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POLITICAL PARTIES, LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES AND IDEOLOGICAL MOVEMENTS: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF TELANGANA'S POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

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ABSTRACT

The political landscape of Telangana represents a distinctive combination of regional identity, party competition, leadership strategies and ideological movements. The formation of Telangana as a separate state in 2014 emerged from a prolonged political and social struggle involving political organisations, students, intellectuals, employees, farmers and civil society groups. This paper examines the historical development of political parties, the contribution of prominent leadership, and the ideological foundations influencing political mobilisation in Telangana. It analyses the roles of regional aspirations, social justice, cultural identity, economic development and electoral competition in shaping the state's political environment. Particular attention is given to the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (now Bharat Rashtra Samithi), Indian National Congress, Bharatiya Janata Party, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen and Left-oriented political organisations. The study also explores leadership approaches, party organisation and ideological transformations in post-statehood Telangana.

Keywords: Telangana Politics, Political Parties, Leadership Strategies, Ideological Movements, Regional Identity, Political Mobilisation, Statehood Movement.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Telangana occupies an important position in the political history of southern India because its formation as a separate state represents the outcome of a prolonged struggle for regional recognition, political representation and administrative autonomy. The demand for separate statehood developed from historical differences, economic concerns, cultural identity and perceptions of unequal development within the former Andhra Pradesh. Before the formation of Andhra Pradesh in 1956, Telangana constituted part of the Hyderabad princely state and possessed distinctive administrative, linguistic and cultural experiences. The integration of Telangana with Andhra created a common political structure, but concerns regarding employment opportunities, irrigation, educational development and regional representation continued to influence political discussions. These issues gradually contributed to the emergence of regional political consciousness and movements demanding separate statehood.

The political developments of 1969 represented an important phase in Telangana's struggle for regional autonomy. Students, intellectuals, employees and political leaders participated in demonstrations demanding the protection of regional interests. The Telangana Praja Samithi emerged as an important political platform during this period and attempted to translate popular dissatisfaction into organised electoral activity. Although the movement did not achieve immediate statehood, it established a political foundation for subsequent regional mobilisation. During the following decades, questions concerning regional development, public employment, water resources and cultural recognition remained significant. The revival of the separate statehood movement during the late 1990s and early 2000s introduced new organisational methods and leadership approaches that transformed the political environment.

The establishment of the Telangana Rashtra Samithi in 2001 under the leadership of K. Chandrashekar Rao provided an organised political platform for the separate statehood demand. The movement expanded through the participation of students, employees, farmers, cultural organisations, intellectuals and various political groups. Leadership strategies included public meetings, demonstrations, political alliances, resignations and negotiations with national political parties. The involvement of the Telangana Joint Action Committee further strengthened coordination among different sections of society. Scholars have examined how cultural identity, regional aspirations and political opportunities contributed to the achievement of statehood in 2014.

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After the formation of Telangana, political competition entered a new phase in which political parties increasingly concentrated on governance, welfare programmes, regional development and electoral representation. The Bharat Rashtra Samithi, Congress, BJP, AIMIM and Left parties developed different approaches towards political organisation and public engagement. The Assembly election of 2023 demonstrated changes in the distribution of political representation, with Congress winning 64 seats, BRS securing 39, BJP obtaining eight and AIMIM winning seven seats in the 119-member Assembly.

Therefore, examining political parties, leadership strategies and ideological movements is essential for understanding the changing character of Telangana's democratic institutions and political society.

II. HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND REGIONAL POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN TELANGANA

The historical development of political parties in Telangana is closely connected with the region's experience under the Hyderabad princely state, its integration into the Indian Union and its subsequent incorporation into Andhra Pradesh. Political consciousness developed through historical experiences involving land relations, administrative structures, linguistic identity and demands for democratic representation. The Hyderabad State witnessed different political currents, including nationalist organisations, peasant movements and communist mobilisation. These movements contributed to the development of political awareness among rural communities and established a foundation for subsequent political participation. The Telangana armed peasant struggle also became an important historical reference in discussions concerning land rights, social inequality and agrarian transformation.

The formation of Andhra Pradesh in 1956 created a new political arrangement by combining the Telugu-speaking regions of Telangana and Andhra. Although the integration was supported by the idea of linguistic unity, concerns regarding regional safeguards, employment distribution, educational opportunities and irrigation resources remained significant. The Gentlemen's Agreement attempted to address some of these concerns through administrative and political safeguards. However, continuing disagreements over implementation contributed to dissatisfaction among sections of Telangana society. These developments demonstrated that linguistic commonality alone could not completely resolve differences arising from historical, economic and administrative experiences. Consequently, regional political consciousness gradually became an

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important component of political debate.

