

MOVEMENT FOR INDEPENDENT VIDARBHA STATE

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Abstract

Due to the formation of 'Telangana as an independent ' state in 2014, the movement for the demands of the small states in India was accelerated. The revival of such movement was seen especially in Vidarbha, Maharashtra. In 2016, the senior legislator Shrihari Ane had strongly supported the Vidarbha state, but he couldn't get proper support from the people from the Vidarbha region. At the same time, some journalists and writers honestly tried to justify the importance and need of the demand for Vidarbha State. In 2017, Mr. Ashish Deshmukh, an MLA from Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP), has organized student's protest for the demand of the independent Vidarbha, but it also couldn't get the success satisfactorily. Finally, he was fed up of the situation. He resigned from his post of MLA in Oct, 2018 and entered into the Congress Party. In short, it can be said that presently the protest for Vidarbha State has been subsided.

Keywords: Movements, Alliances, Region, Linguistic, Agreement, Articles, Decentralization, Reorganization, Leadership, Statutory, Regional, Imbalance, Agitation, Independent.

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Introduction:

Due to some cultural, historical and some other reasons like backwardness, the protest for the independent Vidarbha has been going on by democratic and non- violent ways for the last century. But, since pre- independence period in India till now, in the bilingual state like Maharashtra and its power politics, the region like Vidarbha has often been victimized. Vidarbha couldn't get the proper leaders, except BapujiAne and JambuvantraoDhote, who were having the firm stand on Vidarbha state. Various political Parties have equivocal views about power equation of alliances at present and during the past. It is observed that some leaders, scholars and literary writers were against independent Vidarbha. The issue of Vidarbha state has remained neglected due to poor response and limited support from the people to this movement for the demand of Vidarbha state.

Vidarbha is located in the eastern part of Maharashtra. It was part of central Province and Berar. Vidarbha has Madhya Pradesh in the north, Chhattisgarh in the east, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra in the south and Khandesh in the west. Maharashtra has four parts. They are Konkan, western Maharashtra, Marathwada and Vidharbha. Vidarbha has covered 32% land of Maharashtra. Its area is 97,484 sq. km. According to 2011 census, the population of Vidarbha is 2,06,31,000. It is 24% of total population of Maharashtra. The population ratio in Vidarbha is 181/ sq.km. and it is 257/ sq.km. in other parts of Maharashtra.

Amravati and Nagpur are the two administrative regions included in Vidharbha. 11 districts are there in Vidharbha. The eastern Vidarbha and the western Vidarbha are two parts of Vidharbha. Akola, Washim, Amaravati, Buldhana, Yewatmal and Vardha are the districts from the west Vidharbha. On the other hand, the east Vidarbha has the districts of Nagpur, Chandrapur, Bhandara, Gadchiroli and Gondia. Vardha, Painganga, Vainganga and Pranhita are the rivers flowing from the Vidarbha region. No attempt is made to build any dam on these rivers in order to increase the irrigation capacity of Vidharbha. Late Rajiv Gandhi had started the construction of dam, named 'GosiKhurd', on Vainganga, but it has not been completed till today.

Vidarbha is located beside the region of Hindi Speakers. The language of the people living there is mainly 'varhadi'. The influence of Hindi can be seen clearly on their language and the

sentence construction. It is one of the reasons behind the cultural differences between Vidarbha and remaining part of Maharashtra. It is multi- religious, multi- lingual, and multi- cultural region. There is no conflict in this region based on caste, religion and language.

Natural Resources in Vidharbha:

Vidarbha is naturally rich region in Maharashtra still it is the most backward area in Maharashtra. 12.23% total area from Maharashtra is enriched with minerals. Out of it, 70% area is in Vidharbha. 22% area in Mumbai region, 5% in Aurangabad and 3% in Pune region have been enriched with the natural resources and minerals. The minerals like Coal, Manganese, limestone, Chromite, silicate, tungsten, etc. are found in Vidharbha. Apart from this, various area of metals such as iron, copper, sand, etc. are found in abundance in Vidharbha. Nagpur, Bhamdara, Yavatmal and Chandrapur are the districts which are enriched with natural resources and minerals. But these resources are mostly used in the other parts of Maharashtra and the pollution caused by these minerals and other resources affects the farming and climate very badly.

