as an official language in Hyderabad state and hopes that the coming of Telangana will revive that possibility (Hyderabad, 11 February 2010). According to M T Khan, the people of Telangana practise a catholicity and respect for the opinion of others, which is an intrinsic part of Telangana culture and marks it apart (Hyderabad, 1 January 2010).

For me, Telangana is an ethnicity that needs to be understood – we are a people with a language, a culture, dress code, dialect and distinctive food habits. We also have distinctive literary and performative traditions. And a distinct history that goes back 1,300 years. My films tell stories of Telangana (B Narsing Rao, Hyderabad, 29 December 2009).

Underlying this observation, of course, is the full recognition that histories are tales of injustice *and* tales of resistance against domination and cultural hegemony. Of loss and victories. And nobody has told them better than Narsing Rao in his films – *Maa Bhoomi* (Our Land), *Oka Ori Katha* (The Story of a Village) and *Daasi* (The Woman in Bondage).

People from Telangana have spoken of their experiences of “veiled contempt” and the disappearance of a composite culture, which was the hallmark of Telangana (Vasanth Kannabiran, Hyderabad, 30 December 2009). There are also people, originally from Andhra who have settled in Telangana in the 1960s like film-maker and writer Akkineni Kutumba Rao who agree with this perception and are pained by the caricaturing of people from Telangana by Andhras. But quite apart from the injustice meted out historically, he observes, “when a people do not wish to live together, they should not be forced to” (Hyderabad, 30 December 2009).

Position of Muslims

Telangana is a region in which Muslims have had a significant and historic presence. Issues related to discrimination against Muslim communities find articulation in different districts. Also present are echoes of communal tension not just in Hyderabad, but in the entire region. The uneasy silence on the situation of Muslims in Telangana on the part of the political parties supporting Telangana, particularly the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) (as also the latter's problematic alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)) and the stand of the Majlis Ittehadul Muslimeen on the status of Hyderabad as an independent state is far from representative of the voices on the minority question in Telangana we encountered in our travels.

Noted civil liberties leader and founder of Hyderabad Ekta, Keshav Rao Jadhav, a long-time and ardent campaigner for a separate Telangana embodies the convergence of this twin concern – the demand for Telangana for him being inseparable from the fight against communalism. And yet, communal tension, we discovered in the course of our travels, was an issue that was live and bristling. In Rudrur, in Nizamabad, a meeting with Hindu traders brought up a debate on Muslims setting up a sharp polarisation between Hindus and Muslims. The people we met on a street in Nizamabad town told us proudly that they were Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) workers committed to a separate Telangana. From this atmosphere of hostility, when we moved into Rudrur village, Chand Miyan and his entire neighbourhood consisting of different artisanal and service castes, spoke of how

Rudrur was proud of its composite culture and the total absence of any hostility between the two communities:

There are about 500 Muslim families in Rudrur. We all want Telangana. We work in small hotels, run small shops, small businesses – pan shops, cycle shops, we work as labour and some of us do farming. Like other communities who live in Telangana, we too strongly believe, that our lives will improve when Telangana comes. Hindus and Muslims have lived peacefully in our village over centuries and this will continue. There are some who falsely try to say that Muslims will start fighting with Hindus if Telangana comes, and try to rule over them. This is not true, and is a false propaganda. Like others in Telangana, we too wish for a better life, which we think is only possible if Telangana comes (Sheikh Chand Miyan, Rudrur, Nizamabad, 17 January 2010).

Or, as M A Waseem said,

Hindus and Muslims are like *sheer* [semolina] and *shakkar* [sugar].⁷ We live like brothers and sisters. We participate collectively in the development of our ward, our village (Nirmal, Adilabad, 7 January 2010).

This duality in the articulation of the communal question characterises the debate in Hyderabad as well. The delegation of Muslim representatives in Nirmal spoke of how pained they were about the talk that if Telangana came, the Muslims would trigger off communal tension and that Muslims would bide their time and ask for a separate Hyderabad (Nirmal, Adilabad, 7 January 2010). Both the group in Nirmal and the meeting of a wide spectrum of Muslim intellectuals asserted that there is no single party that can be held to represent “Muslim interests”, and that they were fully in support of the demand for a separate Telangana (Hyderabad on 31 January 2010). Jameela Nishat underscores the fact that just as there is a diversity of political positions among Muslims in Telangana, there is also a diversity of socio-economic location. Telangana, for her, will open the possibility for the creation of employment and the expansion of livelihood for poor Muslims in rural areas and in the Old City of Hyderabad (Hyderabad, 11 February 2010).

Although some people from Andhra resident in Telangana have expressed the fear that they might be treated in Telangana in the way in which Telangana people are treated by Andhras, the course of events over three months has demonstrated that this fear is without a basis (Surepally Sujatha, Karimnagar, 6 January 2010). There is an assertion across the board that the demand for a separate Telangana state does not imply the ousting of non-Telangana people who come here in search of livelihoods. In Nirmal, recounts Deva Rao, a writer, *tapi mestris* (masons) from Andhra came out in a procession in support of the Telangana movement. Right beside the shibiram⁸ in Nirmal town, the fresh coconut seller is from Andhra. Although that is where the action is focused in the town, there has been no single instance when he was attacked, nor have any Andhras in Nirmal town been attacked (Nirmal, Adilabad, 7 January 2010). This has generally been the trend throughout the Telangana districts.

The struggle at every level has been strident in its demand but peaceful and democratic. This is because Telangana has been home to struggles by communists, by women, by dalits, and has a democratic bedrock that directs collective action. The political leadership is undemocratic and lacking in commitment, without doubt, but the mass base of the movement and the movement leadership has grown and developed on democratic values (Mallepally Lakshmaiah, Hyderabad, 31 December 2009).

“Where inequality is all pervasive”, first generation communist Venkat asks, “can you conjure up a geometric pattern to solve a social problem?”:

By making them sit in a circle, can you get rid of inequality? For land redistribution to transform the political economy, it is the land in the hands of landlords that must be redistributed. Not government land (Hyderabad, 30 December 2009).

The focus of the struggle is on the havoc wrought by the political, economic and social power historically wielded by the Seema-Andhra⁹ Reddy-Kamma lobby (Pingle 2010), along with a new overlay – their alliance with global capital, that has aggressively taken root during the past 20 years of neoliberal economic growth. This has acutely aggravated the process of dispossession of land – (private agriculture lands, assigned lands, grazing lands, commonlands, forestlands, waqf board or endowment lands), and water, and the destruction of people’s livelihoods, without a concurrent creation of any new avenues of employment, as promised.

As the Koneru Ranga Rao Committee observed in 2006:

the issue of land continues to be the single-most emotive issue in the rural areas. There is no other issue, which people connect with as issues of land do... Land, not only an economic and social, but also a psychological capital, is still the pivotal asset in terms of both income and employment, around which socio-economic privileges and deprivations revolve.¹⁰

Water has been central to the struggle for a separate Telangana. Godavari, Krishna, Manjira, Musi flow through Telangana. Yet, there is neither water to drink nor water for cultivation.

Settlers¹¹ concentrate around water sources in tribal areas and around dams. Once cultivation reaches a peak they move to a better life in the city. They have a fastness that our backwardness cannot match. Although there are non-tribals from Telangana also who have occupied land in Schedule V areas, the occupation by Andhra farmers is marked because it is high along water sources (Anasuya alias Seethakka, Member of the Legislative Assembly from the Koya tribe, Warangal, 19 January 2010).

It also has to do with education and employment – as in Golusu Narsanna’s words,

Telangana represents the aspirations of the working classes and traditional occupational groups. It is linked to the struggle of the working classes against the exploitation of labour by Seema-Andhra landowners, politicians, industrialists and businessmen (Nirmal, Adilabad, 7 January 2010).

But importantly, it has to do with self-rule, dignity and self-respect, which are the fundamental premises of the Telangana movement. The separate state is seen throughout the region as only the first step towards democratisation.

The refrain – “we want what is ours” – elaborates a complex of arguments in relation to capital investment, employment, education, land water and resources. It is an argument for autonomy and self-determination to put a socio-political order in place that is able to effectively resist the hegemony of economic, political and social forces from Andhra, and wrest a space for deliberative democracy. It has been argued by a cross section of people that long-standing problems and issues are suddenly fitted within the framework of Telangana. Is it reasonable, practical, or rational to expect Telangana to deliver its people from the combined forces

of oppression and subjugation that stamp down on vulnerable communities across the world? Perhaps not. Perhaps it can too, because every struggle has a political geography that situates it; a political economy that is its framework; and a vision of justice that drives it. As part of a larger struggle against discrimination, therefore, Telangana provides an extremely important framework.

2 Land, Water and Livelihood

Telangana is in the midst of a deep and acute agrarian crisis, which has only worsened during the last 20 years of neoliberal economic reforms. There has also been a sharpening of regional disparities and inequitable development, resulting in massive and accelerated marginalisation and ecological destruction on an unimaginable scale, scarcely experienced earlier. The Telangana articulation today by the historically oppressed castes and classes is an expression of the resistance to this oppression. Exploitation, discrimination and destruction of people's lives, livelihoods and dignity in rural hinterlands and amongst the urban poor, is directly linked to the domination over generations by the rural political elite and Andhra industrial capitalists. It has to do with the distorted growth and development of Hyderabad, particularly in the past five to 10 years, where specific policy and legislative changes created a land-market, which facilitated massive investment and land-grabbing by the Seema-Andhra industrialist lobby. Some reports say that the value of land per acre in and around Hyderabad increased by a mind-boggling 300%. Almost all of this has been purchased by industrialist-politicians from Seema-Andhra (Inniah 1997: 131-37).

