

**Dr. M. CHANNA REDDY –  
THE PROPOUNDER OF TELANGANA STATE**

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**VOICE OF TELANGANA**

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Late Dr. M. Channa Reddy

## ABSTRACT

### **Dr. M. CHANNA REDDY - THE PROPOUNDER OF TELANGANA STATE**

(The aim of this paper is an attempt to put at rest to the oft-repeated Philippic against the Telangana leaders who had spearheaded the 1969 Telangana movement. It is a putative notion that Telangana leaders had started movement to settle the scores with the Andhra adversaries and for their political rehabilitation. It is a travesty of truth and preposterous. Before the advent of Dr. Marri Channa Reddy into the Telangana Agitation 1969, students and youth only demanded for the extension of Mulki rules and implementation of the safeguards. It was Dr. Reddy who gave a clarion call for a separate state. He set out to awaken the Telangana people to their potential and to move them to play a dominating role in the Andhra Pradesh polity.)

It was late Indira Gandhi who had consented to the bifurcation of Bombay state, Punjab and presided over the liquidation of Assam. In 1969, Telangana people demanded for a separate state and in 1972, Andhras demanded for a separate state, however, she could not acquiesce. It was largely because of pendency of the case of Hyderabad in the Security Council in the U.N.O. The U.N.O. dropped in the case only in 1989. That's why, Telangana could not be demerged in 1969. The 1969 agitation was not a pure historical tragedy. Even in the failure, it served a grand purpose, a source of inspiration for the later movement of 2000 - 2014 which achieved the state.)

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# **Dr. M. CHANNA REDDY - THE PROPOUNDER OF TELANGANA STATE**

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The aim of this paper is an attempt to put at rest some of the oft-repeated allegations and half-truths against the Telangana leaders who had spearheaded the movement in 1969. It is a putative notion that Telangana leaders had started the movement to settle the scores with the Andhra adversaries. It is not only a preposterous but also a travesty of truth. It is largely because of non-availability of original documents and orchestrated vilification campaign against the Telangana protagonists by the vested interests particularly print and electronic media. The media raised the bogey of national integration is at peril because of demand for Telangana State. If the national integration is not to remain just notional integration, the politicians and editors of newspapers should not arrogate to themselves the exclusive right to speak for the common man. The common man must have a sense of effective participation in the political process of the country.

This vicious calumny is aimed at belittling Telangana leaders and tarnishing their images so that they would not take up the demand for Telangana State. One amongst them was Dr. Marri Channa Reddy. He was not only an intrepid leader but also known for his erudition and scholarship. Little is said and written about this aspect. Amongst the sixteen chief ministers who ruled Andhra Pradesh, from Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy to N. Kiran Kumar Reddy, Channa Reddy was the only first class graduate and none else. He had a brilliant academic career and stood second in merit list in his final MBBS examination. He got gold medals in two subjects viz., anatomy and pathology. By nature, he was not only wary of praise but also chary of praise. He not only excelled in classroom but also in play fields - played good hockey and football. It is a little known fact that he was an ace equestrian too.

He played a stellar role in the erstwhile Hyderabad politics. That's why, he was sent to the Constituent Assembly of India.<sup>1</sup> There,

he interacted with no less person than Baba Saheb Ambedkar. Dr. Channa Reddy averred in the parliament that the directive principles of state policy part-IV of the Indian Constitution should be made justiceable, lest part-IV would be a sleeping beauty. As he proved his mettle as a Parliamentarian, late Jawaharlal Nehru appointed him as the whip of then most powerful Congress Party.<sup>2</sup> Incidentally, he was the youngest ever whip of the Congress Party.

At a very young age, he could become a minister in the Hyderabad state. Dr. Channa Reddy along with Konda Venkat Ranga Reddy opposed the very formation of Andhra Pradesh. In 1953, the Government of India appointed Fazal Ali Commission for the reorganization of States. At that time, Dr. Reddy being in the State Cabinet, submitted a memorandum to the Commission against the idea of formation of a larger state for Telugu speaking people with relevant facts and figures. It was his view that the state should have an ideal population and resources to enable it to grow and become prosperous. The Fazal Ali Commission recommended that the Telangana State should function for the first five years.<sup>3</sup> Later, the elected Telangana Assembly members based on their experience would exercise their choice to remain as a separate Telangana state or to merge with Andhra state. The Government of India could not implement Faizal Ali Report because the Hyderabad case was pending in the Security Council.