35715 sq. km. area in Vidarbha is covered by the forest. Out of all forest area in Maharashtra, 80% area of forest is in Vidharbha. As per the government policy, at least 33% area of total land should be covered by the forest. All over India this percentage is 23% but it is 21% in Maharashtra. There are many forests in Nagpur, Chandrapur, Bhandara, Gadchiroli, Yawatmal, Gondia and Amaravati districts.

Out of total production of electricity, 57% electricity is produced in Vidharbha. But still Vidarbha couldn't get the benefit out of it. The electricity is supplied to Maharashtra from Vidharbha, but there is power cut in Vidarbha time and again. The industries in Vidarbha are prospered on the electricity provided by Vidarbha and the people from Vidarbha have to go to Western Maharashtra for the employment. In addition to this, cotton, Oranges, Oilseeds, fruits and jowar are produced in abundance in Vidharbha.

Inclusion of Nagpur and Berar in Central Province:

Presently, there are 11 districts in Vidharbha. It is divided into two parts.

1. Nagpur Province: (Present Nagpur Administrative Region)-Gondia, Bhandara, Gadchiroli, Chandrapur, Nagpur and Vardha are the districts included in it.
2. Berar (Presently Amaravati Administrative Region) – 5 districts, i.e. Yavatmal, Amaravati, Akola, Washim and Buldhana are included in this region. Earlier Nagpur province belonged to Gond Kings and then to Bhosales. Berar was won by Nizam. In 1803, Bhosales had become tributary of the British. As a result of it, Nagpur province was then under control of British. From 1853, Nizam started giving the tax to the British for the expenditure on TainathiFaug. In 1854, British confiscated Nagpur princely due to the question of legacy. In 1861, 14 Hindi districts (Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgad, Mahakaushal) and 04 districts from Nagpur region including Gondia, Bhandara, Gadchiroli and Chandrapur are collectively called central province. According to the agreement between the British government and Nizam, on 16th Dec. 1902, Berar province was given to British on lease. In return, the British accepted and agreed to give 25 lakhs per year to Nizam. In 1905, the British established 08 Marathi speaking districts by connecting 04 districts of Berar to the central province. The then 14 Hindi speaking districts formed the Central province and Berar state. Since then the demand was being raised for the formation of independent state from 08 districts from Nagpur Berar.

Emergence of Vidarbha- Objections to Connect Berar to Central Province:

A protest was raised for the demand of connecting Berar province to Mumbai region instead of Central province. It was led by DadasahebKhaparde. Many meetings were organized under his leadership for the demand of including and connecting Berar province which is Marathi speaking region, to Mumbai. The central province was the region of Hindi speaking people and it was backward and undeveloped. But the British connected Berar to the central province. Comparatively, Berar was more developed and richer than the central province. Leaders from Berar presented their pleading in front of Lord Montague and demanded the declaration of Berar as sub- province. Later ‘Berar SarvapakshiySamiti’ was established under the leadership of the tribune BapujiAne. This committee had sent Mr. RamchandraKanetkarfor the Round Table Conference in 1931.He was expected to put forward the problems of Berar. In fact, the demand for Vidarbha state was raised for the first time in this conference. It was said in the conference that, technically Berar province is not under the British rule.

Nothing was achieved in the Round Table conference. The decision was taken on 26th January, 1933 by passing a resolution in central province and Berar council to separate Berar from the central province.

Demand of Vidarbha by Marathi people from the Central Province:

Shri.DadasahebKhaparde has already shown objections and opposition, organizing many public meetings ,to connect Berar to Mumbai province on 12th May,1912,Bapuji Ane requested N.C.Kelkar through a letter to publish an article in Kasserri and asked him to create an independent Marathi linguistic province of the districts from the Vidarbha which were under control of Nizam.

