

Book Review

Developmental Priorities and Strategies in the New State of Telangana

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K.V. Reddy, *Developing Telangana: Primacies and Pathways*, ISBN 13: 978-81-19492-41-1, (Ahmedabad: Mahi Publications: 2024), 151.

K.V. Reddy's *Developing Telangana: Primacies and Pathways* is about contemporary developments in the new state of Telangana. Having undertaken requisite field study in the six districts of Telangana state, research outcomes were compiled and complete at the CESS, Hyderabad, last year. This study is aimed at understanding developmental strategies that were identified and proposed during the course of statehood movement in the Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh. Thus, the study is focused on the period after statehood of about nine years during which the state witnessed certain developmental activities. Study of Telangana movement and developmental agenda is largely based on the secondary sources in the form of books and articles, published in the past decade or more. The study is also based on some primary sources like the SKC reports, documented and research studies in some university departments in Hyderabad and Warangal. The author has also conducted some field surveys and personal interviews with political activists among others.

In this book, those socio-political developments that contributed for the formation of Telangana state, as the political voice of democratic sections across the region, have been briefly highlighted. However, the developmental strategies that got initiated and implemented in the new state are so focused on the rural development and the vast majority of farmers and artisans that desperately awaited the irrigation development for long, the new regime had prioritised the irrigation sector and implemented major and minor irrigation projects on war footing. When looked at from a perspective of limited scope for the state governments to develop any state, at a time when the union government isn't cooperative enough due to political differences, as is the case with present state of centre-state relations elsewhere in India, Telangana development is very significant. Unless there is a mutual cooperation between the two governments, comprehensive development is hardly possible. This book is handy for those students of statehood movements, state politics and developmental studies who want pursue research as part of academic career.

The study is undertaken with the purpose of seeking answers to certain pertinent questions about the identity, autonomy, self-rule, economic demands, developmental agenda, social movement, regional politics, plural society, state formation and governments of the Telangana region, which have been raised in the subsequent chapters. Although subject of the state formation is no more a recent phenomenon, its multiple dimensions in the case of Telangana are fresh and varied. The process of state formation has taken the toll of numerous casualties in the country. As part of responding to the democratic demands of local people, different governments had acted quite arbitrarily and in the most unconstitutional ways. For, the political parties that matter in the process of state formation were unwilling to concede the demand for so long. Studying the Telangana state and developmental agenda is a key factor to understand why its contemporary phase has clinched the issue. Thus, the study requires one to consider multi-dimensional character of the movement in assessing the nature, pace and direction of it in different contexts. While the official data and statistics about various developmental programs can be helpful in analysing certain trends in the movements and developments, there are also alternative sources of the source material that substantiate the arguments of activists in the region. Besides, the participant observation that became crucial in verifying the data and approaching the problem afresh, has certainly added more research value to this study.

Since most of the research studies had identified an issue or two within a specific time frame, their relevance is limited in this study. Hence, an attempt is made to undertake the present study that certainly deserves serious attention. This study assumes significance as it focuses on the developmental strategies that were implemented in the last nine years in the state. As per the developmental demands that were raised during the course of statehood movement, the state government was expected to implement the same, as the same party TRS that led the movement got mandate for running the state government since 2014. This study helps one to see if there is any mismatch between the promises and performance in its eight years of TRS regime. In case of any such gap between what it preached but not practised, the study can offer some suggestions of practical developmental strategies.

Those socio-political developments that contributed for the formation of Telangana state have been highlighted. Unlike the second phase, the first phase of movement got derailed and crushed within a short span of time. Since this study is not about history of its movement and politics, the first phase of the political developments has not been discussed in any detailed way. Hence, this study has focused on the developmental issues and concerns of the second phase of movement and developmental agenda that decisively clinched the issue in favour of state formation. While the second phase of Telangana movement is quite mature enough and facilitated the participation of diverse sections of the society, its costly character cannot be undermined at all. Incidentally, success of any

socio-political movement is dependent upon not only the greater participation of people, but also their ability to offer supreme sacrifices as was done in the Telangana region. It has to be studied if their sacrifices were a cause or effect of the popular participation in the Telangana movement, as a result of which the political process was taken to its logical conclusion.

In the scheme of studying Telangana developmental strategies, six chapters are there to deal with specific themes in each of them. First chapter, 'Introduction' covers the contextual profile of the Telangana region, society and movements, significance, main objectives of study, methodology, scope and scheme of study. Second chapter 'Development Debates and Statehood Movements in India' gives an outline of developmental debates and statehood movements in India. This chapter focuses on the theoretical study of developmental factors that contributed for the rise of such movements in the country. Telangana statehood movement is a case in point. Third chapter, 'Developmental Disparities in United Andhra Pradesh' covers the status of Telangana underdevelopment in different sectors, which led to raise the Development Demands and Statehood. For, of all other causes of the statehood movement, the developmental one had been focussed due to deliberate regional discrimination (particularly in the irrigation sector), as the main cause for underdevelopment and statehood movement that ultimately led to the state formation.

In the Fourth chapter, 'Developing Strategies and Federal Fissures in Telangana State', both the issues of developmental agenda and the federalism issues that were crucial in the statehood movement have been discussed. Besides, the role and contribution of various stakeholders including the civil society organizations and political parties during different phases of the socio-political movements in the state have been discoursed. Besides, it deals with the question of how the 'movement of suicides' evoked the mass reactions that in turn betrothed the political parties to press for demand and thereby to contribute their part towards the process of state formation at different levels in the country. Fifth chapter, 'Developing Telangana: Primacies and Pathways', covers the post-statehood period that witnessed implementation of various developmental strategies under the present TRS regime in the state. Since the rural development and irrigation projects are essential for the overall development of state, this chapter is envisaged for the same. Besides, this chapter is largely based on the field study piloted in the state. Sixth chapter, 'Conclusion', provides a summary of findings, besides a few concluding remarks of the study.

To sum up, the developmental issues emerged as the predominant ones that contributed for the rise of statehood movements in various states in the country. Although there were other significant issues that influenced the people and communities for being involved in the mass movements for the new state formation, regional disparities appeared to the decisive ones that precipitated the statehood movements and attracted the major political parties in the country. In

the wake of creating three new states in 2000, Telangana movement gained strength and momentum that had changed its character and pace over the years. Following the creation of new state of Telangana, various developmental strategies have been implemented by the new regime for the past ten years. This book is aimed at explaining the priorities and pathways of the development in the state. The book is helpful for those students of state politics and policymaking who would be having a new insight on the subject. In Telangana and elsewhere in India.

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