

AGRICULTURE WOMEN IN PEASANTS ARMED STRUGGLE IN TELANGANA STATE: A STUDY

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Abstract: *This paper mainly concentrates with Women Participation in Telangana Armed Struggle the 1940's mark a new phase in the politics of Hyderabad state. The struggle, issues raised and the ideology that supported this all heralded a new and radical phase. Moving from demands for freedom of social expression and organization, which were essentially concerns of the urban middle class of Hyderabad, the focus now was on the forms of oppression, the feudal nature of the state and the compulsions necessitating shift of activity from the Urban and Semi Urban areas to the rural villages. These trends necessarily affected women's organizations, compelling hard choices. While most of the women leaders and organizations, given their class character, opted out of this radical phase, a few Hyderabad organizations like the Navjivan Mandali made conscious decisions to support the Communists. By the end of 1940's women's participation in the urban and the rural areas was legitimized by the spaces created for them or the opportunities they created for themselves. Two divergent and seemingly parallel trends emerged, a legitimate public space for participation for the urban middle class educated women, a process that was supportive and facilitated by society.*

Key Words: *Women participation, Telangana Armed Struggle.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

The Telangana Armed Struggle occupies a unique place, not only on the history of India but also in the history of the people's Liberation struggle of the World. During the Second half of 18 Century the Th Burgeousice (middle class) industrial workers and peasants fought liberation struggle throughout the Europe against the Monarchism and Feudal Desports under the slogans of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity". Women Participation in Telangana Armed Struggle The 1940's mark a new phase in the politics of Hyderabad state. The struggle, issues raised and the ideology that supported this all heralded a new and radical phase. Moving from demands for freedom of social expression and organization, which were essentially concerns of the Urban middle class of Hyderabad, the focus now was on the forms of oppression, the feudal nature of the state and the compulsions necessitating shift of activity from the Urban and Semi Urban areasto the rural villages. These trends necessarily affected women's organizations, compelling hard choices. While most of the women leaders and organizations, given their class character, opted out of this radical phase, a few Hyderabad organizations like the Navjivan Mandali made conscious decisions to support the Communists. By the end of 1940's women's participation in the urban and the rural areas was legitimized by the spaces created for them or the opportunities they created for themselves.

Two divergent and seemingly parallel trends emerged, a legitimate public space for participation for the Urban middle class educated women, a process that was supportive and facilitated by society. And its opposite if one could call it a space in which women held a central position but yet could not publicly articulate grievances since they were and are often considered illegitimate. Given the feudal nature of society in which women irrespective of religion or caste were in Purdah or had little opportunity for knowledge half of can't that in the of the outside world, it is truly 20th century that women of Telangana region gradually and yet progressively expanded their sphere of activities and political participation, moving from welfare and recreational activity to active involvement in radical armed struggle at the other end of the spectrum. It is also important to note that the nature of women's participation changed at this juncture. During this period the participants were primarily poor agricultural labourers. It is pertinent here to take a brief look at the feudal nature of agrarian social relations in Telangana region.

The basic feature that dominated the socio-economic life of the people of Hyderabad and especially in

Telangana was the unbridled feudal exploitation that persisted till, the beginning of the Telangana armed peasant struggle. Out of the 53,000,000 acres in the whole of Hyderabad state about 30,000,000 acres i.e. about 60 percent were under Governmental land revenue system called Diwani or Khasla area, about 15,000,000 acres i.e. about 30 percent were under the Jagirdari system, and about 10 percent as the Nizam's own direct estate i.e. sarf-e-khas system.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The objectives of the present study are

1. To bring into light the source material for the reconstruction of the role of women in Telangana Armed Struggle.
2. To observe the causes and consequences of land alienation and aspects of land grabbing in Telangana.
3. To examine the condition of women in Telangana during Nizam rule.
4. To examine the role of women in Telangana Armed Struggle.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

The published material on women during Telangana Armed Struggle is meager owing to less or no importance given to them in history. The academic study on Telangana, particularly on the role of women which is unique was limited in number. The other studies on Telangana are mostly written by activists like Puchalapally Sundaraiah: Veera Telangana Viplava Poratam –Gunapatalu., Raavi Narayana reddy: Veera Telangana- Na Anubavalu, Gnapakalu., Devulapally. Venkateswara Rao: Telangana Prajasa Sayuda Porata Cheritra (1946-1951)., Nalla Narasimhulu: Telangana Sayuda Poratam na Anubavalu.,

C. Rajeeshwar Rao, M.Basava Punnaiah, Raj Bahadur Gour, Kondapally Seetha Ramaiah, Arutla Ramachandra Reddy,. They have tried to highlight the genesis of the peasant mobilisation, movements and their role. The Communist party was leading the movement. These works deal with agrarian problems prevailing at that time. They have not attempted to study the nature and cause of the agrarian relations. It is believed that the process of legal occupants, commodization, and the introduction of agricultural machinery, the growth of markets and development of institutional credit facilities would lead to process of change in agrarian relations.

