

JUSTICE PARTY AND ANDHRA UNIVERSITY ISSUE

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ABSTRACT

The university issue became a pawn in the hands of leaders of Justice party and Swaraj Party. The demand for a separate university for the Telugu people rose simultaneously with the demand to form a separate Andhra State. The first Andhra Mahasabha meeting at Bapatla in 1913 demanded formation of a separate state for Telugu people along with a separate university for Andhra. The differences between coastal and Rayalaseema leaders regarding location of the university was exploited by Tamil leaders. Thus, Andhra university issue was dragged on to the street and the final act completely changed the earlier expectations.

INTRODUCTION

The domination of Tamilians in the madras university led to dissatisfaction among Telugu people. The Telugus language and culture was neglected in the Madras university. Therefore the Telugu people felt it necessary to arrange a university in Telugu speaking areas of Madras presidency. Therefore the leaders of the Telugu region started demanding separate university for Telugu people. After many pranks and twists the Andhra university was established in 1925.

METHODOLOGY

This study makes an analysis of the factors and twists that contributed to the establishment of Andhra University. Historical and empirical methods are adopted to deal the problem. The methodology employed in this study was basically historical analysis of the documentary evidences. Extreme care was taken to scan the original source materials. The critical analysis of sources was done meticulously. Various sources of material have been carefully referred, corroborated, cross-checked and finally deductions have been arrived at regarding various aspects relating to the topic under discussion.

The demand for a separate university for the Telugu people rose simultaneously with the demand to form a separate Andhra State. The first Andhra Mahasabha meeting at Bapatla in 1913 demanded formation of a separate state for Telugu people along with a separate university for Andhra. "For the first time a motion was moved in the house in 1917 by P. Venkatapathi Raju to establish a university for Telugu people"¹²⁹. The Bill was introduced during the first ministry and a committee was formed to study the issue. Speaking on the issue the education minister A.P. Patro said that the government is interested in establishing a university for Andhra area at Vizagapatnam¹³⁰; but this was not the proper time and wait till some technological institutions grow up in the Northern circars¹³¹. Speaking on this issue K.V. Reddy Naidu commented that if we should wait till the necessary institutions grow up in the Andhra country, it might take so long a time that many of us may not live to see them. He suggested that instead of using the word Andhra University, it is better to call it Telugu University. He cited B.V. Sharma quoting in an article in Andhra Patrika in 1922 that the Telugus were by no means Andhras. The word Andhra came from Sanskrit¹³².

Speaking on the issue M. Krishna Nayar suggested that if a Telugu University is established in a portion of the Northern Circars the chances were that the portion of the country which contains a large number of rich landlords and Zamindars will supply the necessary funds for construction activity¹³³. M. Shivarao, Ranganatha Mudaliyar from Bellary, T. Narasimhacharyulu from Cuddapah, B. Munuswamy Naidu from Chittoor opposed the inclusion of the ceded districts in the Andhra University. Another member from Cuddapah district K. Koti Reddy said that there is a legitimate

apprehension on the part of the ceded districts that they may not have proper representation in the Andhra University; 'I do not see any danger in including ourselves in the Andhra University'¹³⁴. Speaking on this issue P.C. Yathirajulu Naidu from Guntur suggested that the proposed University may be located on the banks of the river Krishna. Amravati may be chosen as a centre. It is only 20 miles off Guntur connected by a road. It is a central point which is not far away from ceded districts¹³⁵. Except K. Koti Reddy, other legislators from ceded district strongly argued in favour of Madras University.

Many Tamil leaders opposed the proposed university on the ground that it will entail huge expenditure and will impact on development of higher education, the funding may be reduced to the higher education. Speaking on the issue C. Natesa Mudaliyar worried that if linguistic ambitions were given importance, it might lead to the fissiparous tendencies to come out¹³⁶. 'If the demand of the Andhra leaders is conceded, it will be followed by Kenarese, Malayalis and Tamils. Any resolution that proposed the creation of an Andhra University for Telugus leads to disunion among the members of the non-Brahmin community'¹³⁷. Speaking on this issue the Tamil member C. Muttaiah Mudaliyar said that the Southern Tamil districts were lagging behind the other areas in province. 'There is an urgent need to establish a University in the Southern districts'¹³⁸. Many Tamil leaders supported this demand. The demand of the Tamil members to form a university for Tamils may be reasonable, but the timing of that demand had given the impression that they made this demand to hinder the process of establishment of a university in Telugu region which had been pending for long. The argument of people like Muttaiah Mudaliyar led to regional disparities.

Earlier a committee under Lord Stratham was constituted to study the feasibility of establishing a University in Andhra region in October, 1923. The committee gave its report in September 1924¹³⁹. Before introducing Andhra University Bill on 21st August, 1925, Minister for education spoke that Anantapur, Vizagapatam and Rajahmundry are really the places which are fit to the University centres. The demands came also in favour of Bezwada, Cocanada and various other places¹⁴⁰.