The farmer suicide figures for Andhra Pradesh speak for themselves. Between 1998 and 2005, of the total suicides in the state, which was 3,257, 2,232 (68%) were from Telangana, 538 (17%) from Rayalaseema and 487 (15%) from Coastal Andhra (Kodandaram 2008: 65). This is not a coincidence, but a fallout of deliberate state policy over the past five decades. Tank irrigation was historically important for the chronically drought-prone Telangana region and contributed 62.5% of the area under irrigation in 1960, which plummeted to a mere 18.6% in 2000 over a period of 60 years (Rao and Subramanyam 2002: 90). Maintenance and upkeep of tanks depends on public investment, which has been completely neglected by successive governments in power. As a consequence, Telangana farmers were forced into becoming overwhelmingly dependent on private bore wells that are powered by electricity. Today, 77% of irrigation in Telangana is from bore wells and open wells, while in Coastal Andhra 58% of irrigation sources are canals from the two major rivers – Krishna and Godavari, which are constructed and maintained by public investment (Kodandaram op cit: 64). Dependency on bore wells and extracting water from the depths of the earth is disastrous in a semi-arid ecological zone. This combined with state agriculture policies that gave preference to water-intensive crops triggered a drastic change in cropping patterns in Telangana, from food crops suitable to semi-arid regions to water-intensive cash crops. Jowar, bajra, pulses, oilseeds that produced staple foods and fodder for animals, have been replaced by cotton, castor, sunflower, sugar cane, chillies. Rice that used to be cultivated under tanks and open wells is now cultivated with bore wells.¹²

Mothe village in Nizamabad district captures this systematic destruction of agriculture in Telangana, which was critically dependent on a highly evolved system of irrigation connecting streams, tanks and open wells to farmers' fields. A big stream (vagu), which flows along the western side of this village, bifurcates into two, the northern stream, Peddavagu, and the southern stream, Kappalavagu. In other words, streams on three sides surround Mothe. The streams fill up during the rains, but dry up soon after. Five tanks in the southern part of the village irrigate 430 acres of land for two crops. The tanks can no longer fill as the stream flows downstream and traditional structures such as feeder channels, which were in place to carry water from the streams to recharge the tanks, have run into disuse. The villagers have been demanding a small check dam/barrage on either of the streams to divert water into the main village tank, Peddacheruvu which, in turn, feeds the other four tanks. The tanks were critical for recharging open wells, which numbered 400 around 40 years ago. The collapse of these intricate interlinkages, resulted in the drying up of open wells, and the tank, and prepared the ground for the entry of bore wells. The first bore well in Telangana was dug in this village in 1976. Now there are nearly 1,000 bore wells. The groundwater has depleted, and bore wells are dry. When one bore well fails, farmers dig another. In the last 10 years each farmer has dug at least four to five bore wells. In 2001, farmers of Mothe spent Rs 30 lakh to dig bore wells. Frequent power cuts, and erratic supply damages the electric motors, and farmers have spent nearly Rs 14 lakh to get their electric motors repaired, on installing new transformers and electricity poles.¹³

Planned policies and budgets have deprived Telangana of its rights to maintain its traditional water structures. Policies have instead encouraged private bore well irrigation, and thus created complete dependency on purchase of electricity to ensure continuous irrigation. The failure of bore wells as a key aspect of farmer's indebtedness has been one of the major reasons for farmer suicides.

Unequal distribution of the Krishna and Godavari river water has also been central to the movement for a separate state. According to the Bachawat Tribunal on sharing of Krishna waters between the states of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh has the right to utilise 800 thousand million cubic feet (TMC) + 11 TMC regeneration flow of water. About 68.5% of the catchment area of the Krishna lies in Telangana, 18.3% in Rayalaseema and 13.11% in Coastal Andhra. Based on this Telangana should get 555.54 TMC, Rayalaseema 149.14 TMC and Coastal Andhra 106.32 TMC, and 5 TMC of water goes to Madras for drinking water. According to the state government's statistics, to date Telangana has obtained 277.86 TMC of water, Rayalaseema 133.70 TMC and the Coastal Andhra districts 388.44 TMC. Telangana should have got an additional 277.65 TMC of water, which has gone to Coastal Andhra.¹⁴ Similar is the story for the Godavari, where 78% of the Godavari catchment area lies in Telangana, but the utilisation of the Godavari waters in Telangana is minimal.

According to the Department of Irrigation and Command Area Development of the government of Andhra Pradesh, the cumulative investments in irrigation projects and schemes from Independence up to 2004, was Rs 2,251 crore in nine Telangana districts (no

data for Hyderabad), Rs 7,126 crore in 13 districts of Rayalaseema and Coastal Andhra, which works out to an average investment of Rs 250 crore per district in Telangana, and double that – Rs 548 crore per district in Andhra and Rayalaseema.¹⁵

In 2004, the Andhra Pradesh government announced its ambitious Jalayagnam programme to enhance irrigation facilities in the state. Government data on planned projects and budget allocations project that the maximum investment is to be made in Telangana.¹⁶ A critical analysis of the Jalayagnam programme, however, highlights how once again the projects serve only to divert Godavari and Krishna waters away from Telangana for the benefit of Rayalaseema and Andhra.¹⁷

In light of the past five decades where Telangana has been deprived of its rightful share of river waters due to the lack of political will, it is self-evident that only the formation of a separate state, will enable the region to have its share of the water. According to the Constitution, as a separate state, Telangana will have the power to make laws for its water resources, within the overall framework that Parliament will have the right to legislate the regulation and development of interstate rivers.¹⁸

This concern is at the centre of people's articulation for Telangana, evoking angered responses from women, men and children cutting across caste, class, gender, age, ability:

Two-thirds of our village of 500 families has migrated to Guntur, Mumbai and further afar. In Guntur, we pluck cotton in the lands of Andhra landowners, and are paid miserable wages. The main reason for migration is that we have no water. Our people will return to the village later in the year when the rains begin. All our problems are linked to water. What will we do? If it rains, we grow crops, otherwise the lands are left fallow. Our villages empty out each year. We sell our animals. How much longer will we suffer like this?

– Villagers of Bolgatpalli, Bulabai Thanda, Mahaboobnagar district, 15 January 2010.

"Sriramsagar water will come to you". We are sick of hearing these false promises. Each political party comes here with their "duplicate" manifestos and promise us that we will soon get water.¹⁹ The Bhimalinga canal is supposed to bring us water, and it is still only knee deep! They promise us water, we blindly vote for them, and then we get Andhra rulers and chief ministers who break all promises. And here? Our people in Nalgonda are dying and getting crippled with fluorosis. These politicians keep saying they will do something. They have done nothing...absolutely nothing.

– Mothukuru Panchayat Joint Action Committee, Nalgonda district, 4 January 2010

The Manjira river runs right past our village, but not a drop can we access either to drink or to irrigate our fields. This is the situation in hundreds of villages in Medak...We are forced to purchase water from the water purification plant that the government set up to provide us "clean water". Why should we pay for water. The Manjira water is ours and we have first right to it.

– Dalit women from Avancha village, Medak district, 2 January 2010.

Earlier we drank the Manjira water, our animals drank the water. Today? The water has turned to poison. Our animals die if they drink that water. The Sarpanch and other powerful landlords sold land and gave gram sabha land to the Andhras to set up these poisonous factories.

– Youth of Borpatla and Nawabpet, Medak district, 2 January 2010.

Even the one small canal they promised to build us, which carries water from the Musi river,²⁰ lies incomplete... we feel embarrassed to show it to you. Andhra political leaders who control the politics here and there, make sure that all canals in Andhra are built fast. They have taken it all.

– Women and men peasants from Aaregudem, Nalgonda, 4 January 2010.

The Polavaram, Devadula and Dummagudem projects across the River Godavari are no different as they are set to displace Adivasis of Telangana, and we Adivasis will not get a drop of that water. The water goes to benefit Andhra and Rayalaseema.

– P Narender, Adivasi Activist, Khammam, 20 January 2010.

The capital- and input-intensive green and white revolution based agri-livestock development strategies, which were tailor-designed for irrigation rich Coastal Andhra regions, wrought havoc for farmers and the resources in semi-arid Telangana. The crises that was evident by the mid-1990s (Simhadai and Rao 1997) has further grievously deteriorated in the last 15 years of neoliberal economic reforms: complete withdrawal of state support for agriculture (input subsidies, support prices, credit); privatisation of power which had assumed critical importance for the pump-set dependent Telangana farmers; privatisation of the management of village tanks through the creation of water-users associations; the state thereby completely absolving itself of any financial commitments to maintain this crucial lifeline of Telangana; the privatisation of state agriculture extension and research services; and total monopoly of the agriculture market by agri-business corporations, with respect to inputs (credit, seeds, pesticides, fertilisers), services (extension, research) and purchase of produce. The visible face of these agribusinesses in the average Telangana village is the "seed-pesticide-fertiliser" trader-sahukar.

