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The Role of Folk Songs and Culture in the Formation of Telangana State

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Abstract

The present paper highlights the folk poetry, culture and the oral narrative art forms of Telangana that played a key role in uniting the rural masses to fight against cultural hegemony and marginalization of their language and identity.

It is one of the most powerful, radical and long drawn struggle in the Indian history that stretched from 1969 -2014. It culminated in the creation of the 29th state of India on June 2, 2014. It was not just fight against injustice, poverty and exploitation. It was also a struggle to save its native Telugu dialect, its idiom.

Its unique tradition, culture and folk literature. This period of turmoil also saw the emergence of a new form of folk lore and literature that not only became popular among the masses but also contributed in the resurrection of the unique identity and culture of Telangana. In other words Telangana was witnessing a cultural and literary renaissance that reminds us of the time that preceded and accompanied the Indian nationalist movement.

Key words-Telangana, folk songs, fairs and festivals, folk literature

Introduction

The word Telangana is derived from the word "Trilinga" as in "Trilinga Desa" which translates as "the country of three lingas". According to a Hindu legend, Lord Shiva descended in the lingam form on three Mountains - Kaleshwaram, Srisailem, and Draksharamam which marked the boundaries of Trilinga Desa or Telangana.

The Telangana movement is another illustrious example of the oppressor-oppressed equation wherein a colonizer need not be a foreign ruler. In a post independent scenario, the oppressor could also be your neighbor with power and voice. The state of Andhra Pradesh was found in the year 1956 on linguistic basis to meet the aspirations of Telugu speaking people. The merger of Telangana into the state of Andhra Pradesh was a source of trouble from the very beginning. Very soon the fissures appeared and took the form of a mass movement in the year 1969. The Telangana movement was unique because it was not a peasant revolt or naxalite movement. It involved every section of society irrespective of their class, community, age or gender. Telangana's intellectuals, writers, activists, artists, poet performers, employees and students-everyone played an important role and made great sacrifices to give strength to the movement

First phase of Telangana- The "Jai Telangana" movement started in the year 1969 with student

procession that started from Vivek Vardhani College, Hyderabad

Second phase of Telangana movement - (1992-2014) The Telangana movement resurfaced again with the student agitation from Osmania University. It became the rallying point for Telangana Student Front (TSF) and Telangana Liberation Students Organization (TELSO)

A new political party for the cause of Telangana state was launched in 2001 under the leadership of Kalvakuntala Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR). The liberation movement gained momentum under his leadership. KCR should also be given the credit for restoring the respect of the Telangana Dialect and transforming the revolt into a people's movement. The Telangana native dialect was always relegated and made fun of in the popular media. It was condemned as a language of the uncouth, the illiterate and the anti social elements

Increase in Literary Activity-

There is an interesting phenomenon of increased activity among literary historians. There is a new vigor to assert their literary and cultural identity. Thus we have Mungili : Ancient Literature of Telangana(2009) compiled and edited by Sunkireddy , Narayana Reddy, a pioneering effort offering glimpses of hundreds of writers from ancient times -the Satavahana age , Chalukya and Kakatiya ages-to writers of end 18th century, Telangana anthologies such as Pokkili,(ed Joluri Gowrisanker) Matladi (ed