### **Exigencies for not honouring SRC - 1955:**

1. Soon after the Police Action the Nizam sent a cable to the UNO withdrawing the case of Hyderabad. However, the Security Council did not accept the plea, and raised the question whether recognition should be given to Indian conquest of Hyderabad and claim to title over it. The case of Hyderabad was pending at the UNO as late as 2nd September 1955.<sup>4</sup>
2. Hyderabad Delegation sought the leave of Security Council to complain against India for its military conquest on Hyderabad in the International Court of Justice at The Hague.<sup>5</sup>
3. Government of Hyderabad-in-exile at Karachi appealed to the UNO for its recognition.<sup>6</sup>

4. Had Telangana been carved out as a separate state, the Communists would have formed the government in 1956.<sup>7</sup>
5. Communists already declared Telangana as a liberated zone and referred it as "Indian Manchuria".<sup>8</sup>
6. The government opined that fledgling Telangana state would not stand up to militancy and pave the way for anarchy.<sup>9</sup>
7. The cold war between America and Russia was going on and the west wanted India's support against the communism. That's why the Security Council adjourned the case sine die.<sup>10</sup>
8. The west did not completely trust India, consequently the Security Council did not drop both the Nizam's application and Moin Nawab Jung application against the military conquest of India in the International Court of Justice as late as 2-9-1989.<sup>11</sup>

Crucifixion of Telangana was a *raison d'etat* of all medley groups, for: Government of India - to become free from international opprobrium; (The case of Hyderabad before the Security Council was attracting international attention. It was finally dropped only in 1989): Communists - Pan Marxism; Coastal Brahmins - Government jobs; Kammas to acquire lands and amass wealth; Rayalaseema Reddys - to wield political power, Telangana leaders - for crumbs falling off Andhra leaders' tables. All these pall bearers draped the coffin of Telangana with a velvet cloth printed 'linguistic state'.<sup>12</sup>

However, in Telangana Brahmins and Reddys rivalry led to the disintegration of Hyderabad State and forceful merger of Telangana with the Andhra State against all the canons of democracy.<sup>13</sup> Andhra leaders took advantage of the rivalry and ruled the roost. Vandemataram Ramchander Rao who had lost the election to Channa Reddy in 1967 filed a case on the alleged malpractices. Brahmananda Reddy was said to have secretly instructed the District Collector and the Superintendent of Police to support the charges against Dr.Reddy.<sup>14</sup> This rivalry continued to as late as 2014, that's how both these groups made room for others.

#### **NOT A LINGUISTIC STATE :**

History responds as often to falsehoods as to facts, so is the case with Andhra Pradesh. With ulterior motives, certain jingoists

had invented a wholly fictitious story about linguistic states. As states were not re-organized on linguistic lines, all Telugu speaking areas such as Ganjam, Barampuram, Chakrapur, Parlakmidi, Koraput (Orissa), Kolhar, Bellary (in Karnataka) were not included. As it was not a linguistic state, 60% Tamil speaking Tirupathi was incorporated into Andhra state.<sup>15</sup> It is not out of place to mention that Andhra Mahasabha gave a clarion call to all Andhras to boycott Tamil Tirupathi and British textiles which benefit others.<sup>16</sup> SRC also made it clear that they did not attach any particular importance to the language factor in taking a decision about Kolar district, where the Telugu-speaking people constituted about 54% of the population. However, it was not included in the Andhra State. Can there be a Vijayanagar empire (Andhra Pradesh) without Hampi? Krishnadevaraya would turn in his grave if he were to see Andhra Pradesh without Hampi.

After the Commission's Report, the situation became tense and the Government of India appointed a Three-man Committee with the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru as Chairman, Moulana Abdul Kalam Azad, Govind Ballabh Pant as members to look into the problems of the proposed state. The Telangana and Andhra regions were asked to send three representatives each to present their problems to the Three-man Committee. Dr. Reddy was one of the members of the Committee along with Chief Minister Burgula Ramakrishna Rao and Kasinath Vaidya from Telangana while Chief Minister Gopal Reddy, N. Sanjeeva Reddy and Kala Venkata Rao were members from the Andhra region that discussed with the Union Government. The outcome was the 'Gentlemen Agreement' which was literally drafted by Dr.Reddy himself. However, Andhra leaders did not append their signatures.<sup>17</sup> It was honoured more in the breach than in the observance. It proved detrimental to the development of the Telangana region. In 1969 it erupted into an unprecedented agitation popularly known as "Telangana Agitation" spearheaded by the Telangana Praja Samithi.