There is another dimension to water in rural Telangana as well. Slogans of *Telangana ki addoste vutiki aarestaam* (Whoever obstructs our struggle for Telangana will be washed and hung dry) – rent the air, as the Rajakula Sangham sat on dharna in Rudrur village, Nizamabad. They washed clothes in the village centre, and hung them up to dry. At the shibiram tent an ironing board and coal iron was being used to iron clothes.

We are 60 Sakali households. The caste association, collectively decides what we should charge people who use our services. All of us are out here today at the diksha [hunger strike]. Why, you ask? Because only if Telangana comes, will our water problems be solved. The water is drying up in the village cheruvu [tank]. We can no longer wash our clothes. Lack of rain is not the only reason. The Nizamsagar water also needs to be kept for us. But now that water is diverted elsewhere. We want Telangana because only then will our water problems be solved. We need a new dhobi ghat to wash our clothes.

– Sakali Narsamma and Sakali Saiyamma, Rudrur village, Nizamabad, 17 January 2010.

These voices echo the systemic injustice and discrimination with a 40-year-old history of dams, reservoirs and projects constructed on rivers in Telangana, which have essentially subverted the interests of the Andhra elite.

Livestock have been an integral component of agriculture in Telangana, traditionally providing energy, manure, produce and income to farmers, who depended on their animals to offset drought-like situations. In turn, the animals obtained their fodder requirements from crop-residues and vast grazing expanses. The change in crops, the destruction and collapse of common property resources, the emergence of real estate industry, has severely affected the livestock wealth of the region.

Policies and development plans for livestock, which should have been fine-tuned to the needs of rain-scarce regions, have been geared towards replacing drought-adapted regional indigenous

breeds of cattle (Deoni, Krishna Valley), sheep (Deccani), goats (Osmanabadi), and buffaloes (Pandharpuri and Nagupuri) with high-yielding breeds mostly imported from the Andhra region (Red Nellore, graded Murrahs from Kankipadu, Krishna district in Coastal Andhra), that have sunk farmers into deeper debt, and hastened the march of animals to the slaughter house. The loss of breeds such as the Deccani, which is the only naturally occurring black coarse wool breed in the world, has also meant the destruction of an entire craft and livelihood of the Kuruma community, and the slow death of the *gongadi* a woolen blanket, which apart from its everyday uses in rural Telangana, is symbolic with the strong cultural and performing arts traditions of Telangana (Patil 2009).

The Kurumas²¹ and Gollas²² of Medak have lost access to grazing grounds due to a combination of massive land purchase by Andhra real estate businesses, and because of the large-scale leasing of lands by Andhra farmers who have introduced Bt cotton. The lands thus purchased or cultivated are fenced in:

Andhra farmers have bought up all the lands, erected pillars and fenced off the land. Where will our sheep and goats graze? It is only these Andhra landowners who fence in their lands with white pillars and barbed wire. We have never had these "pillars" and fences... Where do we go? Where do our animals go? (Meeting with Kuruma women in Ramachandrapuram village, Medak, 2 January 2010).

Farmers and youth from Borpatla and Nawabpet in Medak district spoke of 10 farmers from Andhra who leased good "bheed" fallow lands from landowners, flattened out the land and cultivated Bt cotton. After they had finished and taken away the cotton, the land was not even fit for grazing (2 January 2010).

The increasing cycles of debt have pushed people to the brink, and to survive they are forced to sell their lands as a short-term survival-driven measure. They are easy prey for the "land and property estate sharks", who have been aggressively acquiring land at throwaway prices in and around the city of Hyderabad, during the past 10 years. Farmers sold their lands for a song, and ended up having nothing to fall back on.

SEZs and Land Prices

The Special Economic Zones Act, 2005, is possibly a key factor that has fuelled these spiralling land prices and real estate markets. One hundred and three special economic zones (SEZs) in Andhra Pradesh have been approved by the Union Commerce Ministry, of which 42 SEZs are located in and around the city of Hyderabad including in the districts of Ranga Reddy, Mahabubnagar, Nalgonda and Medak.²³ This has paved the way for the creation of huge land banks and the takeover of large tracts of land by developers of SEZs, who are largely government agencies such as the Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation and the Andhra Pradesh Housing Board. Lands once assigned to the poor, particularly dalit, adivasis and backward castes are being taken back to establish SEZs, as also, other government lands which are used for grazing, fuelwood, fodder, etc. Private agriculture lands have been acquired by invoking the Land Acquisition Act, 1894, in the name of "public purpose". Studies indicate that lands far in excess of the stated "government" statistics have been acquired. Further, the growth of speculative

real estate has mushroomed on the periphery of SEZs, resulting in huge increases in land prices in the last few years.²⁴

"Much of this land has been purchased by Andhra investors...": This refrain repeated itself in village after village across every district we travelled to. M A Waseem, leading a delegation of Muslim leaders in Nirmal who came to meet us, pointed to the systematic destruction of Wakf properties by governments [in AP with the exception of six years, Andhra governments] in collusion with political parties (M A Waseem, honorary president of Press Club, Nirmal, 7 January 2010).²⁵

Small peasants – women and men – in Nalgonda, Medak, and Mahabubnagar poignantly capture this reality:

In Mothukur Panchayat alone they have purchased at a conservative estimate 1,500 acres of land. All this land is farmers' patta land, sold out of distress. In Aregudem alone they have purchased nearly 200 acres of land one year ago. They purchase 20 acres, then another 25 acres, then another 30. They buy the land for Rs 15,000 to Rs 30,000 per acre and sell the same land at Rs 4-5 lakh an acre, a price we cannot afford. They come here each year, lease our land paying us a mere Rs 500 per acre per year, and then we work for them as labour... In our village an Andhra farmer leases between 10 and 30 acres of land. They come here specifically to cultivate Bt cotton. They are the ones who first came and introduced cotton cultivation to us. We never cultivated cotton in our village, prior to their arrival. They are very peculiar as they depend on this crop alone, and only cultivate this one crop. We grow many crops – red gram, jowar, castor, pulses... They begin by leasing, and then buy the land.

Why did our farmers sell the land? Because they have no choice. The choice is between suicide or sale of land, to keep our heads above water for the now, for the present. And then finally leave our village (Women and Men of Aregudem Village, Nalgonda, 4 January 2010).

The Padmashalis (traditional weaver caste in Telangana) of Rudrur, Nizamabad who had to shut down their looms because of the withdrawal of state subsidies and schemes to weavers from Telangana, dusted their looms after 10 years of these lying dormant, and brought them out onto the street and wore garlands made of handspun thread, on their day of "Niraharadiksha" (relay hunger strike) when they sat on relay hunger strike.

We Padmashalis are 100 households strong. Ten years ago, we had a vibrant weaving profession. We wove cotton cloth, towels, lungis. We sold the cloth in the local market and to the government and it was used to make shirts, trousers, bedsheets. But gradually our profession became unviable as we had to compete with power-loomed cloth, which is priced lower. The government doesn't buy our cloth either. All of us stopped weaving. The weavers are now employed in kirana shops, beedi factories, hotels... This craft and knowledge will die, as we are unable to earn our livelihoods from this any longer. Our community is left behind when it comes to education and employment.

This present government and past governments promised much, but delivered nothing. All words – No action. The situation for weavers in Andhra is different, they get some support, some loans, some programmes....

We brought out our looms as part of our struggle for Telangana, because we believe that when Telangana comes, our vocation will gain its rightful place. We will fight for that. There is dignity in our work as weavers. When we get our Telangana, it will have programmes and schemes to sustain our occupation so that once again we can produce cloth to clothe our people.

– Padmashali Sangham, Rudrur, Nizamabad, 17 January 2010.

Golusu Narsanna of the Telangana Waddera Sangham spoke of how the Waddera community, which has been engaged in breaking stones, working on construction and dam projects, digging

wells and road construction now reel under unemployment, migrating en masse to Dubai as manual labour.

I belong to the Waddera community, a nomadic community whose traditional occupation was breaking stones, and working with earth. Earlier my community got work for six months in a year, as agriculture was completely dependent on open-well and tank irrigation. We could be gainfully employed in a village for up to six months in a year. Our community worked on democratic principles: men and women shared the work and the earnings. The entry of bore wells changed everything; they displaced open-wells along with which we lost a traditional source of work – constructing and maintaining tanks and open wells. Earth moving machinery has replaced our labour on government sites. There is no work security and no food security. Almost 80% of my community has been displaced from their professional work. At the same time, we benefited minimally from education and employment (Meeting with JAC, Nirmal, 7 January 2010).

The closure of underground coalmines in Adilabad and Khammam districts of Telangana, and their replacement with open cast (OC) mines, is the story of how 40% of coal miners of Telangana were laid off between 1990 and 2009 by the public sector Singareni Collieries. While the OC mines are still “owned” by the public sector company, all operations have been sub-contracted to private operators from Rayalaseema who come with their machinery. The closure of one underground mine is not merely the displacement of mine workers, but the displacement of those who worked in the associated support systems such as schools, and hospitals that used to be run by Singareni Collieries for the benefit of the mining community. Thus several teachers, hospital workers and nurses also lost their jobs. This is coupled with the inhuman and unimaginable levels of environmental pollution and destruction of nature, resulting from open cast mines, with fine coal dust settling everywhere including in drinking water (Chandu, writer and retired employee of Singareni Collieries, 6 January 2010).

