

EMERGENCE OF DALIT POLITICAL MOVEMENT IN ANDHRA PRADESH: A CRITICAL STUDY

U S Saranya*

Abstract

Dalit movements started as a form of revolution in order to voice out for the right in the society. People fight for a cause and that turns into a movement and sometimes it is the movements which bring people together to fight against the atrocities. Likewise, Dalit movement started in the early 80's by Bakthi saints and it gained its momentum with giants like Buddha, Phule and Ambedkar. The inequality among the human on the basis of the religious text and rituals created inferiority and superiority complex in the minds of the people. The fight to gain the position as equal to other human and to stop the ill-treatment within human the movements stated to emerge. This Paper will mainly focus on the Dalit political movement in Andhra Pradesh.

Keywords: Dalits; Movements; Inequality; Atrocity; Inferiority.

Dalits are the people who are economically, politically and socially exploited and are forced to live as untouchables outside the village doing all the low level jobs offered to them by the privileged people of the society. They were not allowed to live a life with dignity they were treated as the suppressed class of Indian society. In Indian constitution the Dalits come under the category of 'scheduled caste'. They are given different names like asyu, Dasa, Atisudra, Panchama, Tirukulattar, Adikarnataka, Adi Dravida Pariahs, Chamars, Mahars, Bhangis etc. State wise they claimed different name as Mahars in Maharastra, Malas and Madigas in Andhra, Holeyas in Karnataka, Chamars in Western North India, Pallar and Paraiyans in Tamil Nadu. The minority Aryans who settled in the river of Ganges defeated the majority indigenous Dalits.

* **PhD Scholar – English Studies, School of Social Studies and Languages (SSL), VIT University, Vellore**

Hindu scriptures and religious texts treated Dalits as slaves. Caste was not God created ideas but it was manmade ideologies to suppress and to dominate the other which is deeply rooted in the Indian Hindu tradition. The privileged Brahmin was treated with high respect and had the superior power in hand and the less privileged Dalits were treated equal to animals and mere slaves. In order to gain the equality the movement came into the society as a protest and so in Andhra to.

Several costal districts in Andhra like Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam, East and west Godavari, Ongole, Guntur, Nellore and four other districts of Rayalaseema like Kurnool, Chittoor, Anantapur, and Cuddapah after colonial rule were included to Madras presidency. Drought and dry was this region and later the Dalit movement gave a strike and led to the development of the people. Coastal region of Andhra more radically took part in the Dalit movement. The pioneer in the movement was Veerasalingam pantalu of nineteenth century he boldly initiated the widow remarriage, avoiding dowry, removal of prostitution and untouchability, eradication of corruption was done in his period of time. He initiated the Brahmo Samaj and through it the Hindus started giving the wasteland for cultivation, educational institution and ashram was constructed to train the cadre of Dalits. Guduru Ramachandra Rao a untouchable activist a spokes person who travelled giving speeches in Telugu districts started the Ashram for training the cadres in 1912. Many other activists like Sundru Venkaiah, Kusuma Venkatramaiah, kusuma Dharmanna took part in the movement. Till 1930 congress was dominated by the Brahmins later the emergence of the non-brahmin movement in Madras put an end to the Brahmin dominated politics. Coastal Andhra provided the consciousness of regional nationalist ideology. The casteist problem began to emerge the Kammas and Reddis partition was formed. Maha sabha organised by the nationalist created many Dalit conference in 1913 and 1918 it created a separated Andhra circle within the congress. The novels written by the Hindus about the Dalit life portrays the social and economic conditions of the Dalits in their region. *Mallepalle* by Unnava Laxminarayan deals about the commercialization and peasant life of the Dalits. *Harijan Nayakudu* by N.G.Ranga in 1933 portrays the violence and betrayal of the dalits in daily life.

The year 1920 and 1930's the Dalits started to shed the identity of being either panchama or Harijan and started to create a separate identity as Adi-Andhras. Influenced by the non-Aryan

theme they gained their own identity and in their conference as First Provincial panchama Mahajana Sabha by Gunduru Ramachandra Rao found that in the Hindu scriptures no where their name was found as they are the original sons of the soil they changed the term of the conference and identified it as 'First Adi-Andhra Mahajan Sabha'. The local bodies of the Andhra started separate schools and construction of the wells for the malas and madigas. The Adi-Andhra conference was held every year from 1921 to 1930. Many conference held in these places increased the awareness among the people and they identified themselves as the true landowners of the Dravidian country.

The Dalits in Hyderabad faced a pressure weather to identify themselves with the Hindus or the Muslim as there were close connection of the Muslims in their region. Later it was known that it was not due to friendship but Muslims were always after the Dalits girls were the complaint. Bhagyareddy varma and Arigay Ramaswamy involved in Brahma Samaj and took active part in the movement from 1912. Arigay Ramaswamy formed the Manya Sangam and transformed the name to Adi-Hindu social service league. Later he opposed Ambedkar in the conversion movement and settled in All-India Depressed Classes League. Various split between the Dalit activist created a rift in the movement and the leaders split themselves as the Hindu congressite and Muslim Pro nizams.

It is evident from the History that the Dalits who are the original inhabitant of the land are not been treated with dignity they are put very low by the invaders of the land who had all the comfort and luxury. Their development in the culture, education, religion, rituals and lifestyle gave them a thought to consider themselves a superior being and the original inhabitant of the soil who were not developed in means of the all the above things were put inferior. For decades and years together they were treated as slaves in their own country. When the Christianity entered the country the dalits started embracing the religion where they were treated with humanity and not as untouchables. The education gave them the right to fight for their own identity. When reading the Hindu scriptures they never found any credit to the original sons of the land instead they put them very low and considered them as impure people. The inequality in the social and economic spheres of life gave them the courage to fight against the caste Hindus.

