

# Political Biography Of Vemavaram Manohar Pantulu: A Study

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**Abstract:** Before Indian Independence, Hyderabad state was a princely state within the territory of British India comprised of three linguistic regions the Telugu speaking Telangana area (including the capital city Hyderabad), the Marathi speaking Marathwada area and a small Kannada speaking area. Telangana occupied 50% of the state's area. The ruling elites including the Nizam were Muslim, while the majority were Hindus. In the Telangana region of the erstwhile in 1946-51. Hyderabad state was a pivotal movement in Indian history, because of its impact on the future of the Communist in India and its higher lighting of the condition of the Indian peasantry. It brought the struggle of the present to the fore and served as a reminder of the sacrifice made by the people of this region in fighting against the autocratic rule of the Nizam of Hyderabad and the feudal regime that concentrated power and land in the hands of few. A large number of people participated in the popular struggle. The Nalgonda district played a significant role in the armed struggle. The prominent among them were Arutla Rama Chandra Reddy, Arutla Kamala Devi, Gurunath Reddy, Bhemreddy Narasimha Reddy, Mallu Swarajyam and like Vemavaram Manohar Pantulu also played a key role in the Telangana armed struggle. An attempt is made in this paper to study the brief biographical sketch of Vemavaram Manohar Pantulu and his contribution to the Telangana armed struggle.

**Keywords:** Erstwhile, Meaningful fight, Processions, Draconian, Razaakars, Oppressive regime, Sneered, Veterans.

## 1. Introduction

It is my earnest endeavour to present the admirable, inspiring Telangana revolutionary life sketch of Sri Vemavaram Manohar Pantulu, a unique benefactor and an epoch-making dignitary, a real Congress leader. Sri Vemavaram Manohar Pantulu (102) was born in an ordinary family, as the son of Sri Vemavaram Venkataratnam and Smt. Sattamma in the year 1921, January 1, at Janampally village in the Nalgonda district. Recently his wife Janamma (July 2021) passed away.

## 2. Childhood and Education

It is a fact that great people have a simple start in their lives and our Vemavaram Manohar Pantulu is not an exemption to this. Thus, he was born but lost his father Venkataratnam after 28 years, those days there was no school at Janampally and children had to go to Nalgonda even for elementary education. Our Manohar Pantulu, as a boy studied at a private tutor where

he recited the Andhra Mahasankramam (Telugu) and Chowti (Urdu) the poetry of Vemana and Sumathi Shatakam along with these studies "Peddabala Siksha". Manohar Pantulu joined the elementary school at Nalgonda to start with 5th class. He appointed as all Hyderabad student union (ASHU) in Nalgonda district general secretary (1947 November). He participated in the Vandemataram Movement, Non-cooperation movement, Grandalayam movement, and Andhra Mahasankramam (Andhra Mahasabha). He was attracted by the Telangana liberation movement in 1946-1948.

## 3. Role in Armed Struggle Movement

The 75th year of Indian independence is an event that brings memories of his valour. "We knew no fear. There was something important to be achieved and we knew we would have to go to any extent to realise it," Pantulu told STOI. After India got independence on August 15, 1947, the erstwhile Hyderabad state had not acceded to the Indian union by the Nizam. "We got instructions from PV Narasimha Rao, who was a leader of All Hyderabad Students Union, that independence should be celebrated despite the restrictions. As students, we took out processions openly. Until that time, we only engaged in underground activity," Pantulu recalled. Coming out of jail, there was more resolve.

Pantulu got trained in using arms in then Madras. He became part of a 30-member team that would not only resist the Nizam's forces and the Razakars but also take the fight into their camp. Pantulu is particular that the supreme sacrifice that Rama Kotaj @h, Subba Rao and Narsi Reddy made in a village in Samasthan Narayanpur area in Rachakonda hills should never be forgotten. When the Indian union forces were heading to Hyderabad, Pantulu and his associates were assigned the responsibility of being part of the group to trek before the path that the army that preceded to Hyderabad.

The Nizam acceded and Hyderabad was liberated on September 17, 1948, merging it with the Indian Union. The 102-year-old Vemavaram Manohar Pantulu would, normally, need the support of another person to walk or move in view of his ripe age. But the nonagenarian becomes astir with a twinkle in his eye when people remind him of his bravery displayed during the Telangana Peasants Armed Struggle against the oppressive

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regime of Nizam in 1948.