The period between 1968 and 1973 was a very significant one in Dr. Reddy's political life. During this period there was a great turmoil and tumult among people, the manner in which the legitimate interests of the people of the Telangana region were being trampled upon by the government. The students and youth started an agitation for redressal of the grievances of Telangana People. As one who

always stood by the just cause of the people, Dr.Reddy could not remain indifferent and joined the movement to lead the people in the hour of their distress. When this agitation was sought to be put down by the State government through use of force, Dr. Reddy rebelled and wanted a separate statehood for Telangana so that the people could achieve fulfillment of their aspirations. This was followed by the formation of the regional party Telangana Praja Samithi, the leadership of which ultimately fell on Dr.Reddy's shoulders.

Before the advent of Dr. Reddy, students and youth demanded only for the extension of the Mulki rules which was lapsed in 1968 and implementation of safeguards in letter and spirit. Dr. Reddy crossed his political Rubicon and as a medical doctor diagnosed the issue and came to the conclusion that in the integrated Andhra Pradesh, the grievances of Telangana people could never be addressed let alone be redressed, and the panacea for this ill was only statehood for Telangana. It was Dr. Channa Reddy who gave a clarion call for a separate State, earlier it was only demand for implementation of safeguards. It was Dr.Reddy who propounded the theory of a separate Telangana State. He asserted "Telangana belongs to us, not you" and expounded emphatically. He set out to awaken the Telangana people to their potential, and to move them to play a dominating role in the Andhra Pradesh polity.

It is not out of place to mention that the author of this paper was the company commander of B-Company of 2/11 Gorkha Rifles, which was deployed at Warangal in January 1969 has had a ring-side view of the agitation. At that time it was a student movement, and the so-called many names we hear as ideologues were neither seen nor heard of at Warangal. No newspaper of that time made a mention of the so-called ideologues. What Martin Luther to protestants, Dr. Channa Reddy is to Telangana State. It is a truism that Dr. Channa Reddy is the father of Telangana State. His outstanding trait was providing leadership to the movement. It is not everybody that can provide leadership. Mark Twain in his characteristic way had observed, an army of stags led by a lion is far superior to an army of lions led by a stag. The Telangana agitation in 1969 was started at Khammam and spread to Hyderabad city.<sup>18</sup> However, it was confined to students and youth. It was Dr. Channa



Reddy made it as a mass movement and provided able leadership. His leadership shook both the centre and the state. English lexicographer, Johnson had Boswell, Karl Marx had Engels, Jayashankar had K.Chandrashekar Rao but Channa Reddy had none to shower encomiums. That's why his contributions to Telangana State are not recorded faithfully. There is a farrago of fact and falsehood about him. Dr. Reddy also said that Telangana identity is not based on either language or religion; it is based on history. In the course of history, cultural characteristics and social structures have grown in Telangana, and they are different from those in the rest of Telugu country.

In 1971 elections, Indira Gandhi had a secret understanding with the Telangana Praja Samiti (TPS) and also financed their election. It is not out of place to mention that Indira Gandhi did not have amicable relations with other senior Congress leaders particularly from Andhra Pradesh. Therefore she wanted TPS support. The TPS president Dr. M. Channa Reddy took advantage of the discomfiture of Indira Gandhi and made her to acquiesce to Telangana state. After 1971 Indo - Pak war Indira Gandhi emerged as a tall leader. Despite the Congress reputation TPS could bag 10 Lok Sabha seats of total 14 in Telangana region under the dynamic leadership of Reddy. He was neither complacent nor complaisant and demanded of Indira Gandhi to honour the agreement. She wanted to redeem her promise of Telangana. However, she was dissuaded by External Affairs ministry who reminded her of the pending case of Hyderabad in the Security Council. After this, she changed her stance towards Telangana and initiated efforts to weaken the very Telangana Movement itself. In this endeavour she won over TPS MPs with inducements. However, Dr. Reddy was not aware of all those things and was isolated. As he was a practical politician, he initiated peace parleys with Indira Gandhi, which resulted in his leading the majority of TPS members back into Congress on the basis of an oral agreement. The TPS claimed that Indira Gandhi had implicitly endorsed their 6 - Point Programme: I) Statutory powers for Telangana Regional Committee, II) Separate Budget and Separate Accounts for Telangana, III) A separate Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee, IV) the Separation issue to be reopened at a later stage, V) Implementation of the Mulki Rules and VI) A change in the leadership. Certainly she acted with great alacrity on the last

point and Bramhananda Reddy was asked to resign and P.V. Narasimha Rao was elevated. Telangana got no separate PCC, but a Telangana sub-committee on the PCC. In 1972 elections it recommended candidates for the region without reference to Andhra leadership. However, P.V. Narasimha Rao as his wont stated that TPS merger with the Congress was unconditional.<sup>19</sup> However, when something important is going on silence is a lie. One should not be oblivious to one reality, it was she who was instrumental for bifurcation of Bombay state into Gujarat in 1960 as the AICC President, and bifurcation of Punjab in 1966 as the Prime Minister of India. She was a party to the creation of Nagaland state in 1963. As the Prime Minister, she presided over the liquidation of Assam state. It clearly establishes the fact that she was not averse to smaller states. In 1969, Telangana people wanted a separate state, and in 1972, Andhras wanted a separate state. Why couldn't she accede to? What was her compulsion? Obviously, international opprobrium.