The emergence of Dalit movements in different states in different period of Dalits shows the revolutionary attitude of the Dalits to gain their own rights and dignity.

Through the movement initiated by various leaders starting from Bakthi to Ambedkar period marks the struggles of the Dalits to regain their lost identity in the society which dominates them in the name of Caste, creed and Religion. Various saints and leaders contributed their life in gaining the liberation of the Dalits souls in the society through their revolutionary works and speeches. The movement in different states made the Dalits to fight for their own rights even after so many decades the suppression of the Dalits by the caste Hindu is an unended form of revolution. Even today in every walk and every sphere of life the Dalits face oppression and criticism though many law support the Dalits the people in the higher ladder is always the Hindu and all the requisitions and complains fails to address the Dalits. The struggle for life and the struggle for living are always faced by Dalits even today. Through the Dalits movements one can get to know the difficulties faced and the rights that were denied to the Dalits is witnessed. The eminent personality like Jothirao Phule and Ambedkar changed the social life of the Dalits and raised their state of Living. The right to freedom and determination made the human to attain their own rights and dignity of which even today many revolutionary movements takes place in the society like the social movements of women, tribes, Dalits, and environment movement. The anti-colonial struggle paved ways to unfold the creative society and spread new visions of transformation in the society. Any social movement is organised by an individual group or a community to achieve and attain their goal likewise the Dalit movement made the dalits to lead a dignified life and have their own space in the worlds to live with the equality in the society.

ADI-HINDU AND ADI-ANDHRA MOVEMENT (ANDHRA PRADESH)

Dalit movement in Andhra began in early 90's. Adi-Andhra movement started in Hyderabad and Adi-Dravida Movement in Andhra. Bhagyareddy Varma (1888-1939) of Hyderabad played a major role in organizing the protest of the Dalits in the Adi-Andhra conference in the year 1938 he fought for the bill to be passed for the temple entry in Madras provincial he supported the Ambedkarites. He organised the 'Jagan Mitra Mandali' in the year 1906 and 'Manya Samngam' in 1911. From 1906-1916 he travelled all over telungana and gave awareness and speeches to the people and asked them to cutoff some habits from their life such as drinking, eating meat,

wearing unclean clothes, child marriage etc. His other contemporaries were Ariga Ramasswami and B.Syam Sundhar who ignited the fire of the movement in Hyderabad region. Adi-Andhra movement and Adi-Hindu movement were led by Bhagyareddy varma one in the coastal region of Andhra and the other in Hyderabad. Dalits of Andhra had a conference held in Vijayawada in 1917 sponsored by the Hindu named as First Provincial Panchama Maharaja Sabha sooner it gained the name as Adi-Andhra Maharaja Sabha. The Adi-Andhra conference was held every year. The Hindu opposed it but still the dalits held various conferences in different parts of the region and 1913 census indicated that the Dalits of Andhra claimed their identity as Adi-Andhra under the nizam rule. Dalit writers like Boyi Bhimanna, Kusuma Dharmanna and Jala Rangaswamy made their pens as powerful weapons and wrote against caste oppression, denial of education, untouchability and their writings claimed that the Dalits were the original inhabitant of the Telugu land. Gurram Jashuva's *Piradousi* (1932), *Gubbilam* (The Bat); Kusuma Dharmanna's *nalla Dhoratham* (1933), *Harijana chathakam* (1933), *Madhyapana Nishedham* (1930); Boyi Bhimanna's *Paleru* (1940), *Cooliraju* (1947) and *Jana Padhuri Jabhulu* (1940); Jala Rangaswami's *Mala Shuddi* (1930), China Venkataiah's *Harijana Keerthanalu* (1935) these were few works of the Dalit Telugu writers among them Premaiah and Abraham contributed more to the movement through their revolutionary writings.

The privileged Brahmin was treated with high respect and had the superior power in hand and the less privileged Dalits were treated equal to animals and mere slaves. These writings were to break the long silence of the dalits of thousand years they found the space to express their revolt against the social evil imposed on them for centuries. Majority of writers who wrote the brahminical text wrote with a Brahmin touch in order to sustain their mode of living in the society and they occupied the upper positions and leaving the dalits to do the lower job by subjugating them from the top in the form of religion, birth, caste etc. The pioneers of many Dalit movements were commoners and they brought about a great radical and revolutionary change in the life of the Dalits.

References

- [1] Azhagarasan.R. *“The Oxford India Anthology of Tamil Dalit Writing”*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012. Print.
- [2] Bharathi Thummapudi. *“A history of Telugu Dalit Literature”*. New Delhi: Kalpaz Publication, 2008. Print.
- [3] CHAPTER II *“DALIT MOVEMENT.”* Web. 07 Mar. 2016
- [4] Dangle Arjun. *Poisoned Bread: Translations from Modern Marathi Dalit Literature”*. Mumbai. Orient Black Swan. 1994. Print.
- [5] Mani B.R. *“De-Brahaminising History: Dominance and Resistance in Indian Society”*. New Delhi: Manohar. 2005. Print.
- [6] Nimbalkar Waman. *“Dalit literature: Nature and Role”*. Nagpur: Prabodhan Prakashan. 2006. Print.