The Singareni Unemployed Workers from Mancherla, the joint action committee (JAC) of Mancherla, and local teachers discussed these realities, of shrinking employment opportunities within the public sector, and placed it in the context of the movement for a separate state, where a strong demand is to close down OC mines and re-establish underground mines (Meetings with JACs in Adilabad district, 6 January 2010).

Discrimination in Employment

It is virtually impossible to obtain official disaggregated data of region-specific employment within the private sector. However, testimonies both in urban and rural areas point towards an unwritten but visibly discriminatory pattern of hiring which operates within the private sector, with respect to employing people from Telangana. Most companies, factories and industries have been established in Telangana by Seema-Andhra industrialists, and are reported to be blatantly biased in their hiring practices. Testimony after testimony reflected this very obvious form of discrimination faced by dalit and backward caste youth from Medak and Nalgonda districts:

I have an msc in Chemistry and a BEd degree and I applied for a job at the Divis Labs,²⁶ located in Nalgonda. Over 1,000 applicants were interviewed. I was offered the job of a helper. Later on, I came to know that almost all the senior posts of supervisor and quality managers

were offered to Andhras and we from Telangana, despite being more qualified, were employed as helpers (B Ravinder Reddy, JAC Convenor, Mothkur Panchayat, Nalgonda, 4 January 2010).

These regional biases and patterns of employment in the private sector resurfaced and appeared to be no different in Hyderabad, as we discovered through conversations with youth from Addagutta Basti, Secunderabad. Thirty-five young men predominantly belonging to dalit, backward caste and Muslim communities, working as drivers, taxi drivers, in call centres, as office boys, attenders in small shops and in multinational corporations, and a DJ, sat with us during one of the Telangana bandhs, narrating their experiences and hardships, articulating their need and vision for Telangana. While five of them had obtained degrees, the remaining had completed high school, or continued to be in college. They were unanimous in their observations that today in Hyderabad, the management of companies and factories are most often in the hands of Andhras, who prefer to hire cheap Andhra labour, rather than Telangana workers. Speaking of the decline in opportunities in construction work on sites and in factories in and around Hyderabad, the youth from the Addagutta expressed concern about the unfair conditions of work and practices akin to bonded labour practised on these sites which brought in labour from Andhra. The creation of Telangana, they observed, would force employers to meet labour standards (Hyderabad, 30 December 2009).

Labour migrating to Hyderabad, particularly from north Coastal Andhra, a majority of whom belong to dalit, adivasi and backward caste communities, is symptomatic of collapsing agriculture – and related livelihoods. Additionally in recent years, parts of Rayalaseema and the coastal belt of Andhra have witnessed the entry of SEZs, the creation of the Petroleum, Chemical and Petro-chemical Investment Region (PCPIR), commercial ports, thermal power plants, and mining, severely affecting the livelihoods of fisherfolk, small and marginal farmers and labour, resulting in massive migration and accelerated ecological destruction. The new growth-led model of development is unable to absorb the labour that is displaced from traditional livelihoods.²⁷

The youth from Addagutta were also clear on the solutions – creation of a separate state of Telangana and one for Andhra, which would enable both regions to develop.

They dominate us.

The Andhra worker works for less than minimum wages, without fixed hours, and hence the owner prefers to hire him.

The monthly salary for a driver is Rs 5,000, but the Andhra driver will be willing to work for Rs 4,000, and undercut us. Then they come here as bachelors and work from morning to night, on holidays and festivals. They eat, sleep and live in the taxi, which is their home.

The industries around Bolarum, Kukatpalli and Medchal are mostly owned by Andhra industrialists. They bring their labour from Andhra, negotiating them at the cheapest contract basis. They prefer “their own” because the Andhra labourers are meek, fear being sacked, and are thus easily exploitable. We from Telangana stand up for our rights. We ask questions, we answer back. If we know something is wrong we question that. They do not like this.

We are not asking them to go away. We are seeking priority in jobs in our own region Telangana. If they invest in their region in Andhra and develop facilities, then jobs will be created there. Poor people come here because facilities are not built there (Hyderabad, 30 December 2009).

Today it is the dominant castes of Andhra Pradesh controlling political and economic power, which have been instrumental in establishing this model of development and growth, expanding their capital in nexus with global capital, which has aggravated regional imbalances, undermining the democratic rights of the people.

3 'Maava Nate, Maava Raj': Telangana Adivasi Question

The demand for a separate Telangana in a sense mirrors the adivasi demand for self-determination against colonialism, against oppression, against repression. The demand by adivasis over generations has been the right to govern themselves. Today, the people of Telangana are making the similar demand that must be understood in the framework of that historical experience.²⁸ There is also a regional specificity to the adivasi experience in Telangana that has been articulated by the adivasi JAC in its many meetings in January-February 2010.

Our demand has been "Maava Nate-Maava Raj" [our village our rule] and Jal, Jangal, Zamin Hamare Hain' [water, forest, land are ours]. Our concerns are around the rights to our resources, the right to self-rule, according to our customs, traditions, and the constitution. Our rights are constantly under threat. Adivasis of Telangana first have to contend with Lambadas who migrated to Telangana from Maharashtra, and then there are traders and *sahukars* from Andhra, as also the non-tribal of Telangana. The Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Areas Land Transfer Regulation Act 1 of 1970 has not been implemented effectively, and the government failed to prevent the occupation of our lands. Similarly, our rights to forests have not yet been recognised, though we have fought for the Forest Rights Act (The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (2/2007). We support Telangana because it is a just struggle for self-rule. The demand for self-rule in Telangana, now has been our adivasi slogan and our demand all along (S Shambhu, Adivasi leader, Utmoor, Adilabad, 7 January 2010).²⁹

The total scheduled tribe (ST) population in 10 districts of Telangana is 27,50,000 comprising 9% of the entire Telangana population. The total tribal population in Schedule V areas is 8,76,800 which is barely 10% of the entire ST population. The original adivasi inhabitants of the forests – the Andh, Koya, Gond, Nayakpod, Konda Reddy, Kollam, Chenchu, Thoti, Mannevar and Pardhan – have become a minority since 1977, when the Lambadas, who were historically a nomadic pastoral community, were notified as a ST in Andhra Pradesh. This led to a large influx of Lambadas from Maharashtra to Andhra Pradesh.³⁰

The threats outlined by adivasi leaders stem from a historical past, and despite several constitutional safeguards, their resources and way of life continue to be under attack. In 1940, under the leadership of Kumaram Bhimu, the Gonds revolted against the forest officials – the Babhijheri revolt – when 11 adivasis including Kumaram Bhimu were killed and several others wounded.

Following this in 1942, the Nizam of Hyderabad State requested well-known anthropologist Haimendorf (1979) to report on issues related to land alienation and exploitation.³¹ Haimendorf strongly recommended that securing the rights of Gonds to their land be made a priority. This involved a reversal of the existing policy concerning the allotment of land. This paved the way for a new legislation to prevent the alienation of land from tribes to non-tribals resulting in the promulgation of the Hyderabad Tribal Areas Regulation of 1359 Fasli (AD 1949) published in the government of Hyderabad gazette dated 31 October 1949.

When Haimendorf revisited the Adilabad area in 1960, he found that *sahukars* from Andhra districts had appeared in the region as early as 1957 – almost immediately after the creation of the state of Andhra Pradesh. In his subsequent visit between 1976 and 1977, he found massive encroachment of outsiders on tribal land.³² This wave of immigration reached its peak in the years between 1968 and 1977, and it was then that many villages changed their character and Gonds became an economically disadvantaged minority in localities where only a generation ago they had been the sole population. He wondered how this could have happened despite strong legislation to prevent such alienation.

Girglani noted in 2007 that the only change that had occurred between Haimendorf's visit and his was that in the course of time, the immigrant non-tribals' lands had passed on into the hands of the Telugu non-tribals, mostly from the four central Coastal Andhra districts. He observed,

Thirty years after Haimendorf had asked the question, I had the same question to ask after I had recorded in my report submitted on 14 August 2005. The atrocious grabbing of tribal lands in all the three scheduled areas of the state through ingenious subterfuges and even open and un-camouflaged devices that would make any conscientious observer scream in anguish, "Oh government, of the people, by the people, for the people, where were you? Where are you? Oh fighters for just cause, where were you? Where are you?"³³

Seetakka, the sitting MLA from Mulugu Constituency says that 35% of the population in her constituency consisting of three Mandals are non-tribals.³⁴ An identical scenario unfolds vis-a-vis the struggles for recognition of rights in forest areas. More than 50% of the lands in Schedule V areas of Telangana are classified as reserved forests, leaving very little land for adivasi agriculture livelihoods. Thousands of acres of land cultivated by adivasis as also their habitations in forest areas continue to be unrecognised, and thus, the participation of Telangana adivasis in the movement for recognition of forest rights is decades old. The Forest Rights Act, 2006, seems to have made little difference to their lives despite thousands of applications for individual and community rights being submitted by adivasis in Telangana.

