

1. Examine the emergence and role of the Telangana Praja Samithi (TPS) in the 1969 agitation. How did it influence the Telangana movement during this period?

Introduction

The Telangana Praja Samithi (TPS) emerged as a powerful political force during the 1969 Telangana agitation. Amidst growing public resentment over the violation of the Gentlemen's Agreement and persistent regional discrimination, TPS provided **organized political expression and leadership** to the movement for separate statehood. Its rise significantly influenced the trajectory and intensity of the agitation.

Emergence of TPS

- The **TPS was officially established on March 25, 1969**, evolving from the Telangana People's Convention.
- Initially presided over by **Madan Mohan**, the party gained real momentum under the leadership of **Dr. Marri Chenna Reddy**, a seasoned Congress leader who resigned from the party to lead TPS.
- The creation of TPS marked a shift from fragmented protests to a **cohesive political front** representing Telangana's aspirations.

Role and Influence of TPS

1. Mass Mobilization and Political Articulation

- TPS organized **processions, hartals, bandhs, and mass satyagrahas** across the Telangana region.
- These activities disrupted administrative functioning and drew national attention to the Telangana demand.
- **Chenna Reddy's leadership** galvanized widespread support, especially from students, employees, and rural populations.

2. Symbol of Regional Identity

- TPS became the **political embodiment of Telangana sentiment**, translating regional grievances into a structured demand for separate statehood.
- It tapped into issues such as **employment discrimination, resource diversion, and cultural marginalization**.

3. Electoral Validation

- In the **1971 Lok Sabha elections**, TPS won **10 out of 14 seats in Telangana**, demonstrating the popular legitimacy of the movement.
- The electoral success highlighted the public's overwhelming endorsement of TPS's demand for a separate state.

4. National Political Engagement

- The Telangana issue gained traction in Parliament, with support from leaders like **NG Ranga and K Pattabhi Ramayya**.
- TPS's rise forced national parties to address Telangana's grievances, though many like CPI and CPM opposed the statehood demand.

Limitations and Strategic Retreat

- Despite its popularity, TPS was unable to secure a commitment for statehood from the central government.
- In **September 1971**, TPS **merged back into the Congress Party**, citing strategic reasons to influence policy from within—a move that disappointed many grassroots supporters but preserved political relevance.

Conclusion

The TPS played a **transformative role** in the 1969 Telangana agitation. By offering organized leadership and amplifying regional voices, it converted scattered unrest into a **formidable political movement**. Though the immediate goal of statehood was not achieved, TPS laid a **political foundation for the future Telangana movement**, which culminated in the creation of the state in 2014.

2. Evaluate the political and social impact of the “fast unto death” protests during the 1969 Telangana agitation. How did these acts of civil resistance influence public sentiment, political negotiations, and the larger statehood demand in the historical context?

Introduction

The "**fast unto death**" protests during the 1969 Telangana agitation were powerful expressions of civil resistance. Emerging in response to persistent regional inequalities and the violation of the **Gentlemen's Agreement of 1956**, these hunger strikes played a pivotal role in reshaping public opinion, intensifying political discourse, and mobilizing mass support for the demand for a separate Telangana state.

Contextual Background

The 1969 agitation was rooted in the **perceived injustice in employment, education, and development policies**, where Telangana's resources were allegedly diverted to coastal Andhra. The breakdown of promises enshrined in the Gentlemen's Agreement fueled discontent. In this context, **non-violent resistance, particularly fasts**, became symbolic tools of protest.

Key Civil Resistance Events

- **Annabattula Ravindranath**, a student, initiated the most significant **fast unto death** in early 1969, which captured public imagination and triggered mass mobilization.
- **Potu Krishnamurthy**, a daily wage worker, undertook a similar fast in solidarity, highlighting that the issue cut across class lines.
- Political figures such as **MLA Satyanarayana** also joined symbolic fasts, adding legitimacy and reach to the protests.

Social Impact

1. **Widespread Public Mobilization:**
The fasts sparked protests across towns and universities, particularly **Osmania University**, drawing in students, workers, and unemployed youth.
2. **Symbol of Shared Suffering:**
Hunger strikes transcended socio-economic barriers and **united diverse sections of Telangana society** under a common cause.
3. **Emotional Resonance:**
The non-violent nature of the protests gave them moral force, evoking empathy and emotional solidarity across Telangana and beyond.

Political Impact

1. **National Attention and Media Coverage:**
These fasts pushed the Telangana issue into the national spotlight, compelling the **state and central governments** to respond.
2. **Government Response:**
Prime Minister **Indira Gandhi** took note, leading to the proposal of an **Eight-Point Formula** in an attempt to defuse the crisis.
3. **Formation of TPS:**
The rise of the **Telangana Praja Samithi (TPS)** as a political platform was a direct response to the intensity of the agitation sparked by the fasts.

4. **Long-term Legacy:**

While the protests did not immediately achieve statehood, they **institutionalized the statehood narrative**, sowing seeds for future struggles that culminated in Telangana's formation in **2014**.

Conclusion

The “fast unto death” protests were **not merely acts of individual resistance but collective catalysts** that energized the Telangana movement in 1969. Their ability to blend emotional appeal, moral authority, and mass mobilization made them instrumental in **reshaping political discourse**, compelling negotiations, and establishing **statehood as a legitimate and enduring public demand** in Indian federal history.