The warhorse gets instant energy and raises the ton of his voice to narrate proudly how he, along with his peers, fought against the Razakars, a private militia formed by Qasim Razvi to support the cruel rule of Nizam Osman Ali Khan, to free the people from the clutches of the tyrant.

BJP national president Amit Shah's visit to Gundram all village in Nalgonda district, which had played a memorable role in Telangana people's fight against the Nizam, on Wednesday provided an opportunity to Telangana freedom fighters like Manohar Pantulu who are in their 80s and 90s, to recall their valiant fight against the draconian regime of the Nizam.

While remembering their salad days, not only Manohar Pantulu now general secretary of Telangana Freedom Fighters Association, and some others such as Gunduri Satyanarayana (85) and Shamala Yada iri Reddy (98) tried to recount the ordeal endured by the locals during those times.

"Tens and hundreds of Hindus were killed by the Razakars. The militia brutally raped countless

Hindu women. Sayyad Maqbool, a follower of Qasim Razvi in our village (Gundrampally), used to sexually harass local women. When lactating mothers were breastfeeding their babies, Maqbool sneered at their breasts. We resisted the attempts of Razakars with arms and the help of Communists," the veterans recalled during their interaction with Express.

According to Satyanarayana, when Razakars did not stop the massacre in Gundrampally and its surrounding areas, local youth like him decided to shoot Sayyad Maqbool. But, when they fired a bullet at him when he was with his wife at home, Maqbool managed to escape. His wife and daughter were, however, killed in the attack. "The incidents that occurred in the village during the armed struggle are still fresh in our memory," he said.

It was an occasion for the freedom fighters to pay a fitting tribute to the Iron Man of India, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who liberated the then Hyderabad state from the clutches of the Nizam and reintegrated it with the Indian Union.

"Only because of Vallabhbhai Patel's determination could the erstwhile Hyderabad state be integrated with the rest of the country. Or else, it would have become another Pakistan," Yada iri Reddy said. Earlier, Amit Shah paid tributes to the martyrs of Telangana Peasants' Struggle at Gundram all and visited six families in the village. "Gundrampally was a witness to the Telangana peasants

Struggle. The Congress is questioning our efforts to eulogise the peasants struggle.

What is wrong in our attempt to recall the sacrifices of the local people made while liberating the then Hyderabad State? The BJP will try to keep the memorable history of peasants struggle alive for another 100 years," Shah declared. Manohar pantulu, having got attracted to the communist party ideology during his school days, joined in Communist Party of India. After India attained independence in 1947, the Communist Party of India party led armed struggles against a series of local monarchs that were reluctant to give up their power particularly in Telangana, Tripura, and Kerala. Manohar antulu was an active member in rebellion that took place in Telangana, against

the Nizam of Hyderabad. As an active member of Communist Party of India, he led several processions on behalf of farmers from Nalgonda district on foot. In Telangana Armed Rebellion, he worked with suddala hanumanthu, dharmabhiksam qurunathreddv and Ja anmohanredd and other strong communist pioneers of that times.

He held District and state level positions at Communist Party of India. He worked as secretary of Communist Party of India, Ramannapeta taluk, and as district president of Raithu Sangam and also as State president of Akhila Bharatha Raithu Sangam of Andra pradesh.

During this period, Nalgonda district was a part of the Hyderabad State under Nizam. Manohar pantulu is in deference to the wishes of several of his relatives who participated in the satyagraha in response to a call given by Mahatma Gandhi as part of the struggle to attain swaraj (self-rule, or independence) from the British.

He transformed himself into a revolutionary, mobilizing people against Nizam's Razakars. His stint in public life began at the age of 19 when, in response to a call given by the Andhra Mahasabha to end bonded labour, he defied the family norms and distributed rice to bonded labourers hailing from different castes and communities. Manohar antulu became the commander of a dalam fighting against Zamindars and carried a prize of Rs.10, 000 for his head during that time. The Communist Party of India was fighting with arms under the banner of Andhra Mahasabha against the cruel rule of the Nizam and bonded labour in the state.

The 102 year-old man was on a secret mission. He did not have to disguise himself as his natural appearance was enough not to give rise to suspicion about his movements. For his participatio during the freedom struggle, Vemavaram Manohar \_antulu was felicitated by Nalgonda district collector Prashant Patil.

The 102-year-old freedom fighter vividly recollects his actions during the Quit India movement. "For us who participated in the movement as children, it was a decision taken consciously. We had the elders who were leading the movement and we contributed in our own way," Manohar pantulu told TOI over telephone from Nalgonda.