Our rights to forest have still not been recognised, as the forest department insists on derailing the process of recognition of rights. The surveys have not been conducted. The Gram Sabhas as per the Forest Rights Act and the Panchayati raj Extension to Scheduled Areas Act were not carried out. Titles, which were distributed, were made out far less than what had been applied for. Community rights were granted to vss (Vana Samrakshana Samiti set up under the Joint Forest Management Programme) controlled areas. We have rejected all these, and continue to fight for justice (R Narendar, Hyderabad, 25 January 2010).³⁵

The majority of wild life sanctuaries are located in the forest regions of Telangana, and the conflict between tribes residing inside the sanctuaries and the forest department continues unabated. Chenchus reside in the Nallamala forests, which straddle five districts, including parts of Telangana, Rayalaseema and Coastal Andhra. To reach the Chenchu *pentas* (habitation) in Appapur panchayat, Mahabubnagar district, located inside the Nallamala forests, we entered the forests through the gates of the tiger sanctuary, which are open between 9 am and 5 pm. Chenchus have to walk nearly 20-25 km from their *pentas* to reach the gate of the sanctuary, and then access the main road. The gates close at 5 pm and if a Chenchu woman returns later than that, she is kept out.

The Chenchus are virtually fenced inside and their movements policed by the forest department that has the “key” to their homelands and territory.

We are still waiting for the Forest Rights Act to be implemented. We keep asking, and they keep saying they will. Till now nothing has moved. We are constantly under threat of eviction. We are the worst victims of state repression. They came and told us that each family would get Rs 10 lakh, if we left the forest and agreed to be moved. However, this is our ancestral homeland. We have traditional ways of living in the forests and utilising the forest resources. For instance, each family that resides in a Chenchu penta, has rights to a designated part of the forest. The entire community decides these boundaries. If we move we will die (Chenchu women, Appapur Penta, Mahbubnagar, 15 January 2010).

Educated youth amongst Chenchus are aware of the Forest Rights Act, 2006 as also a notification made by the Nizam issued in 1942, for the creation of a Chenchu Reserve in the Amrabad Plateau.³⁶

The new Telangana state should draw upon the recommendations of Haimendorf, which resulted in the creation of a Chenchu Reserve in 1942 covering 1,00,000 acres in Amrabad area of erstwhile Hyderabad State. If such a reserve is re-established, only then will we be liberated. Otherwise whether we are in Andhra Pradesh or Telangana, makes no difference if the rulers persist in their policies and legislations to relocate us from our homelands (Guruvayya, Appapur Penta, Mahbubnagar, 15 January 2010).

The people of Appapur felt that Telangana should draw upon some of these powerful historical safeguards, so that new opportunities will open up for them to live freely and with dignity.

If Telangana is an internal colony of Andhra Pradesh, the adivasis of Telangana articulate how they suffer from multiple displacements and forms of colonisation by the so-called development projects such as open cast coal mines, proposed iron ore mines, paper mills, cement factories, heavy water plants, and of course, dams. The recent modes of displacement are climate change deals, which are being negotiated, and experimented by both government and private corporations in Adilabad and Khammam districts, where biofuel and clonal eucalyptus plantations under the Clean Development Mechanism are displacing adivasis from their lands and forests and their right to grow food is unashamedly trampled upon. The recent mass exodus of internally displaced adivasi people from Chhattisgarh, who have fled the brutal violence of the State, and arrived in large numbers in Khammam and Warangal districts, in search of livelihood and peace, completes the picture.

We support Telangana completely, as this will mean the end of Polavaram Dam! It means the survival of the Koya tribe. The majority of the villages getting displaced lie in Khammam, Telangana (Ramanamma, Adivasi leader, Chintoor, Khammam, 20 January 2010).

4 Education

We work hard, we struggle, we educate our children, send them to school and colleges with our sweat, blood and tears. Then they finish their education and do not get any jobs. What is the use of all this education? (Men and women from Aaregudem, Nalgonda district, 4 January 2010).

Students, who spearhead the Telangana movement today, are the first generation in their families to be studying in junior, degree, postgraduate, technical and professional colleges. Belonging to

the most discriminated classes and castes of Telangana, these young people have grown up experiencing their parents' and grandparents' daily struggle for survival, and witnessed the gradual appropriation of their resources and destruction of their livelihoods. The caste composition of Telangana state universities today is vastly different from 1969, and students are largely drawn from poor peasant and artisanal communities, urban and rural working classes, and belong to BC, dalit, Muslim and adivasi communities of Telangana. Despite several promises by political leaders and representatives, as also safeguards and agreements made through the years to protect, enhance and expand the educational and employment facilities in Telangana (Bhushan and Venugopal (2009) these have been systematically broken and undermined. The progress made in the region is abysmal as compared to the other two regions of the state, which had a head-start educationally at the time of the integration of erstwhile Hyderabad State with Andhra Pradesh.³⁷ Across Telangana, students reel off the statistics on disparities in education.³⁸

Telangana students have reached where they are, against all odds, through sheer determination, and ironically, have been forced to pay for this education. Historically disadvantaged, the opportunities to study have continued to be weighed heavily against them. An analysis of the state's public expenditure on education highlights how it has primarily favoured already developed regions in Andhra, with absolutely no special provision and budgetary allocations for educationally disadvantaged Telangana (Reddy 1997: 163). This has created a massive educational vacuum, which has been “filled” by the mushrooming of private educational institutions. An already impoverished and debt-ridden agrarian class whose livelihoods have been completely destroyed is forced to pay for private education.

We have no other option but to study in private colleges as there is only one government college in this entire taluka, comprising six mandals. It is located in Achampet town, 30 kms from here. There are 200-300 seats and getting admission is highly competitive. Most of us are forced to enroll in the private colleges where we pay exorbitant fees. In Telangana state we will make sure that we build more government colleges. The new state will have its own separate budget, so will be obliged to invest in new facilities. Even the school situation is pathetic. After completing primary school in the village, the girls and boys have to take autos to attend private schools in Achampet. While girls do study, it becomes more and more difficult for them to continue with higher education because of the distances. Ninety per cent of those who pass their 10th from our village are boys and the remaining 10% are girls.

Our villages are full of young boys and girls who have completed their intermediate, degree or professional courses, and remain unemployed. We fought with the MLA in the past about the need for more government degree colleges, but it was of no use. MLAs have been useless. We will not vote these MLAs back to power. New leaders will emerge from amongst us – (Students of Bolgatpalli Thanda, Mahabubnagar district, 15 January 2010).

Those who manage to survive these obstacles and obtain degrees are faced with the next level of barriers, which operate with respect to both public and private sector employment. Practically, every Telangana student is aware that the odds of their reaching top government positions are slim, with everything stacked heavily against them: The oft-quoted statistic is that 134 Indian Administrative Services positions are held by Seema-Andhra

bureaucrats and a mere 27 are there from Telangana region, with identical trends in all other top government employee categories (Bhushan and Venugopal 2009: 188). In 2001-02, not even one district collector in Andhra Pradesh was from Telangana.

A number of youth have committed suicide since the movement began in November and there are criminal cases lodged against several hundred students. This continues to be the most painful aspect of the struggle for a separate Telangana.

5 The State's Engagement with Telangana

In terms of the state's engagement with the Telangana movement it has been predominantly through the discourse of law and order, and the upholding of hegemonic violence. The concerns of elected representatives from the Andhra and Rayalaseema region are reflected in the statement by the Rosaiah Committee on Telangana statehood:

To go into the economic issues that propel Telangana sentiment and to examine the facts relating to employment, exploitation of resources, etc; concerns of minorities in the proposed Telangana; status of Hyderabad Metropolitan Area taking into consideration the migrant population; concerns of the migrant population in the rest of Telangana (excluding Hyderabad); issues relating to Maoist and Terrorist activities in the context of a proposed Telangana set-up; modalities for sharing of river waters vis-a-vis the existing situation; infrastructure and service facilities in the State capital relocation and consequential issues; issues pertaining to existing demands for separate States by other regions; and working out a strategy for the overall and harmonious development of all regions in the event of formation of a Telangana State.³⁹

This reflects the key contentions of those from Coastal Andhra opposing the formation of a separate Telangana state. These too from our travels around the region are the very issues that have resulted in the sharp polarisation of positions – an understanding of these issues from the standpoint of Telangana, in fact driving the movement for a separate Telangana. In this entire struggle, there is no attempt by those active in the struggle for a separate state to claim resources that are within the territorial jurisdiction of Andhra and Rayalaseema regions. The opposition to the statehood demand from Seema-Andhra is to the assertion that the resources, opportunities for employment, education and water located within the territory of Telangana must belong to that region alone. There is recognition on both sides, therefore, that the movement of people and capital is unidirectional and is rooted in the fact of dispossession in Telangana and monopoly of Seema-Andhra over state power and infrastructure (Harinath 1997: 35-41). The broad-based struggle by rural and urban communities in the Telangana region is reduced in official rhetoric to a "Maoist or terrorist" disruption that needs to be controlled by force.

The terms of reference set out for the Srikrishna Committee consist of seven points: To examine the situation in Andhra Pradesh with reference to the demand for the Telangana state as well as maintaining status of a united Andhra Pradesh; to review the developments in the state since its formation and its impact on the three regions; to examine the impact of the recent developments on women, children, students, minorities and weaker sections; to identify the key issues to be addressed, while considering the matters mentioned above; to consult all sections of the people, especially political parties, to identify optimal solutions;

and to recommend a plan of action and a road map; to consult representatives of trade and industry, farmers and others with specific reference to all-round development of the three regions of AP; and to make any other suggestion or recommendation that the panel may deem fit.⁴⁰

The setting up of this committee also led to the virtual dismantling of the political JAC with all major parties pulling out. When the Osmania University Students' JAC gave a call to protest against the Terms of Reference on 14 February, the large contingent of paramilitary forces posted around the campus opened fire on the students and abused women students, drawing a sharp reprimand from the high court for the unnecessary presence of the police on campus and the disproportionate use of force.

