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TELANGANA PEASANT STRUGGLE- A CAUSE OF OPERATION POLO

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Abstract

Telangana Peasant Struggle (1946-51) had lead finally to Operation polo. A critical examination of the causes that lead to operation polo tells us that the rebellion of Farmers against th land lords backed by Nizam is the main cause, when we list out the different causes .When the farmers are in unrest no government ruling them could survive longer in rule .This is clearly recorded in the history. We cant separate the Farmers from people in an agrarian society. There is a misconcep -tion that The Farmers struggle against Land lords (Doras) is for Land and Livelyhood (Bhoomi kosam bukthi kosam). But it is against the Exploitation and Robbery. The People's Ambition of freedom from Tenant Farming and bonded labour i.e Forced labour(vetti) finally lead to freedom from Land lords and rulers. (Nizam).

The operation polo could not stop the peasant struggle immediately as the conditions before the struggle continued to prevail even after Operation polo. Rulers were changed but the land lords took a different form to continue the exploitation. The struggle was supported by mainly communist divisin of Andhramahasabha initially changed to armed rebellion as it communist party turned into an armed party... Though the Struggle had included violent incidents due to the above said factors. We have to see the armed struggle as the part of Telangana Farmers struggle.

This study is to establish the Telangana **PEASANT STRUGGLE** as the ultimate cause for the operation carried by Indian Government against the Nizam.

This paper is to put forth briefly the factors that lead to Telangana peasants struggle against the land lords. The ongoing struggle suddenly encountered a challenge from Razakars whivh further intensified the struggle . The revenue system and the land lords oppression and the communists who supported the struggle were also discussed

Introduction

Telangana society at par with Indian society did not witness various modes of production in 20th century as that of European societies .According to Dr Kosambi slavery mode of production was found in Europe due to early Industrial revolution .Only agricultural mode of production is the main occupation of 90% telangana people. So peasant movements dominated the Telangana society.

Feudalism in Telangana: The feudalism is the main cause for the uprising of peasants struggle in Telangana society. Feudalism from below is the concept where class of Landlords like Desmukhs, Desh pandes, Makthedars etc are developed within the village. this class of Land lords are between the state (Nizam) and peasantry(Farmers). These feudalistic classes gradually secured the Civil and criminal powers over the local

population. There existed an intensified land centralization in Telangana .According to estimates nearly 60%-70% of total land under cultivation was under their control.

As quoted by Shri Puchalapalli Sundaraiah in his book “Telangana sayudha Poratam” feudalistic land lords are nearly 500 in number in telangana. Out of these only five land lords (Desmukhs) had the control of nearly 2,20,000 acres of land spread over nearly 100 villages of erst while districts of Nalgonda, Warangal and Khammam. The surf- e- khas lands owned by Nizam are nearly 5,30,000 acres in addition to 530 villages. Totally altogether nearly 2000 land lords are in the occupation of land in various villages in Telangana Region.

Revenue Administration and Reforms: The hierarchy of Revenue Administration in Nizam state is like a ladder. At the top is Nizam Nawab and next is Palegallu, Jagirdars, Zamindars, Makthedars, Deshmukhs, Deshpandes etc. and the executive body has patels, Patwaris etc. (For tax collection) The whole heirarchy from top to bottom puts the whole burden on the poor farmers and tenant farmers. These mediators have some civil and criminal powers based on their status. No farmer has complete rights on the land or on the produce. The Land lords used to levy huge tax on the farmers and paid only a part of it to Nizam nawab. Forced labour (vetti) was the most common in that period.

Caste based occupations such as Kummari (potter) Mangali (Barber) Chakali (washerman) kammari (Black smith) etc had to give service first to the land lords and their subordinates like patwaris, patels etc, that to free of cost.

Salarjung reforms: Earlier the land tax was collected in the form of produce (grain) by makthedars locally. They used to collect huge amount of grain from peasants. This system had been changed by salarjung and the tax was collected in the form of liquid. The amount collected is based on the extension of cultivable land only. A special revenue department had been set up to execute this system.

Effect of Levy: levy tax was introduced in 1943 and came into force by 1944. Targets were fixed village wise for the collection of Levy. According to a survey nearly 20 kgs (20 sherlu) per acre was paid by farmers. The purpose of levy collection mentioned is to create a public distribution. System that helps to feed poor people. The purpose had taken a wrong direction and the levy grain made the land lords richer. It has affected the Rich farmers were effected to some extent.