Along with 10 other freedom fighters from Telangana, Manohar antulu was to have been felicitated by the President of India but due to the Covid-19 situation, all of them were honoured at their houses by the administration in various districts. Across the country, programmes were held in connection with the 79th anniversary of Quit India movement.

Manohar antulu was part of the 'bala sangham' in his village. His mother died when he was a child and for this reason, everyone in his village and also surrounding villages showered more affection on him. "I would walk up to 10 km from my village as I was a 'courier' passing on messages to the elders involved in the freedom struggle," he recalled. "Angrez odu elli ovale Nizam gadde diqale (The British should leave the country and the Nizam should step down)," was the slogan of those involved in the struggle against the British and also the Nizam's rule. "It was this slogan which drove us into action," he said.

Way back in 1977, 30 years after India gained independence,

the Union government decided to honour the freedom-fighters who played a major role in the country's unshackling from British rule. It was decided to set up stone plaques with names of prominent freedom-fighters to remind future generations of the sacrifices made by these brave people.

And now, 43 years later, seven such plaques, each six feet tall, bearing names of freedom-fighters from erstwhile Nalgonda district, lie in various stages of decay, hidden by garbage in some places and by bushes in others, allegedly due to the negligence of the district administration. These plaques, or what remains of them, are located in seven of what were earlier known as Talu as either in the Talu a office or in the main centres of the town.

A majority of the freedom-fighters from the district are no more, but for the 40 of them who are still alive, and witness to the decay, quite literally, it is heart-wrenching to see that even the wee bit of recognition that they had was disappearing under administrative apathy.

Speaking to *Telangana Today*, Vemavaram Manohar antulu, general secretary of Telangana state freedom fighters association, rues that no government authority now wants to take up the responsibility for the maintenance of these plaques. "Nobody is even bothered to clear the garbage or clear the bushes around these memorials," he said.

Stone plaque honouring freedom fighters on the premises of Gandhi Park at Bhongir.

The 102-year-old freedom-fighter made a poignant statement when he said they are remembered only twice a year, on Independence Day and Republic Day, when they are invited for the official function in what is more of a symbolic gesture. "During these occasions, when we get to meet the District Collector, we do put up our case including the state of the plaques but to no avail. We are forgotten once these functions are over," Manohar antulu misty-eyed, said, adding that the least the government can do on such occasions is to clean up the plaques.

He recalls that the stone plaques had the names of freedom-fighters on one side and the preamble of the Constitution on the other. "Most of the freedom-fighters whose names were etched on the stone plaques supposedly for posterity are dead, and most of the freedom-fighters still living are in their eighties and bed-ridden. A majority of us are surviving on the State government's pension of Rs 15,000 while a handful get the Central pension of Rs 29, 000," Manohar antulu said. While nobody has been able to trace out the plaque that was erected in Bhongir town, the one at Ramanna is believed to have been done away with for road-widening. In Bhongir, the plaque can still be seen in Gandhi Park, but it has garbage for company, and the one at Ramannapet has bushes covering it.

#### 4. Manohar Panthulu as a Sarpanch

Manohar panthulu was an efficient and socialist worker in the society. He became a popular figure in the congress party activities in Nalgonda district. Manohar panthulu has a good relation with former Prime Minister RV Narsimharao. Manohar panthulu elected his yeoman service extended in many aspects.

- He worked as the president of the Agricultural co-operative society in Janampally village.
- He was the chief promoter of Milk society in Janamapall village.
- He was elected as the sarpanch for three time for the Janma all village unanimously, his wife Janakamma had also elected as sarpanch.
- He was the founder of "BHU TANAKA BANK".
- He worked as the President of the "TAAKA".
- He worked as the general secretary of the Bharat sevak samaj in Nalgonda.
- He was the director of BC Corporation.
- He was also president of Indira Brigadier of union Nalgonda district.
- He was the Mandal parishad territorial constituency (MPTC) of Ramannapeta Mandal.
- He was the freedom fighters association president of Yadadri Bhongir district.
- He was the general secretary of freedom fighters association of Telangana state.



#### 5. Conclusion

Venerable and admiring personality Sri Vemavaram Manohar panthulu had been political, social, educational services in Nalgonda district and did yeoman service, his service to the party when it became weak are second to none. Farmers were benefitted by his unnerving service getting water plants, bore wells, electricity, roads etc. Bank loans were his boon to the farmers. Even at this age with grey hair, Gandhi hat, at this age of 102 years, he always thinks about the good of the society and extends his sections to society, to the leaders in particular.

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