The demand for a separate state by people is constitutional and specifically in furtherance of Article 38 (2) which reads:

The State shall, in particular, strive to minimise inequalities of status facilities and opportunities not only among individuals, but also among groups of people residing in different areas or engaged in different vocations.

Extensive studies and documentation undertaken by scholars in the Telangana region have pointed to a persistent failure to perform this obligation for over a period of 60 years. Article 3 provides for the formation of a separate state in accordance with public demand. The Srikrishna Committee was set up in recognition of this vociferous demand, and yet the first point in the terms of reference speaks of examining feasibility of forming a separate state. The protest against this prolonging of the stalemate is met with brute police force, and a plea by the government to the Supreme Court to permit it to rule by force. This typically has been the history of the state's engagement with Telangana over the past 60 years.

Article 51 A (e) of the Constitution reads: "to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people in India transcending religious; linguistic and regional or sectional diversities;..."⁴¹ Large states contain large pockets of backward regions, which are largely neglected and do not receive the attention they are entitled to under the equality code of the Constitution. In all these years of the Constitution, we have not developed a constitutional morality or culture that enables us to act effectively on issues of plural societies that confront us from time to time. The demand for Telangana state also brings up for debate the important question of the relationship between small states and democratic governance in plural societies.

Through all these deliberations, negotiations and stalemate by the State it can scarcely be forgotten that the people wait for an answer – "the real people who played Bathukamma, cooked their food on the roads, beat their chests and drums and lost 300 of their children as well" (Ilaiyah 2010).

6 Politics of Organising

Mothe (Kodandram et al 2001) tells the tale of Telangana and serves as a metaphor for politics in this region. There are hundreds of small political formations in the form of Joint Action Committees that have sustained the aspirations and spirit of the people of Telangana – like the vagus – the many streams that flow along the borders and through Mothe; the cheruvus – the lakes

and tanks in the village that constantly fill up with water from the streams. These movements, although locally specific, have the potential to nurture deliberative politics in unprecedented ways. Yet, mainstream politics chokes off the rivers and streams and forces the tanks to silt and dry up; mainstream politics, too also, chokes off the lives and aspirations of people, and there is the isolation of the students' movement and the mass suicides by youth mirroring the catastrophic desertification of Mothe.

As people actively engaged with democratic politics, our questions centre around understanding the implications of the transformation that is taking place in Telangana for political practice. Between 1996 and 2001, there were 6,000 meetings on Telangana across the districts. A large group of activists, intellectuals, journalists and cultural activists of diverse persuasions organised and participated in these meetings (Pittala Srisailam, Hyderabad, 12 January 2010). This movement has thrown up so many questions regarding participation, equity, power, inclusiveness, representation, democratic values, accountability, commitment, creative expression and so on.

In our interactions with people, one question that inevitably came up for discussion was on the kind of change we wish to see. Would our vision of a democratic Telangana be centred on a different model of development? Would it put in place a new politics? Is it pushing for new systems of governance?

It is a struggle against exploitation of a region. It is a struggle for justice. It is a struggle for adequate representation in social and political life. Unless you attempt to understand the movement in these terms, you cannot make sense of it. In order to break the argument that it is a parochial movement, you have to understand that the Telangana movement started outside the dominant political mainstream. It always started on the margins (M Kodandaram, Hyderabad, 31 December 2009).

In this exhilarating moment, the people we met were inviting us to join them in reinventing the present.

There is a widespread expression of the fact that people did not accept the movement as long as the mainstream political leadership was at the helm. Several accounts in different districts spoke of how nobody was allowed to wear a party *khanduva* in a shibiram. "Missing" cases are filed against legislators who are absent from their constituencies and have not shown solidarity with the movement.

The emergence of *kula sanghas*, which are, in this context, an assembly of people belonging to a single subaltern caste/occupational group as a vehicle of struggle points to an expression of livelihood rather than to an expression of parochial allegiance to caste in the context of the Telangana struggle – the collapse of the *kula vritti* (traditional work) spurring people into forming groups to join the movement. What are the means of direct action?

The movement for Telangana ... has become a movement with unique characteristics. Masses belonging to all walks of life have come out to the streets with their cultural symbols. We can see dalit-Bahujans beating drums and dholaks, the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) with their ploughshares and bullock carts, shepherds with their flock, toddy tappers with their moku (rope assembly used to climb palm trees) and muttadu (the belt they wear to keep their hatchet) and stone-breakers with their own iron artefacts (Ilaiah op cit).

Telangana, for the *kula sanghas*, presents the opportunity for a return of livelihoods. In Rudrur in Nizamabad, the JAC brought together 49⁴² *kula sanghas*, that took turns on the relay hunger

strike from 22 December non-stop, with slots booked till 31 January. Seventy per cent of these groups are backward castes and the remaining are dalits, Muslims and other castes (ocs). In Nirmal, the Goud Jana Hakkula Porata Samiti, although worried that the police might slap Naxalite cases on them, set up a shibiram on 2 December 2009.⁴³ From then till we met them over a month later, the response was stunning. According to the JAC, since then there has been a demonstration without respite in Nirmal town.

Deva Rao, a writer and member of the Telangana Rachayatula Vedita (Telangana Writers' Forum) observes that the consciousness of caste was perhaps not as high in 1969. One reason for this, in his view, is that the high level of insecurity in livelihood has transformed the caste association into a forum through which people can mobilise easily around issues of livelihood that are linked to Telangana (Nirmal, Adilabad, 7 January 2010).

The JAC is a new political formation, which emerged during the current phase of the movement, and has become a platform for political expression for a diverse range of people. The first JAC, the OU Students' JAC, which was formed in late November, was the vanguard for the formation of all other JACS in the region. The political JAC which consists of representatives of political parties with a mere token presence of women, is only one JAC among many, and ironically, although the only "official" body, the most fragile and indecisive within the state, racked as it is by political pulls and the ever-looming threat of trading. Political parties are unable to comprehend the complexity of people's articulations of politics, and are unwilling to respond to the popular upsurge.

Around this time, along with the hundreds of other JACS that were formed, the Telangana women's JAC also came into being. Ratnamala identified the gender dimension of the Telangana struggle with reference to the several layers in which it plays out – from recalling the history of women's struggle in Telangana during the armed struggle of the 1940s, to feminist activism in the 1970s and 1980s, to the ways in which the underdevelopment of Telangana has an impact on gender relations, especially among youth, to gender concerns in organising women students (M Ratnamala, Hyderabad, 5 January 2010).

Speaking of the relation between the political JAC and the women's JAC, one of the women we interviewed observed that while it is possible for women to work in the women's JAC, men will not give women a space in the general JAC. Even if this segregation is accepted, women from political parties have the power to make decisions only with respect to women's issues. When general issues are discussed, they still have to return to their parties for a clear directive (Sujatha Surepally, Karimnagar, 6 January 2010).

Within the state the movement is led by the stunning mobilisation of the students JACS, that have brought together diverse groups, communities and political formations, and represent the aspirations of people even from far-flung districts. As the people from Mothukuru, Nalgonda district, told us,

Our children show us the way. We get news of their plans and actions through TV scrolling and coordinate our activities according to that. If the children can put their lives on hold for this cause, how can we turn away? (Village meeting in Aaregudem, Nalgonda, 4 January 2010).

The student JACS consist predominantly of dalit, adivasi, Muslim and BC students. Unlike the political JAC which has a mere token presence of women, the OU Students' JAC has a very strong and vocal presence and participation of women students in all decisions. The OU Women Students' JAC was at the forefront in a situation of heightened police presence on campus, as a protective shield for the men students (Hyderabad, 12 January 2010). This role has made the women students vulnerable to police brutality that ranged from being wounded by rubber bullets to being battered by the lathi and subjected to unimaginable verbal abuse, especially as witnessed in the firing and lathi charge on campus after the setting up of the Srikrishna Committee.

Advocate and Telangana historian, Jitender Babu explains this phenomenon:

Children from dominant castes increasingly opt for corporate colleges that offer exclusive and expensive education. It is dalit and adivasi students who throng to universities today for higher education. The leadership, therefore, is in the hands of these students. That the repression on the students is extremely high is not accidental and needs to be addressed urgently (K Jitender Babu, Hyderabad, 10 January 2010).

Students of every town, every village, in every corner of Telangana, are conscious of these basic facts of injustice and articulate the same. Either way – backwards to their parents' collapsing livelihoods or forward to no new livelihood – there is despair within the existing political economy and geography of Telangana. This struggle is as much about demanding educational and employment justice for the region, as it is a struggle over resources and for "Bathukuderuvu" or survival and livelihood. Organisations such as the Vidyavantula Vedika, Telangana Aikya Karyacharana Committee, cultural organisations, journalists, lawyers and writers from the region, have played an important role over the past 15 years, in reaching out to college and university students to conscientise the student community about these gross inequalities and historical injustice that permeate the length and breadth of Telangana.