The demand was raised to create an independent state from the eight districts from the central province and Berar. The British agreed to pass the law and gave autonomy at regional level in 1935.Accordingly the elections took place in 1936 and the regional governments were established. In the central province Hindi speakers were in large number. Due to the dominance and influence of Hindi people, the feeling of separation from them was aroused in the minds of Marathi people. Hindi people rejected the Marathi CM by majority in the politics of the central province and Berar. It resulted into the strong feeling in Marathi people against Hindi people. It was evident in the resolution put forward by Barrister RamraoDeshmukh on 1st October 1938 in which he said that an independent region namely 'Vidarbha region' of Marathi linguistic people. The resolution was passed unanimously. But unfortunately the Second World War was started in September 1939.In this war the British people included the Indian people without their consent .All the regional governments were asked to resign against it and the issue of Vidarbha remained untouched. BapujiAne and his MahaVidarbha under his leadership,declared that it will be a separate state.In 1939-40 BapujiAne spread the awareness regarding this. Mahavidarbha Sabha was established under the leadership of Br.RamraoDeshmukh on 18th August,1940.

Sanyukta Maharashtra Movement and Vidharbha:

In the British rule, they divided the various regions which were multi-cultural and multilingual. They created these regions for the convenience of collecting the taxes from the people living there.

When it became clear that, the government is going to set a committee for reorganizing of the states, many movements, demanding the same, became active and raised their demands. Mahavidarbha Sabha was established on 18th August,1940, which decided to create 'Nagavidarbha or Mahavidarbha' from the eight districts of the central province. For this cause the protest was started by Bapuji Ane, Brijlal Biyani, Jamnalal Bajaj, Raje Vishweshwarayya, T.G. Deshmukh, Baburao Harkare, Genral Awari Crips Mission and Cabinet Mission were busy in elections of constituent assembly and the negotiations at the time of independence. Therefore, the Congress leaders were not interested in raising the issue of regional reorganizing of the states. There was drought like situation in 1943. About 15 to 20 lakh people were died in that. The congress leaders didn't have time due to the Second World War and Quit India Movement. In the second half of the 1945, the war was ended and the British asked Indians to make the constitution according to the cabinet Mission. After that the drafting committee was formed and the process of making constitution was started. On the other side, the protest for the demand of lingual restructuring of states were fervently raised. But, it was decided as per the letter of cabinet mission that the issue of regional restructuring of states will be dealt with after the completion of the constitution.

During the protest for Vidarbha, the resolution was proposed for united Maharashtra for the first time in the Marathi Sammelan held on 15th October 1938 in Mumbai. In 1946 G.T. Madkhalker put forward the resolution for the united Maharashtra. For this, united Maharashtra conference was established and the huge mass protest was raised for the independent state for Marathi Speakers including Mumbai and Vidharbha. All the political parties took active part in this protest. But congress and Jansangh remained separated from it. P.K. Deshmukh, Veer Vamanrao Joshi and G.T. Madkhodkar from congress participated in it and raised their demand to form the united Maharashtra from eight districts from Vidharbha. But Bapuji Ane Biyani, Marotrao Kannamwar, Jambuvantrao Dhote, etc. continued their protest for the separate Vidarbha.

Akola Agreement:(8th August,1947):

An agreement was signed between 'United Maharashtra Conference and Naga-Vidarbha Samiti' on 8th August,1947, as per Dar Commission. There were different points of view regarding it. The proponents of Vidarbha were looking at it from the central province. On the

other hand, the proponents of Maharashtra had the view of uniting all Marathi speaking people through it. Therefore, the conditions in this agreement were favorable for the separate Vidarbha State. Total 17 leaders had signed this agreement. They were the leaders like Shankar Dev, Bapuji Ane, G.T. Madkholkar, D.R. Gadgil, M.S. Kannamwar, Gopalrao Khedekar, Ramrao Deshmukh, D.V. Potdar, Shrimannarayan Agrawal, Sheshrao Wankhede, Pandharinath Patil, P.S. Deshmukh, Poonamchand Ranka, D.V. Gokhale, Brijlal Biyani, Pramila Oak, G.R. Kulkarni, etc.