Under these circumstances the minister for education A.P. Patro said that 'I leave it to the representatives of various districts to come to an understanding on this point and advise me on the matter as to where University should be located'. In view of regional differences between circar and ceded districts on the one hand and differences among Telugu leaders regarding centre of the university, Mr. Patro's decision to leave the selection of the university centre to Telugu representatives further divided the Telugu leaders from different districts. The Bill was introduced in the council. "A select committee consisting of 30 members was formed and the bill was referred to it"¹⁴¹. The Bill was finally passed in February, 1926. Though Anantapuram and later Vizagapatam was selected as the centre of the University, the chief minister Raja of Panagal intervened and Bezwada was declared to be the centre of the university¹⁴². Panagal's intervention and selection of Bezwada as centre of the university alienated the leaders of the ceded districts from circar area. On 26th April, 1926 the Andhra University was inaugurated at Bezwada with jurisdiction over all the Telugu districts of the presidency, even though there was considerable controversy regarding the location of the headquarters. C.R. Reddy was appointed as the first vice-chancellor. The teaching departments were located at Rajahmundry. The apprehensions of the leaders of the ceded districts were proved right.

The matter did not end there. The arrival of new ministry following 1926 elections led to further change in the university issue. As location of the administrative offices and teaching departments in two different places was likely to hamper the efficiency of the university, it was decided by the government under Sobbarayan, in April, 1927, to recommend the senate of the university to shift the teaching departments to Vijayawada¹⁴³. Venkatapathi Raju proposed a motion that today the discussion on the nature of the university be finished. Speaking on the motion A. Kaleswara Rao said "District boards and municipalities in Krishna and Guntur are promising funds to the University. Let us postpone this motion for three months". Raju's motion was defended. Kaleswara Rao voted against

this motion. This shows the fickle minded nature of old leaders¹⁴⁴. Even veteran Congress leaders from circar region like Ayyadevara Kaleswara Rao were instrumental in alienating the leaders of the ceded districts with their comments and objections in the council.

Andhra University senate recommended in October, 1927 that Anantapur be made head quarters of the Andhra University. This recommendation was put to vote in the council and won 35 in favour and 20 against the motion¹⁴⁵. The select committee of the legislature also accepted it. It appears that the controversy over the issue has been resolved to the satisfaction of all. Though the senate of Andhra University and the select committee of the legislature decided in favour of Anantapur, the ministry headed by Sobbarayan decided Vizagapatam as the centre of the University. Andhra University will be a teaching and residential institution, all the colleges in Andhra will be affiliated to the Madras University¹⁴⁶. The inability of Andhra leaders to come to a decision on headquarters of the University gave chance to the chief minister to take unilateral decision.

The Congress Patrika wrote, "While the Andhras in the council are busy in cutting one another's throats, the government caused votes to be given in favour of the division of the Andhras and thus the government cut throats of all Andhras"¹⁴⁷. B. Munuswamy Naidu from Chittoor moved an amendment saying that, "as decided earlier you have not stood by your words regarding university centre at Anantapur. Therefore we will not be in the scope of Andhra University and continue in the Madras University. The amendment won by 51 to 23 and 8 remained neutral"¹⁴⁸. Before this the chief minister P. Sobbarayan moved a resolution deciding the university headquarters at Vizagapatam. It was won by 68-28¹⁴⁹. One thing is very clear that in case of these two motions Tamil members absolutely supported them and succeeded in dividing the Andhra leaders into two regional groups- Northern circars and the ceded districts.

Finally the Andhra University Act was passed in the legislature in November, 1929¹⁵⁰. Prajamitra wrote that the exclusion of the ceded and Chittoor districts deserves to be highly commended¹⁵¹. The controversy over the headquarters of the university created ill feeling among the leaders of circar and ceded districts. By using these differences the Madras legislature delayed the passing of the bill creating separate Andhra province. The Raja of Panagal, a powerful Telugu politician in the Madras presidency and chief minister for six years (1921-1926) remained silent and did nothing to control differences among Telugu leaders. Instead Mr Panagal himself created problem by selecting Bezwada as the centre of the university. The main problem for the Andhra University was funding. The wealthiest Zamindars of Madras Presidency were located in Northern Circars. Neither these Zamindars nor big landlords, nor any Komati millionaires like Mothey family of Ellore came forward to donate money. Andhra University faced financial problems. But the Zamindars and land lords, who were interested in showing Kshatriya pattern of opulence and spent lakhs of rupees in the elections, did not come forward to help the cause of Andhras.

Tamil members also demanded a separate University for Tamils in the heart of Tamilnadu to foster the growth of Tamil literature and culture. According to them Madras University, being a Brahmanised institution, could not serve the interests of the Tamil culture. Fortunately "Sir Annamalai Chettiyar, great industrialist and philanthropist, donated five lakh rupees if the university is proposed in the Southern part of Tamilnadu. In September, 1929 the Annamalai University Act was passed"¹⁵².

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