4. METHODOLOGY:

The research depends upon secondary data. And also related secondary data will be collected through books. Magazines, annual reports, documents, news papers journals thesis and etc. This promoted the selection of district and the selections books mainly observing the extent of availability of educational institutions in an areas and its proximity to rural area and their importance.

Women Participated in Telangana Armed Struggle.

In Subaramigudem, Golla Muttayya was killed for not surrendering the piece of land he was cultivating, but his wife stepped in and continued the cultivation and did not allow the enemy to seize the land. In Moddulukunta, a lambadi took possession of a piece of land from landlord Ramakrishnanna who tried to seize it with the help of the police. The lambadi was beaten to pulp and forced to leave his house and farm. But his wife refused and persisted. She cultivated it and succeeded in carrying the harvest to her home. Veeraram, a lambadi peasant and his wife resisted their land being sized by the landlord's men and the police. The police trampled on the women who were pregnant and she died.

It was a fact that tens of thousands of women stood along with their men folk in this struggle for land. A great percentage of agricultural labourers are women. They are in very large numbers, perhaps as many as the men themselves, because they too have to earn if they are to get even one meal for their children and themselves. They cannot rely on their men's earnings. As such it is not surprising that women participated in large numbers in all agricultural labour strikes, or in seizure of grain from landlord's and 7 deshmukhs warehouses and gadis. In the Kondrapalli centre, and other neighboring centres in a large number of village, agricultural labourers went on strike for increase of their daily wages to four seers from the then existing 2 or 3 seers. In the ags indemonstrations, women in large numbers participated with their hands. Ultimately to force the landlords to come to a settlement, they had to raid and start seizing grain. The landlords were forced to concede the demands.

There were women who staying in their own villages, defended their homes, fought against the oppressors and the police and suffered. Many demanded to be taken into the immensely, but went on guerrilla squads, to the forest area, maybe partly under the pressure of the enemy attacks as the only method of escape. The party admitted only a few women into the forest areas and even fewer in the guerrilla squads. Yet there were quite a number of women in various jobs in both the forest and plain regions. In the political and militant. The village women folk aided the guerrilla squads in their raids. They provided the squad members with water and food while the battles raged for hours together. Women went in disguise to gather information about the military camps and passed it on to the squads. They also participated in battles with pots of chilly powder, kept vigil on the routes of the police and killed them. Hundred of such raids occurred all over Telangana.

During the Nizam days in 1946-47 the Nizam police and levy of raided the villages of Akunur and Machireddypalli in Jangoan taluk. They raped a dozen or more women. This incident was taken up even by Congress leaders as a major issue, as an insult to the honour of womenfolk and as a disgrace to national honour. Padmaja Naidu was in the forefront of that agitation and a huge wave of anger swept the whole country. In Ragipadu (Suryapet taluk) a woman who had delivered only three days before, was raped. In Narigudem (Bhuvanagiri taluk) a woman who had delivered a day before, was raped. In Tangunta, a woman in advanced pregnancy was raped. In Yenapadu, of Bhuvanagiri taluk, and in Pushpapur of Khammam taluk even girls of 10 years were raped. Reports of women being raped by 5-10 military police men at a time were innumerable. More than 100 women died of brutal raping. In the year itself reports showed more than a thousand women being raped. It will be no exaggeration to say that in all these three years of the police and military terror regime a few thousand women were raped. But the women and the people waged a continuous and bitter struggle against this barbarous attack on women, beat back the police in many cases, and saved them from this torture.

In Madarugudem, Miryalagudem taluka, the wife of the local organizer, Balakoti was caught hold of by the military. She resisted and fought back, and escaped from their clutches. In Jalalpuram an armyman tried to rape a pregnant woman. She talked to him to get him into room and then bolted it from the outside and gathered a crowd of women. When the armed police were attacking the villages of Balemula, Patasuryapet, Mallareddygudem, Devarapalle and in a number of other places, women were at the side of their men, handing them stones for their slings. Along with their men folk they faced brutal rings. Lathi charges and a woman who was supplying stones, in the Mallareddy gudem standing by the side of her husband, was shot dead. Women resisted their men folk being spirited away in Lorries and demanded that they should accompany them and face all the consequences. The police getting women in the Lorries, could move only when they took the along with their men folk. In the Kottagudem Koya hamlet, in Gundala area, in September 1950 the men and women of the whole village resisted the military atrocities killed a subedar and three of his men and seized there and in that guns. After this when the military came in large force in whole village had to take shelter in the deep forest. That was the heroic way the women lived through the ordeal, not even allowing their children to cry out, will always rouse admiration and be an example of the determination and stubbornness of which women are capable.

In Rajaram centre, a man and woman of a lambadi tanda were taken to the camp, the police suspecting them of helping the guerillas. They were made to stand up for days and nights without food and water. When they fell down, a little water was given and as soon as they became conscious was again made to stand up. Their legs became swollen, but even after this torture both of them would have rather given up their lives than give any information about the guerillas. The enemy then let them off. ghting area that women took It was a common feature in the whole extraordinary precautions to look after the guerillas and squads, sheltering and billeting them in their houses and in a large number of cases keeping night or day vigil while the guerillas or leaders were sleeping or resting.