The Conditions in the Agreement:

1. Maha Vidarbha and Western Maharashtra should have two sub-regions. These sub-regions should have their own cabinets and legislatures.
2. There will be a governor and a deputy governor for each region.
3. The separate elections will take place for legislatures in sub-regions.
4. Two High courts will work independently for two sub-regions.
5. If the Sanyukta Maharashtra is not created in future, the leaders from Maharashtra will support the separate Vidharbha.

Barrister Ramrao Deshmukh's Equivocal Stand:

Barrister Deshmukh was with Bapuji Ane who was a leading personality to raise the demand for the independent Vidarbha State. He had signed the Akola Agreement and he had his great contribution in it. After the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi in 1948, he had delivered the presidential address in united Maharashtra Conference held in Mumbai. In his speech, he clarified that he didn't oppose Akola Agreement, his objection is not to united Maharashtra. But he wanted Maharashtra including Vidarbha sub-region and Maharashtra sub-region as a whole. The demand for separate Vidarbha was raised in Akola Agreement due to the injustice on Vidarbha by Nizam of Hyderabad and Hindi speaking people from Mahakosla. All these points were reiterated by Br. Ramrao in that session of the parliament. He has also said that if the sub-regions are not paid proper attention in the Constitution then the Vidarbha will undoubtedly be on the side of United Maharashtra. Therefore, the protest for the independent Vidarbha had weakened from the beginning.

The similar things happened in some later years. That's why Bapuji's side was not strong enough for fighting for Vidarbha. Because Br. Ramrao Deshmukh was consistently demanding the separate Vidarbha. Later on at the time of Nagpur Agreement Br. Deshmukh has become the proponent of Sanyukta Maharashtra.

Nagpur Agreement:

The leaders from Vidarbha were consulted by Bhausaheb Hire and Shankarrao Dev. They came to know that, if Vidarbha is included in Sanyukta Maharashtra, Nagpur, the then capital of the central province, will be considered the secondary and the development will be neglected. In this regard, on 27th and 28th September 1953, an agreement was signed between Sanyukta Maharashtra conference and leaders from the Vidarbha, under the leadership of Yashwantrao Chavan. It is called Nagpur Agreement. This agreement was signed by R.K. Patil, P.K. Deshmukh, Bhausaheb Hire, Devkinandan, Yashwantrao Chavan, Laxmanrao Bhapkar, Pandharinath Patil, Ramrao Deshmukh, Gopalrao Khedekar, Sheshrao Wankhede and Nana Kunte. Some of these leaders belonged to Vidharbha.

The following were the articles of Nagpur Agreement:

- 1) The independent state should be made from area of the Marathi linguistic people from the present Mumbai, Madhya Pradesh and Hyderabad. No other region should be included in the area of these States. It should be named as Maharashtra or Marathi Region and Mumbai will be the capital of it.
- 2) For the administrative purpose and all types of development schemes in three regions such as Mahavidarbha, Marathwada and remaining part, will be considered.
- 3) The funds will be divided according to the population. The special provision will be made for Marathwada, as it is backward, for its all round development. The report will be submitted to the state government in this regard every year. The representation will be given in the State government according to the population.
- 4) The necessary facilities will be provided to all in admissions in Vocational and scientific educational institutes as well as the institutes that have other special educational facilities.
- 5) The high court of new state will be in Mumbai and the secondary bench will be in Nagpur. The Nagpur court will work in Mahavidarbha. At the time of the selection of the judges of high

court, the attention will be paid to give representation to the people from MahaVidarbha legal system. This article will be applicable to Marathwada after some necessary changes.

6) There will be recruitment for the government jobs and industries under government control. It will be based on the ratio of population.

7) Decentralization is useful for more and more participation of various factors from the society.

8) People from MahaVidarbha has the old connection with Nagpur, as the capital of their state. Accordingly they also get some benefits. After Nagpur Agreement, to make them more comfortable and believe in this, article 371(1) was added in the constitution through an amendment in 1953. As per this article, for the development of Vidarbha and Marathwada, the special funds will be provided from the fund of state government. For that Regional Statutory Development Board will be established and provision, of giving the rights to the Governor for development of backward area will be made.