The 1969 Telangana movement represented a significant stage in the development of organised regional politics. Students, government employees, intellectuals and political activists participated in protests demanding separate statehood. The Telangana Praja Samithi emerged under the leadership of M. Chenna Reddy and attempted to represent the aspirations of the regional movement through electoral politics. Its electoral performance demonstrated the relationship between popular regional demands and political party mobilisation. Nevertheless, the subsequent merger of the organisation with the Congress and the weakening of the movement illustrated the difficulties of maintaining a regional political platform within a larger national political structure. The movement nevertheless contributed to the continuing discussion of regional autonomy and political representation.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the emergence of the Telugu Desam Party introduced another important dimension to political competition in Andhra Pradesh. Founded by N. T. Rama Rao in 1982, the party emphasised Telugu identity, political decentralisation and alternative leadership. Although it operated across the united state, its organisational expansion influenced political competition in Telangana. At the same time, regional activists continued raising concerns about development disparities and the implementation of constitutional and administrative safeguards. The political environment during this period was therefore characterised by the interaction of statewide party structures and continuing regional aspirations.

The establishment of the Telangana Rashtra Samithi in April 2001 marked a major transformation in regional political organisation. K. Chandrashekar Rao established the party with the objective of achieving separate Telangana statehood. Its political strategy combined regional identity, electoral participation, public demonstrations and negotiations with national parties. The involvement of intellectuals, cultural activists, students and employees expanded the movement beyond conventional party membership. Professor K. Jayashankar played an important intellectual role in articulating the historical and political arguments supporting statehood. This combination of political leadership and social mobilisation strengthened the movement's organisational foundation.

The formation of Telangana in June 2014 transformed the regional political movement into a new state-level political system. The TRS became the governing party and subsequently adopted the name Bharat Rashtra Samithi in 2022. The Congress, BJP, AIMIM, CPI and other organisations

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continued to participate in electoral and legislative politics. Political competition increasingly concentrated on public welfare, agricultural development, employment, infrastructure, social justice and governance. Thus, Telangana's political history demonstrates the gradual transformation of regional grievances into organised political movements and established democratic institutions.

III. LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES AND POLITICAL ORGANISATION IN TELANGANA

Leadership has played a significant role in determining the direction, organisation and continuity of political movements in Telangana. The development of regional politics demonstrates that successful political mobilisation requires more than individual popularity; it also depends on organisational networks, ideological communication, public participation and institutional negotiation. Political leaders have used different approaches to connect with social groups and translate their demands into political programmes. These strategies include public meetings, grassroots campaigns, party organisation, legislative participation, alliances and media communication. The Telangana statehood movement provides an important example of how leadership can coordinate different social organisations around a common political objective.

K. Chandrashekar Rao emerged as a central figure in the contemporary Telangana movement through the establishment of the TRS in 2001. His leadership strategy focused on maintaining separate statehood as the central political demand and transforming regional dissatisfaction into an organised political campaign. The party attempted to expand its influence through district-level organisation, public meetings, electoral participation and negotiations with national political organisations. The strategy also involved the mobilisation of political representatives and community organisations. By maintaining a consistent regional demand, the party established a recognisable political identity that distinguished it from statewide political organisations.

The Telangana Joint Action Committee represented another important organisational mechanism in the movement. It provided a common platform through which student organisations, employees, teachers, intellectuals, political groups and civil society representatives could coordinate their activities. Such coordination enabled different organisations to participate without necessarily abandoning their individual ideological identities. The committee contributed to demonstrations, public discussions, cultural programmes and other forms of collective political expression. Its functioning illustrates the importance of decentralised leadership and coalition-building in

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regional movements. It also demonstrates that political mobilisation may extend beyond conventional party structures when a common objective receives wider social support.

Other political parties adopted different leadership strategies according to their organisational traditions and ideological priorities. The Indian National Congress relied on its established organisational network, national leadership and state-level political representatives. The Bharatiya Janata Party emphasised ideological organisation, national political narratives and expansion through local leadership networks. AIMIM maintained a distinctive political presence through its concentration on Hyderabad and its engagement with minority representation and urban political concerns. Left parties historically emphasised class mobilisation, labour organisations, agrarian questions and social inequality. These differences demonstrate that leadership strategies are shaped by organisational resources, ideological traditions and the social environments in which parties operate.

The transition from movement politics to state governance also changed the responsibilities of political leadership. During the statehood struggle, political leaders primarily concentrated on regional recognition, mobilisation and institutional negotiations. Following the establishment of the state, leadership became increasingly associated with administrative performance, welfare implementation, infrastructure development and public accountability. Governments had to address questions relating to irrigation, agriculture, education, healthcare, employment and urbanisation. Leadership strategies therefore required a combination of political communication and administrative capacity. Electoral campaigns also increasingly focused on the evaluation of government programmes and the promises made by competing parties.

Contemporary leadership in Telangana is also influenced by digital communication, television, social media and changing patterns of political participation. Political parties use these platforms to communicate policy announcements, organise supporters, respond to criticism and establish public narratives. However, the growing importance of personalised leadership creates questions concerning internal party democracy, succession, transparency and institutional accountability. Strong leadership can facilitate organisational coordination, but sustainable democratic development also requires effective party institutions and opportunities for participation at the grassroots level. Therefore, leadership strategies in Telangana should be understood through their relationship with political organisation, public engagement and democratic governance.