The parents' caste-based expressions of protest – through the kula sanghas – is symbolic of this vanishing livelihood that their children cannot return to under the present circumstances. There is neither dignity nor sustenance in them any more. And so these children have been pushed into higher education at enormous cost by impoverished communities in the hope of sustaining life with dignity.

The wave of suicides by youth in the state since December has to be understood within the larger context. Telangana for these students and youth holds the hope for an end to the systemic and systematic discrimination they face and the insecurity in the long term that they have inherited from their parents and communities and that looms large over them. Telangana for them encapsulates the demand for justice and equality, for freedom from want, for security, for a meaningful life. And at moments when they see that hope slipping away, they choose a fast death over a gradual but certain choking off of life.

Students from oppressed classes are not only holding mainstream political formations to account in unprecedented ways, but are also providing direction to the movement. The movement

by the students of Telangana merits an independent study, but this time, undoubtedly, they have led the way. Their tenacity is evident in the uneasiness of political leaders who are peripheral to the movement. It is evident in the state's deployment of troops – 30,000 strong paramilitary force stationed for three months to guard unarmed students. It is evident in the enormous risk they have taken – hundreds of criminal cases in three months, and large-scale arrests.

7 The Way Forward

It is important to ask workers, peasants, women, dalits, adivasis and minorities what course they want the struggle to take. Today the Telangana movement is in the hands of the people. It is a popular cultural movement that has used different art forms to communicate resistance against injustice and inequality. For example, the Kuruma community in Veldurty who are always migrating with their sheep in search of fodder and who never vote during the elections as they are away from home, are today on the roads for Telangana and their demands are simple: 'we need our grazing fields which are fenced by the landlords and real estate owners'. They want their sheep to be able to graze freely in their village. Telangana will bring back these lands for them. People want to see this political transformation (Pasham Yadagiri, Hyderabad, 25 January 2010).

The struggles of the students of Osmania University too help us redefine the contours of struggle and leadership. At enormous cost, the persistent and sustained struggle led by the OU Students JAC has brought sharply into focus the meaning of personal liberty and custody. With all exits from the campus being blocked by barbed wire fences and barricades controlled by armed police for close to three months, the campus is an open prison. Students have faced harassment, verbal abuse, criminal charges, and yet persist. This persistence and tenacity actually show the road to another way of doing politics, although its influence on the political JAC seems doubtful. But that has to do with the inherent limitations of mainstream politics, which groups across Telangana have effectively delegitimised.

The full-blooded use of different cultural art forms by communities and the different vocationally rooted demonstrations of Telangana identity result in a constant merging and separation of these two streams, between art and life, forcing us to reckon with the struggle in radically new terms. In Innaiah's words, "For us, Telangana brought song, dance and speech back into a region that had lost its voice and life" (Jaffergarh, Warangal, 4 January 2010).

Autonomy, self-rule, self-respect and self-reliance, constantly used by common people in Telangana are not to be seen as referring to the political state alone. We witness in the movement the emergence of a popular political consciousness. Yet, this is not new to Telangana either. In 1963, a dalit villager Malepalli Rajanna was killed because he asserted his right to sit on the kacheri gadde (the seat of the village court) in Janagam (Mallepally Lakshmaiah, Hyderabad, 31 December 2010).

It is possible to trace the growth of popular consciousness through a century-old history of resistance in Telangana. Sometimes this took the form of large movements, like the armed struggle or the movement for a separate Telangana in 1969, and at other times, it broke out into local insurgencies against landlords, seemingly small resistance reminiscent of peasant insurgencies – without respite, that challenged authority and domination in different ways.

At this historical conjuncture, this democratic struggle for Telangana is a call to collectively reimagine “Brathukuderuvu” – livelihoods and way of life; to address questions of economic and social justice. In the final analysis, the political voices of the people from Telangana, we discovered, clearly articulate discontent and despair that the existing political parties and formations are unwilling to meet people’s demands and

aspirations, and are not living up to their political commitments and promises. Simultaneously, people are challenging their elected political representatives to use the paradigm of parliamentary democracy to protect their interests – politically and in every other sphere. In a sense, we see the emergence of a new politics that is committed to deliberating over the meanings of democracy and direct action.

NOTES

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- 1 Baaraana is 75%, chaaraana is 25%.
- 2 All dates in this article after quotes/citations refer to the date of the interview.
- 3 We travelled roughly 5,000 km in five weeks. Our travel and interview schedule in the 10 Telangana districts was as follows: Hyderabad 24 December 2009 to 1 January 2010; Avancha, Narsapur, Ramachandrapur and Nawabpet in Medak district on 2 January 2010; Aaregudem and Motukuru in Nalgonda district, and Jaffergarh, Warangal district on 3-4 January; Karimnagar, and from there to Mancherial, Utnoor, Nirmal in Adilabad district on 6-7 January; Hyderabad on 9-12 January; Bolgatpally thanda, Appapur Penta, and Kalwakurthy in Mahaboobnagar district on 15 January; Nizamabad town and Rudrur in Nizamabad district on 17 January; Warangal town, and Medaram in Warangal district, and Bhadrachalam and Elagalagudem in Aswapuram, mandal and Chandellaramapuram in Burugampahad mandal in Khammam district on 19-20 January; Rangareddy district on 23 January 2010; meetings in Hyderabad from 25 January to 15 February.
- 4 For details of the various commissions that have been constituted over the past six decades, see Venugopal (2010).
- 5 The statements of Andhra politician, Botcha Satyanarayana on the need to create Telangana, so that there can be a more even spread of resources and development in the Coastal Andhra region, particularly the north coastal area merit special mention. For a detailed statement on this, see Appa Rao (2010).
- 6 In 1969, there was a movement for a separate Telangana that was largely confined to students and employees. Some of the people interviewed in this essay have referred to the differences between that movement and this one.
- 7 The reference is to sheer korma, the traditional sweet semolina that is served on Muslim festive occasions.
- 8 The shibiram is the site at the centre of the village or town where protests and relay hunger strikes are carried out for a separate state. These shibirams have come up in each town and village across Telangana, and there has not been a single day between late-December and mid-February, during which time we travelled in Telangana, when there had not been a group protesting at these sites.
- 9 Seema-Andhra refers to the Rayalaseema and (north and south coastal districts) regions, and is a term, which entered common usage after 9 December 2009, as a counterpoint to the unified Andhra demand from politicians from dominant castes in Andhra and Rayalaseema who have a monopoly over agricultural and industrial capital in the state.
- 10 Land Committee Report submitted to the Government of Andhra Pradesh, 2006, p 4.
- 11 “Settlers” is a term used to describe Andhra migrants settled in Telangana. Interestingly, it is not used to describe any other migrant group from within the state or outside. For a detailed analysis of this term see, Satyanarayana (1997).
- 12 The net sown area of 47.65 lakh hectares in Telangana in 1972-73 decreased to 40.42 lakh hectares in 2000. During the same period the fallow lands, which were 16.26 lakh hectares in 1972-73, increased to 26.78 lakh hectares in 2000. Fallow lands in cultivable land in Telangana in the year 2000 were 40%, as compared to 16% and 25% in Andhra and Rayalaseema respectively. Rao and Subramanyam (2002: 99).
- 13 M Kodandram, Mallepalli Laxmiah and R Limbadri, *Mothe: Telangana Bathukubata*, July 2001, HBT [Telugu].
- 14 R Vidyasagar Rao, 2006, Neellu Nijalu, pp 161-62. Retired Chief Engineer of Central Water Board. Telangana Rachaitula Vedika. Telangana Development Forum, the US.
- 15 Department of Irrigation and CAD, Government of Andhra Pradesh. <http://irrigation.cgg.gov.in/jsp/districtinreport.jsp>. Last accessed on 3 March 2010.
- 16 <http://www.jalayagnam.org/index1.php?action=articles>. Last accessed on 3 March 2010.
- 17 The Polavaram dam will serve to divert 80 TMC of the Godavari waters to the Krishna basin. The reason is to fill the gap in water that has to be met because of diversion of Krishna waters to Rayalaseema via the Pothireddy padu project. Godavari water 250 TMC is projected to be diverted from the Godavari basin via the Polavaram (80TMC) and the Dummagudem – Nagarjunasagar tail end project (165 TMC) to the Srisaillam dam via Pothireddy padu. See /ishare.rediff.com/video/news-politics/-in-telangana-facts-and-fiction/1031476. Last accessed on 3 March 2010.
- 18 http://www.nih.ernet.in/nih_rbis/India_information/Godavari%20Water%20Dispute%20Tribunal.htm Accessed on 3 March 2010.
- 19 The left bank canal of the Sriramsagar Project constructed on the Godavari is yet to reach Nalgonda.
- 20 As part of the Veligonda project.
- 21 Kurumas are traditional herding communities of Telangana
- 22 Gollas are traditional cattle, sheep and goat-rearing communities, spread across all three regions.
- 23 www.livemint.com/2010/03/02214739/Andhra-govt-issues-notices-to.html accessed last on 5 March 2010.
- 24 For a detailed discussion read Seethalakshmi (2009).
- 25 This observation about the disappearance of Wakf properties is borne out by unpublished information collected by Muslim intellectuals that has been widely circulated. See for instance, the reports in *The Pioneer*, 29 January 2008; *The Financial Express*, 13 January 2008; *Deccan Chronicle*, 21 January 2008; *Times of India*, 10 January 2008.
- 26 <http://www.kammavelugu.org/industrialists5.htm> lists top Kamma industrialist as President and CEO of Divi Labs. Last accessed on 20 February 2010.
- 27 “The Government of Andhra Pradesh claims that about 25 lakh persons will potentially be employed once all the SEZs become fully operational in the next five to seven years. As on January 2009, around 61,905 persons gained employment in 40 operational SEZs. The project employment claims are contestable as the employment in all SEZs in the country is currently 3.5 lakhs as against a projected 40 lakhs jobs” (Seethalakshmi 2009).
- 28 We are indebted to Pandu Dora for drawing our attention to this similarity.
- 29 Adivasis of Telangana live in 1,512 villages within the Schedule V Areas of 4 ITDAs (Bhadrachalam, Eturnagaram, Utnoor and Srisaillam (Mahaboobnagar, Rangareddy and Nalgonda). 384 villages are yet to be recognised as scheduled areas. See Sharma (2001).
- 30 Former commissioner, National Commission for SC and ST, B D Sharma astutely described how the scheduling of certain tribes proved to be catastrophic for the concerned communities on the one hand, and led to cornering of benefits by some comparatively advanced groups on the other leading to acrimony and in-fighting (Sharma 2001).
- 31 Haimendorf (1979) reported that majority of the Gonds had been cultivating tenure called Siwa-ijamabandi (without revenue settlement) for many years. They were liable for eviction at anytime because the Gonds were not registered as *pattadars*. From 1918 onwards, there was a huge influx of Marathas, Kunbis, Banjaras and Mathuras from the districts of Yeotmal, Nanded and Parbhani in Maharashtra who occupied these lands, and pushed the Gonds, Kolams and Naikpods to the forest slopes. The adivasis cultivated mainly the light soils of the hilltops, allowing long periods of fallow between the times of cultivation as part of their agriculture cycle. When the reservation of forests took place, the fallow lands of Gonds, Kolams and Naikpods got taken over and included as government forest, and thus the tribes were evicted.
- 32 In most of the roadside villages, there were large concentrations of Marathas, Hutkaas, Mahars, Lambadas and Muslims from Maharashtra as well as a sprinkling of Gujaratis. Some of them were shopkeepers, merchants and moneylenders, and the majority of the Marathas, Mahars and Lambadas were cultivators who came to the district with the intention of acquiring land.
- 33 “Tragedy of Tribals of Telangana”, B Janardhan Rao Memorial Lecture, 27 February 2007, Warangal. http://telanganasav.wordpress.com/2007/03/12/tragedy_of_tribals_in_telangana/ accessed on 23 February 2010. He submitted a report on the Tribal Land Issues in Telangana, to the Koneru Ranga Rao Land Committee, Government of Andhra Pradesh in 2004. See Land Committee Report, Government of Andhra Pradesh, 2006.
- 34 Her observations are echoed in the Koneru Ranga Rao Land Committee report. In Adilabad, 21,062 acres of land out of a total of 76,170 in Utnoor mandal stand in the name of the three advanced communities of non-tribals under what is being characterised by them and the MROs as “Old Pattas” (p 67). In almost all the villages in Govindaraopet mandal in Warangal, the land is under cultivation by non-tribals. Seventy-five per cent of the population is also non-tribal. Most of the non-tribals are “settlers” from coastal districts. The major thrust of infiltration and “detrribalisation” has been during the last 10 years. In Mulugu Mandal, a large extent of the land occupied by the non-tribal settlers is government land. They are not evicted, but pattas have not been granted either to them or to tribals. There are 2,000 acres of land ceiling surplus land of which 1,200 odd acres are under occupation of non-tribals. The restoration orders have been issued under LTR for 350 acres. The orders are not being implemented since 1980 due to “non-tribal resistance” (pp 71-72). In Narsampet mandal it was stated that in Rajivpet