State Reorganization Commission and Vidarbha:

The demand for linguistic reorganizing of provinces in India was strengthened after the formation of Andhra Pradesh in 1953. The pressure on the government was increased. In this regard, Pandit Nehru on 22 December 1953 declared the appointment of State Reorganizing Commission. Accordingly, it was established on 29 December 1953 under the chairmanship of Justice Fazal Ali.

In 1954, the commission visited various places and tried to get reactions from the people. It has got mixed reactions. The commission especially visited Bapuji Ane, who was continuously demanding the Vidarbha state. It also visited Mukund Ramrao Jaykar. He also demanded Maharashtra including Mumbai and other Marathi regions. Bapuji Ane had put forth '*Vidarbhaichi Kaifiyat*' in front of the commission for the demand of the independent Vidarbha state. The stress was given on the cultural, linguistic and historic diversity. In his 'Kaifiyat' he proposed to connect some places near the border such as Burhanpur, Nemand, Khandwa, Baitul, Chhindwada, Mulamati, Bhaidehi, which were Marathi linguistic people, to proposed Mahavidarbha state. Bapuji Ane said that it was good to get separated from Hindi linguistic people. He also expressed his fear that the economic development of Vidarbha will be limited if

it is connected to united Maharashtra. He clearly mentioned his view about independent Vidarbha in his 'Kaifiyat'.

The commission released its report on 10th October, 1956. The commission recommended the large bilingual Mumbai state by rejecting the demand of United Maharashtra including Mumbai. At the same time, it was suggested that a state should be formed from the eight districts of Vidarbha and Berar because it has historical, cultural, administrative and economic background. But it was recommended that Nanded, Baitul, Chhinwada, Balaghat and Bastar, where the majority of Marathi Speakers, should be included that Vidarbha will be economically independent & rich by doing it.

There was a dispute on whether Mumbai belongs to Gujrat or Maharashtra in the linguistic structuring of the state. Finally the government tried to resolve this issue by forming Mumbai as bilingual state in 1956. The people from western Maharashtra and Gujrat didn't like it. Some leaders wanted Mumbai to be included/merged in Maharashtra. These leaders pressurized the government for the same. In Vidarbha the congress leaders were being elected in large number. Congress knew that they cannot form the government without these leaders. So, they put pressure on Pandit Nehru to include Vidarbha in Maharashtra in the bilingual regions on 1 November, 1956. It was against the people from Vidarbha and formation of Maharashtra. Thus, the Vidarbha movement was retarded due to the politics of Congress.

1957 Elections:(Resignations of MLAs from Vidarbha):

After the formation of Mumbai as a bilingual state, Vidhansabha elections were held in 1957. Due to the disharmony between the congress and Nag-vidarbha Andolan Samiti, the latter fought elections independently, but unfortunately had to accept the defeat in it. In the election, the United Maharashtra Committee defeated Congress badly in Mumbai, Maharashtra, and Marathwada. Similarly Mahasamiti in Gujrat defeated Congress in Gujrat. But in Vidarbha only, congress won 54 seats out of 62. All the MLAs have submitted their resignations to Marutrao Kannamwar. Congress was going to form the government only with the support of Vidarbha Congress.

Pandit Nehru convinced MarutraoKannamwar and he also agreed to give support of his MLAs to congress. It means, in order to stabilize the government, Vidarbha was included in Maharashtra. The people from vidarbha didn't like Kannamwar's stand on this. But he himself was benefitted by the post of Deputy CM as well as, for one year, he was made the Chief Minister after YashwantraoChavan. In this period, Kannamwar expressed his views regarding the development of Vidarbha. As a result, Vidarbha was given Statutory Development Board after some days.

YashwantraoChavan's Single handed Leadership:

The first protest for the United Maharashtra was being serious. The Congress government was planning to form the state as a bilingual state. At the same time ,the protest for the independent Vidarbha was going on.The protest was enlarged by T.G.Deshmukh and JambuvantraoDhote through NagVidarbhaAndolanSamiti. In this regard, the issue of independent Vidarbha State was proposed & put forth in Congress Working Committee meeting held on 4 December,1959. The committee asserted that Vidarbha and Mumbai will be benefitted if Vidarbha will be a part of new Mumbai State.