#### **REASONS FOR NOT FORMING TELANGANA:**

- ❖ Due to split in the National Congress Indira Gandhi depended on the Left Parties to be in power. In deference to their wishes she did not consent to Telangana State.
- ❖ 1971 Indo-Pak war was just concluded and India was facing International opprobrium.
- ❖ 1971 Curiously, it was another regional movement in the sub-continent (Bangladesh), which contributed to bringing the Telangana movement to a halt.<sup>20</sup>
- ❖ Hyderabad's case was still pending in the UNO, Government of India's intention was to give Telangana state soon after the conclusion of Hyderabad's case in the UNO-Clyde Egleton's article "The case of Hyderabad before the Security Council" (published in the American Journal of international Law, Washington DC)
- ❖ Smt. Indira Gandhi had an electoral understanding with Telangana Praja Samithi in 1971 election and promised to give Telangana State. However, she was dissuaded from it, as Hyderabad's case was pending in the Security Council. Poor M. Channa Reddy became a whipping boy.

- ❖ As a matter of fact, Smt. Indira Gandhi wanted to commence the process of formation of a separate state for Telangana by instructing late P.N.Haksar, her senior secretary in the PMO, but she had to withdraw at the last minute at the intervention of External Affairs ministry.
- ❖ Finally, Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, did not ascent to Telangana State.

If the 1857 revolt were the first war of India's independence, 1969 Telangana Agitation were also the first movement for the statehood to Telangana. True, 1857 could not achieve independence yet we recognize its significance and remember the memories of Rani Jhansi, Nanasaheb and Tantiya Tope. This movement gave inspiration to later day freedom fighters. If we apply the same analogy, Dr. Channa Reddy was a renaissance man. Despite the 1969 movement's limitations and weaknesses, their effect to emancipate Telangana from alien rule was a laudable act and a progressive step. If the importance of a historical event is not limited to its immediate achievements, the 1969 agitation was not a pure historical tragedy. Even in failure, it served a grand purpose, a source of inspiration for the later movement (2000 - 2014) which achieved what the 1969 Agitation could not do. Even his implacable adversary, K. Brahmananda Reddy writes "he is dynamic and industrious, though abrasive at times. He was with me and against me; either way he is formidable."<sup>21</sup> However, Dr. Reddy always forgave his enemies, but never forgot their names. This amazing doctor, who had perhaps brought more self-esteem to Telangana people than any one before or since, was a good orator, loved children, adored animals, did not drink and remained faithful to his region to the end.

Dr. Channa Reddy might have been a man of few peccadillos and more good can be said than of many historical figures. He can't be easily described, and certainly not in brief compass.

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## ANNEXURE - I

UNITED NATIONS  NATIONS UNIES

POSTAL ADDRESS—ADDRESS POSTALE UNITED NATIONS, N. Y. 10017  
CABLE ADDRESS—ADDRESS TELEGRAPHIQUE UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK

PO 240 PI

27 September 1979

Dear Mr. Aziz,

I have been directed to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 12 September 1979, addressed to the Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs, in which you seek information on the Hyderabad question.

As you know, the case was discussed by the Security Council in Paris in 1948. After that debate the Council received further communications on this subject in October, November and December of that year, but the Council's discussion was not resumed until May 1949, when it heard statements on the question by the representatives of India and Pakistan. Since that date, no further developments in the matter have taken place. However, the Hyderabad question is still a matter of which the Security Council remains seized.

I hope that this information will serve your purpose and I thank you for your interest in the work of the United Nations.

Yours sincerely,

  
Director  
Security Council and  
Political Committee Division

Mr. Qutubuddin Aziz  
Managing Editor  
United Press of Pakistan Ltd.,  
Karachi-3  
Pakistan



شعبہ طب

تصدیق کی جاتی ہے کہ ایم چناریڈی  
ولد ایم لکشماریڈی نے امتحان ۱۳۵۱ء میں  
جامعہ ہذا سے ام بی۔ بی اس کی ڈگریاں حاصل  
کی ہیں اور مصنفین ذیل میں معالجہ کے قابل ہیں۔

طب  
جراحی  
قبالت

امیر جامعہ

حیدرآباد دکن  
پورٹ نمبر ۵۲ فروری ۱۳۵۱ء