- village all the Koyas were dispossessed of their lands. *Lambadas and non-tribals have moved in after their dispossession* (p 68). In Yellandu mandal in Khammam, non-tribals who have migrated to Hyderabad, hold 12,000 acres of patta land in the name of old pattas (p 69). Thousands of acres of government lands are in occupation of the non-tribals. In Bhadrachalam Revenue Division of Khammam itself it is stated that more than 25,000 acres of government lands are in occupation of the non-poor. No action is taken to evict them and assign the lands to the tribals (p 70). Land Committee Report, Government of Andhra Pradesh, 2006.
- 35 R Narendar, an adivasi activist from Warangal, at meeting of adivasi representatives of different forest tribes from nine districts across regions and political JAC members, intellectuals and Telangana leaders on 25 January 2010 in Hyderabad.
- 36 The Chenchu Reserve which came into force on an experimental basis for a period of five years, with clear boundaries of reserved area of which 1,07,853 acres was constituted as a reserve under Section 7 of the Forest Act No 1 of 1926 F in part I of Jarida No 40 dated 30 Shehrewar 1349. The Chenchu Reserve notification states clearly that Chenchus of Amrabad Plateau, Mahabubnagar district are not accustomed to work in government nor as labour, and they seem to be also in danger of extinction as a race by close contact with others. In order to preserve the race and look to their welfare and livelihood, the government sanctioned the Chenchu Reserve. See Haimendorf (1973).
- 37 The historical educational advantages of the Seema-Andhra region have been extensively discussed and analysed. See Jayashankar et al (1997) and Reddy (1997).
- 38 Telangana with 10 districts has a mere 17,594 government schools, while Andhra with nine districts has 26,800, and Rayalaseema with four districts 13,000. The story repeats itself for the colleges of higher learning: Andhra and Rayalaseema have an average of 30 and 35 junior colleges, respectively per district and Telangana with only 17 per district, is half of the former. Similar is the case with degree colleges, where Andhra and Rayalaseema have an average 18 colleges per district and Telangana has a paltry seven degree colleges per district. Bhushan and Venugopal (2009: 187).
- 39 *The Hindu*, <http://www.thehindu.com/2010/02/01/stories/2010020166371400.htm> last accessed on 15 February 2010.
- 40 Public Notice issued by Committee for Consultations on the Situation in Andhra Pradesh, Government of India, davp19101/11/0028/0910 dated 15 February 2010.
- 41 We are indebted to K G Kannabiran for helping us understand the constitutional framework within which the separate statehood demand must be understood.
- 42 The list includes Achhukatl, Agolu, Are-kateke, Balija, Banja (Lingayats), Boda, Bogam, Brahmin, Chakali, Darji, Dasari, Deemara, Devanga, Erakala, Gandia, Gangaputra, Golla, Gosangi, Goud, Iyyawar, Jangam, Kamari, Kamsali, Kateke, Kummari, Kuruma, Lambadi, Madiga, Mala, Mangali, Medari, Munnuru Kapu, Muslim, Padmashali, Patkari, Patthans, Pereke, Reddy, Seesha Kamari, Sheiks, Syeds, Tamali, Vaishya/Komti, Vanjari, Velama, Waddarolu, Wadrangi, Kamma (Andhra farmers).
- 43 The Telangana Goud Jana Hakkula Porata Samiti has been active since the early phase of the present movement, 1997, with the Gouds in Nirmal being active participants since the beginning.

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52nd Annual Conference of THE INDIAN SOCIETY OF LABOUR ECONOMICS

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The 52nd Annual Conference of the Indian Society of Labour Economics (ISLE) will be organised in Dharwad (Karnataka, India) during 17-19 December 2010 under the auspices of Karnatak University. **Professor Abhijit Sen**, Member, Indian Planning Commission will preside over the Conference. The topics selected for the Conference are: (1) Planning for Full Employment, (2) Labour Migration: Causes and Consequences, and (3) Emerging Pattern of Employment Relations.

Those who desire to contribute papers may send the same in duplicate along with a soft copy by email (isle.ijle@gmail.com) to the Hony. Secretary, The Indian Society of Labour Economics, NIDM Building, IIPA Campus, I.P. Estate, Mahatma Gandhi Marg, New Delhi-110 002, **latest by September 30, 2010**. The paper should necessarily contain a detailed summary of about 1000 words. The best paper writer below the age of 40 years will be honoured with the Sanjay Thakur Young Labour Economist Award. Those contributors who wish to be considered for the award are requested to furnish proof of age along with their papers. For details please contact the Hony. Secretary of ISLE (Phones: 011-23358166, 23321610; Fax: 23765410; Email: isle.ijle@gmail.com; Website: www.isleijle.org).

Prof. L.D. Vaikunthe, Chairperson, Department of Economics, Karnatak University, Dharwad (Karnataka) is the Local Organising Secretary of the Conference. Participants, who desire to participate in the Conference, are requested to contact on the following address for registration and reservation of accommodation: Prof. L.D. Vaikunthe, Chairperson, Department of Economics, Karnatak University, Dharwad-580013, India; Phones: 0836-2215251(O), 0836-2743274 (Res.), 09845705930(Mob). E.mail: ldvaikunthe@yahoo.com; Fax: 0836-2446601.

The membership fee of the Society (Rs.400 for annual and Rs.4000 for life) should be sent by DD/local cheque in favour of the Indian Society of Labour Economics, NIDM Building, IIPA Campus, IP Estate, M.G. Marg, New Delhi – 110002.