13) Indira Gandhi's Groupism and Vidarbha Protest:

After 1972 politics in Maharashtra, Indira Gandhi devitalized and degraded the leaders from Maharashtra. On the other hand,in order to maintain the control and dominance in administration, she managed the leaders from Vidarbha Maharashtra and Konkan, that were the backward regions. In Indira Gandhi's power politics of groupism, the proponents of Vidarbha such as NasikraoTirpude, VasantraoSathe and JambuvantraoDhote were used as the puppets. Therefore,protest for Vidarbha was pacified.

From 1970 to 1985, one of the great proponents of VidarbhaJambuvantraoDhote addressed Indira Gandhi as 'Jay Ambika' and increased the intensity of the protest for Vidarbha. The protest reached to the every corner of Vidarbha.12 MLAs of 'VidarbhaRajyaSamiti' were elected. On this,the then Chief Minister of Maharashtra VasantraoNaik was frightened. At that time ,Dhote brought 10-12 bullock-carts in the capital. Indira Gandhi come to Nagpur after this protest . Jambuvantrao addressed her as 'Ambika Devi' and gave a sword as a gift to her. Indira Gandhi offered Nagpur Lokshabha seat for him. JambuvantraoDhote, with his party 'Forward

Block' and 12 MLAs , merged in Congress Party in 1978. It was resulted in to the disarming the protest.

BanwarilalPurohit was a proponent of Vidarbha from the Congress Party. He left the Congress Party and entered into BJP on the issue of Lord Rama's birth place. He passed the resolution of supporting the demand of Vidarbha State in the National Executive council of BJP. He had successfully organized '*VidarbhaRajyaNirdharYatra*' from all districts of Vidarbha.

NashikraoTirpude was another proponent of Vidarbha who had been deputy CM. He always tried to preserve the pride and honour of Vidarbha in the politics.He always strived for the creation of Vidarbha state by establishing '*VidarbhaVikasMahasabha*'.

Regional Imbalance :Demand for Statutory Development Board:

In the politics after 1980 in Maharashtra , regional imbalance, protest by farmer's union ,recommendations of Mandal Commission etc. were some of the important issues. The government formed Dr. V.M.Dandekar Committee for regional imbalance in 1982. The committee submitted its report in 1984. As per the report, total backlog of Maharashtra was 3177.07 crore rupees.Out of total backlog ,onlyVidarbha had 1246.54 Crore Rupees , which is 39.23% of the total backlog. In order to eliminate such imbalance , the leader from Vidarbha strengthened the demand of Vidarbha by establishing '*VidarbhaVikasSamiti*'. This samiti demanded to establish VidarbhaSthanikVikas Mandal (Vidarbha Local Development Board) according to 371(2). It was supported by all the parties and leaders . Except '*VidarbhaVikasMahasabha*' of NashikraoTirpude, many other leaders like Jawaharlal Darda, Satish Chaturvedi , T.G.Deshmukh etc. supported it. The movement for independent Vidarbha was not accelerated in that period.

Protest of Congress during the period of Alliance :

According to the above mentioned demand VidarbhaVaidhanikVikas Mandal was established in1994. The Congress Party was defeated in 1995 elections , and Shivsena and BJP alliance formed the government. The Congress leader from Vidarbha tried to entrap the ruling parties with the weapon of the demand for independent Vidarbha. Vasant

Sathe, Vilas Muttemwar, Ranjit Deshmukh, Jawaharlal Darda, Rikhabchand Sharma, and Satish Chaturvedi etc. leaders from Congress raised the demand for Vidarbha State. Satish Chaturvedi observed 2nd October 1996 as 'Swatantra Vidarbha Vikas Sankalp Din'. It was supported by Mathadi Kamgar Sangh and Vidarbha Vikas Sangharsh Samiti. It was declared to establish 'Vidarbha Sena' on 5 October, 1996 for the demand of Vidarbha State. A rally was organized for the cause by Vidarbha Rajya Congress Kriti Samiti on 21 October, 1996. In this rally, Congress leaders from Western Vidarbha showed their support to Vidarbha state movement, but criticized the dominance of the of the eastern Vidarbha. As a result, the Vidarbha movement was splitted-again.