The women fed guerillas and party organizers at any time of the night or day with great care and affection. They took food and supplies to the guerilla hideouts in the forests on hills and suffered horrible tortures and indignities when they were found out. In the village of Bendalapadu, a peasant woman Rajamma was caught. She and her husband were tortured with red hot irons, her waist and hands were branded as if wearing ornaments but not a single word did she utter about the squads.

The charge was that she was taking food to the squads in the forests. In this struggle, women had participated equally along with the men and due to this it became easier for the gram committees, Sangham and party to campaign against the age old ideas prevalent in the society that women were inferior to men. Women were elected to village Panch committees. As mentioned earlier the Urban Women's Organizations in Hyderabad split on issue of support to the growing radical movement.

Smt. Sita Kumari was very interested in politics. She pioneered the ideas which she propagated and in the process she became the member of the Legislative Assembly. The organized Satyagraha movement launched by the States Peoples, Conference in 1938 was only the beginning of the people's struggle. It was at such time that the

Communist party called upon the All India Trade Union Congress, the All Hyderabad Students Union and the women who were organized in a few towns, to join hands with the Andhra Mahasabha and to come out boldly and protect the life of the people. Men and women prepared themselves to face the Nizam.

Women played an important role in the Telangana Armed Struggle. They who had suffered and starved under the regime of extortions of the Nizam and the Deshmukhs, now saw the possibility of a new life, and they actively participated in the land movement, in the seizure of the landlords' grain, and in the struggle for higher wages. They fought the Razakars and the Nizam's police and later the Indian Army, standing shoulder to shoulder with their men. Ordinary women in the villages heroically defended their land. It is a well known fact that tens of thousands of women stood along with their men in this struggle for land, women formed a large percentage of the participants in the agricultural labour agitations in hand came in strikes.

In demonstrations, the women with red chilly they participated in seizing the grain of large numbers and landlords who were then forced to concede their demands of four 'seers' of grain as daily wages, raising it from the prevailing rate of two or three 'seers'. Even though the women had hitherto not been drawn politically into the movement or politically trained, they in the course of the now rose to great heights of heroism and sacrifice in their villages and their homes, but in the struggle. Not only did they in the many demanded to be taken in the guerrilla squads and forests. The leaders admitted only a very few women into the forest area and fewer in the guerrilla squads.

Mallu Swarajyam who was active even as a young girl in the Andhra Mahasabha, later joined the Communist movement and organized men and women to participate in the Telangana struggle.

The Navjivan Mandali, a composition organization mainly of non Telugu women of whom there was a large number in the city, did splendid work in the city.

Among the most active was a young village girl from Marathwada, named Padma Deshpande. She played an important role in organizing the activities, going from school to school can't role was Sarojini from and taking the message of the demonstration to the girl students.

Another individual who played a significant role was Dhoopet, who was a hard working and devoted worker. She was not only in the forefront of the struggle for the introduction of food rationing but also took the responsibility of writing and distributing the ration cards, working day and night through the Mahila Navjivan Mandali. She earned great popularity and she used all her organizational talents to rouse women against the activities and the injustice of the Razakars. She gathered around her a good number of sympathizers who were a big asset to the anti-Razakar movement.

Yashodaben was another member of the Navjivan Mandali during the Razakar period. When the people's anger was mounting against their atrocities she played a dominant and inspiring role. She was a leading spirit directing the activities of the Navjivan Mandali.

The story of Jamalunissa Begum, fondly called Baji is not only can't because in those days Muslim women inspiring but also significant never participated in any movement that opposed the Nizam. In 1926-27 she decided to give up the purdah and to boycott foreign clothes. She invested all the Rs. 10,000 she got from her insurance policy to start an Urdu paper which for all purposes was a paper of the Communist party.

This brave Muslim woman carried out her revolutionary mission courageously in a situation where hardly any Muslim woman dared to support the great Telangana Armed struggle or the Communist party which was its spearhead.

In this great struggle women showed their courage and fortitude and in the process liberated themselves from the feudal chains that had bound them down for centuries. But, the reason so many women participated in leading the struggle was due to the good work done among women and by the women cadres. From the beginning of the forties a mass organization of women was built. Pramela Mahendra one of the active comrades in Hyderabad, says that the general atmosphere helped the Communist programme. Their programmes were for the entire womenfolk irrespective of caste and creed. There was no friction among members.

5. CONCLUSION:

The women's organizations became a big mass movement involving the movement was the building of and countryside. The movement which questioned the very basis of the society founded on exploitation, inequality and indignity. It demanded a socioeconomic transformation of society. Communist women gave a new turn to the women's movement. Most of the organizations of women comprised of the middle and upper middle and their membership was limited in numbers. The way in which Communists worked and the way Navjivan Mandali became popular did bring credit to its members. It helped the Communist party time peasants, workers to gain popularity in the city. For the downtrodden in the urban areas, the agricultural women, lower middle class women.

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