IV. IDEOLOGICAL MOVEMENTS, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND REGIONAL IDENTITY

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Ideological movements in Telangana have developed through the interaction of regional identity, cultural recognition, social justice, economic demands and political representation. The separate statehood movement was not limited to the administrative demand for a new state; it also expressed concerns regarding historical recognition, regional resources and the representation of local communities. Telangana's distinctive cultural traditions, dialect, folk literature, festivals and historical experiences became important elements of political mobilisation. These cultural expressions helped create a shared political identity among individuals belonging to different social and economic backgrounds. Consequently, regional identity became a significant ideological foundation for the development of Telangana's political movement.

The ideology of regional autonomy was particularly important in challenging perceptions of unequal development within the former Andhra Pradesh. Activists and political organisations raised concerns about irrigation facilities, employment opportunities, educational institutions, budgetary allocations and the utilisation of regional resources. These issues were presented as questions of political and administrative justice. The demand for statehood therefore combined economic arguments with cultural and historical claims. Academic studies of the movement highlight how intellectual discourse, student activism and cultural resistance contributed to the development of a distinctive Telangana political identity.

Social justice constitutes another important ideological dimension of Telangana politics. Caste inequalities, land distribution, access to education, employment and political representation remain significant subjects of public debate. Dalit, Adivasi and Backward Class organisations have articulated demands concerning equal opportunities, social recognition and participation in political institutions. These movements have also raised questions regarding the distribution of benefits from development programmes. Their participation demonstrates that regional identity does not eliminate differences within society. Rather, the process of building an inclusive political community requires attention to the different experiences and demands of marginalised groups.

Agrarian ideology and rural development have also influenced political competition. Telangana has a substantial agricultural population, and farmers' concerns regarding irrigation, electricity, credit, crop prices, agricultural infrastructure and public support have frequently influenced political programmes. Historical peasant struggles created a tradition of political awareness around land relations and rural inequality. Contemporary political parties have incorporated agricultural welfare and irrigation development into their electoral platforms. However, different organisations may interpret agricultural problems through different ideological perspectives, including welfare-

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oriented governance, market-based development, agrarian reform and public investment. These differences contribute to the broader ideological diversity of the state.

Cultural movements have further strengthened the relationship between political ideology and public participation. Folk songs, poetry, festivals, theatre and regional literature were important instruments of communication during the Telangana statehood movement. Cultural activists helped communicate political demands to communities that were not necessarily connected with formal party organisations. Bathukamma, regional folk traditions and Telangana dialect became significant symbols of cultural recognition. The contribution of artists and performers demonstrated that political movements can develop through cultural expression as well as institutional campaigning. This cultural dimension also encouraged participation among women, students and rural communities.

The ideological environment of Telangana after 2014 has become more complex because the achievement of statehood introduced new political expectations. Questions of regional identity increasingly interact with debates on welfare, employment, economic growth, caste representation, religious diversity and administrative accountability. Different political parties have presented alternative interpretations of development and social justice. These differences indicate that Telangana's political identity is continuously evolving rather than remaining fixed within the original statehood demand. An inclusive democratic framework must therefore accommodate cultural recognition, social equality, economic opportunity and constitutional principles. The continuing interaction of these ideological movements remains essential to understanding Telangana's political development.

V. CONCLUSION

The political development of Telangana demonstrates the important relationship between regional identity, political leadership, party organisation and ideological mobilisation. The historical experience of the Hyderabad region, its integration into Andhra Pradesh and the subsequent statehood movement created a distinctive political environment. Regional grievances concerning employment, irrigation, education, administrative representation and cultural recognition contributed to the development of political consciousness. The movements of 1969 and the subsequent revival of statehood demands established the historical foundation for the emergence of organised regional political institutions.

The establishment of the Telangana Rashtra Samithi in 2001 provided a significant organisational

platform for transforming regional aspirations into a sustained political campaign. Leadership strategies, electoral participation, negotiations, cultural mobilisation and the involvement of students, employees and intellectuals contributed to the achievement of statehood in 2014. The Telangana Joint Action Committee also demonstrated the importance of coordination among political and non-political organisations. These developments illustrate how collective political action can influence constitutional and administrative restructuring within a democratic federal system.

After state formation, political parties increasingly concentrated on governance, welfare, economic development and electoral competition. Congress, BRS, BJP, AIMIM and Left organisations have contributed to the development of a plural political environment through their different organisational traditions and ideological approaches. Political leadership has also undergone transformation, moving from movement-centred mobilisation towards administrative responsibility and institutional accountability. The changing electoral environment demonstrates that political influence is continuously shaped by public expectations, government performance and the ability of parties to communicate their programmes.

Overall, Telangana's political landscape reflects the continuing interaction between regional aspirations and broader democratic principles. The long-term development of its political institutions requires transparent leadership, effective party organisation, inclusive representation and meaningful participation of marginalised communities. Cultural identity and regional recognition must be accompanied by equal opportunities, economic development and social justice. The study concludes that Telangana provides an important example of how regional movements can reshape political institutions while creating new challenges for democratic governance. Understanding its political parties, leadership strategies and ideological movements is therefore essential for analysing the changing nature of Indian federalism and regional democracy.

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