NDA Government and Issue of Independent Vidarbha:

BJP had promised the people on the independent Vidarbha in their manifesto. NDA formed the government at center after the 1999 Lok Sabha election. Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the then PM of India, had arrived in Nagpur to participate in the National Conference held on 26 October, 2000. At that time, the opposition leaders such as Vikas Muttemwar, Vijay Darda, some MLAs and around 50 members met Vajpayee. Vajpayee welcomed them by saying 'Jay Maharashtra'. Vajpayee said that Vidarbha has all the qualities that are necessary to be a state. He also said that it will be easier for them when the resolution gets passed before hand in Maharashtra Vidhansabha.

Fifty MLAs from all the parties have formed 'Maji Amdar Vidarbha Samiti' and planned a protest for the demand of Vidarbha state in Winter Session of parliament on 1 September, 2000. After the formation of Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttaranchal by NDA, the stumbling movement for Vidarbha was strengthened and accelerated. In order to make the people aware of the situation, Vidarbha Rajya Sangharsh Samiti, 'Vidarbha Rajya Gan-Parishad' and 'Vidarbha Mukti Morcha' organized 'Vidarbha Nirdhar Yatra' in Vidarbha on 15 November, 2000. The bundh was declared by Vidarbha Rajya Sangharsh Samiti on 27th November, 2000. This bundh was supported by BJP, Swatantra Bharat Paksha, Bhartiya Republican Paksha, Bahujan Mahasangh, Vidarbha Congress Samiti, Nationalist Congress Party, Republican Party, Nag-Vidarbha Andolan Samiti etc. Except Shivsena and the left parties, Vidarbha Arthik Parishad and 250 Trading firms also supported it. But in parliament Congress and Shivsena opposed the Vidarbha

State. Therefore, due to protest of Shivsena, NDA government couldn't form the Vidarbha state. Congress also thought that, they will lose the power in Vidarbha and other part of Maharashtra.

Vidarbha Bundh: (20 January, 2010)

Home Minister P.Chidambaram made the declaration of independent Vidarbha on 9th December, 2009. Later protesters demanding United Andhra Pradesh started the Turmoil in border areas. Therefore, the government declared not to take any step further till the consensus of all parties and organizations. Telangana protest had been enlarged at that time. After the strike in Telangana, all parties from Vidarbha had declared the bundh on 20 January, 2010. For this 'Vidarbha Rajya Sangram Samiti' was founded. The bundh was observed in Vidarbha by setting the boards at various places. Except Shivsena and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), all other traders and college students participated in the bundh.

The government offices were deserted. There was no such bundh before this in Vidarbha. The effects were taken to disturb and break bundh but it was in vain. Shivsena couldn't do anything for it. People actively participated in it and supported Vidarbha openly. At some places the bundh turned out to be violent, when some buses were broken by the people.

Retreat of Main Leader: (20 March 2013):

Under the leadership of 'Vidarbha Jan Morcha'; the union like forward Block, Janta Dal United (JDU), Bahujan Mahasangh, RPI, Vidarbha Socialist Forum, Vidarbha Navnirman Sena has organized a rally at the hall of Teachers Co-operative bank to raise the voice for Vidarbha. For this gathering Sharad Yadav of JDU, Adv. Prakash Ambedkar from Bhartiya Republican Paksh, Bahujan Mahasangh Devavrat Vishwas from forward Block Paksha, Vijaya Samiti from Telangana Rashtra Samiti, Raghu Thakur from Loktantrik Samajwadi Party and Jambuvantrao Dhote were invited for the rally. In his speech, Jambuvantrao Dhote recalled some important memories regarding Vidarbha. He expressed his views about how the leaders were divided during the protest for Vidarbha. He also shared the cause of his concern and said that if the people and leaders from Vidarbha are advocating the opponents component of Vidarbha, then why should I fight the lone battle and for whom it should be fought? If the people don't want Vidarbha, and then I have nothing to do with it. He also said that I always organized

various rallies and protests for Vidarbha. Nobody in Vidarbha is ready to pay attention towards this issue. There is no development for the youth. The farmers are committing suicide. We all are still impotent on this. No one is concerned with it.