Farmer unions in Telangana: The First union formed is “Nizam Andhra raithu sangam” in 1937 by the local farmers Ch. Hanumaiah, A. kamaiah in Khammam. The first meeting was held in 1938 Thanikipadu , a small village near Vijayawada Border. Sri Hanumaiah also participated in the Akhila Bharatha Kisan Sabha. The farmer unions failed to address the problems of Farmers and lost their Identity in telangana.

New course of Peasant Movement-Division of Andhra Maha Sabha: The Andhramahasabha a socio political organization formed in 1930 Initially slowly oriented against the Nizam's rule .in a decade the two groups had got ideological differences in helping and backing the farmers. These differences were clearly spectated in the meeting held in Hyderabad in 1943 .

The ideological differences resulted in the division of Andhramahasabha.

1. Extremist group –Shri ravi Narayana reddy, Baddam Balreddy, D. venketeshwar rao. etc.
2. Moderate Group-shri K. VRangareddy, Shri M. Narsingarao ,shri M. Kama koteshevar rao etc..

Soon the extremist group with communist ideology actively started its revolt against the land lords . They even included the violence as a part of their ideology.

Deshmukhs and other Landlords had taken shelter under moderate group ideology of Andhramahasabha. People mostly supported communist party (sangam). To counter the activities of communist party land lords started to strengthen the private army for security. violent incidents also were a part of this revolt..

Shri Doddi komuraiah is the first martyr who sacrificed his life in the peasants struggle of telangana. This happened in the Visnour area where the Desmukh Ramachandra Reddy's private army killed him as in a procession held in kadevendi village of Janagoan taluq of nalgonda dist.

Soon the sangam started to identify the land grabbers and tried to handover. For example Nearly 200 acres of land from Dharmavaram patwari Raghavarao was redistributed to farmers.

Chakali Ailamma incident (1945)

Chakali Ailamma a poor Tenant farmer holding a land of just 6 acres. The Desmukh of Visnour apakaillegally Transferred the tenant land on his name. The private army of Desmukh tried to steal the harvested crop of her. Ailamma with the support of communist party bravely fought against them and could protect her produce. This is the first victory of peasants against the land lords.

Farmers, communists, Land lords and Razakars (1946-48): The farmers had to take up multiple dimensional struggles during this period. First is dealing with the Communists and working under the leadership. Second is to face the strengthened the Land lords and the Third dimension is subjection to the atrocities of Razakars.

The village committees formed during 1946-47 reoccupied the land which originally belong to peasants. The reoccupations occurred in Suryapet, Miryalaguda, Huzurnagar, Bhuvanagiri of Nalgonda district, Ellandhu, Khammam, Mahubabad of Warangal district. As per the Data given by shri Puchalapalli Sundaraiah nearly 10 lakh acres of land was redistributed. Tenant farmers stopped paying tenant tax.

The downfall of land lords started with the intensity of movement in during 1947. Many village committees were formed. These committees were formed and got hold on village administration. They even tried to establish their own panchayats. Land lords lost their hold and fled to other places and even surrendered.

Operation polo-Cessation of Telangana Farmers Movement.

The Official statement of Indian Union under the guidance of Sardar vallabhai Patel to carry out Operation polo is "To halt the atrocities by the paramilitary Razakars and ending Nizam's rule for peace". As said earlier people means farmers.

The conditions of farmers did not change immediately as their problems were not not solved immediately. Farmers were still in a mood of revolt. There arise a question about their continuation of movement.

Indian union could resolve some of the farmers issues as they analyzed the ideology and conditions that lead to the Farmers movement.

The First step is to bring into force the "Hyderabad tenant farmers act 1950". This has brought the security and confidence in the tenant farmers. Amendments were made to protect their rights further.

Conclusion

The Telangana Peasant struggle is a unique one in the world history with the conditions pertaining to the region. The Peasantry here has the increasing dependence on the intermediaries like Deshmukhs, Deshpandes who enjoyed the powers over the peasants. These developments restricted the peasant's mobility and made them subject to increasingly intensive forced labour.

Operation polo has liberated this forced labour. A farmer can enjoy his rights and product in a democratic country. The Nizam could not do any justice to the farmers in an autocratic rule. The robbery and slavery of land lords have no place in the Democratic society. Even today we can witness That any Law against the benefit of Farmers cannot be implemented.

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