From here on, don't expect anything from me. Present situation of Vidarbha movement is so serious. Now I am tired and fed off of the struggle, so I had better retreat from it. Jambuvantrao Dhote further said that if the opposers of Vidarbha like Shivsena are getting their seats won in Vidarbha, then who wants Vidarbha State. Such was the pessimism expressed by him. Those leaders who have raised this protest, they themselves are not interested in it. So, for whom it should be fought. The condition of Vidarbha movement can be understood from his views on it.

Protest of Vidarbha State (August, 2013) :

After the declaration of independent Telangana State on 31 July 2013, the proponent of Vidarbha raised the demand for Vidarbha state. Mukulvashik and Congress Executive Committee who played an important role about Telangana. The news of demand for Vidarbha state was broadcasted in media but Gurudas Kamat and Mukul Wasnik kept mum about it.

Congress leaders Vilas Muttemwar, Naresh Pugalia and Vijay Darda wrote a letter to Sonia Gandhi. In this letter, vilas Muttemwar reminded her and Sushilkumar Shinde about dissatisfaction of people and expressed the possibility of the protest that can turn out to be violent. It was also mentioned in the letter that Sushilkumar Shinde didn't do anything for Vidarbha as a CM. The delegates from Congress had met Sonia Gandhi, where she promised them to think positively about Vidarbha issue. Naresh Pungaliya reminded her of their meeting before four years and requested her to fulfill the demand. M P Mr. Vijay Darda also requested Sonia Gandhi to take initiative to form Vidarbha State. He also mentioned in his letter that Vidarbha has been treated badly by the ruling parties.

Agitation by Vidarbha Sanyukt Kruti Samiti at Jantar- Mantar:

Vidarbha Sanyukt Kruti Samiti has spontaneously organized an agitation, along with many followers, on 5 August, 2013 at Jantar-Mantar.

S.K. Baisimuthiarithe, MP from Bodoland People's Front supported the protest. The picketing Protest was also supported by Arvind Kejariwal of Aam Aadmi Party. Kejariwal mentioned the need to form the second state reorganization commission and to consider all the proposals of small states. Except Ajay Sancheti, Member of Rajyasabha from BJP, all other Proponents of Vidarbha avoided to visit the protests and told that they couldn't come because of their busy schedule. Many leaders like Adv. Vamanrao Chatap MLA Anil Bonde, DR. Shrinivas Khandewale, Ashish Deshmukh, Vilas Kale, Prof. Kamal Bhardwaj, Rameshwar Mohabe, Shankar Bhole, Tanha Nagpuri, Pratibha Khaparde, Deepak Nilawar etc. had participated in the protest they gave the slogans about forming Vidarbha state. This Protest couldn't become the great success due to the negligence of the main leaders.

In the bill for Telangana State, the amendment was suggested for the Vidarbha state by committee headed by Devendra Fadanvis and other leaders like Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari, Sushma Swaraj, Arun Jaitly, Gopinath Munde and Ravishankar Parasad. The proposal for independent Vidarbha was passed in the session at Bhubaneswar in 1992. It was reminded by them, the members of this ambassador were as below - MP Mr. Hansraj Ahir, Anil Dhote, Ajay Sancheti, Banwaridhal Purohit, Sudhir Mungantiwar, Nana Potale, Ranjit Patil, Sudhakar Deshmukh, and Vikas Kumbhare.

In the Parliament, Vilas Muttemwar made the demand to shift the capital of Maharashtra from Mumbai to Nagpur in order to get back its grandeur. The then CM Pruthviraj Chavan made a statement that it is impossible to create the independent Vidarbha. The effects of this statement were clear in Vidarbha congress. Nitin Raut, a minister, expressed his disagreement with the CM and Vilas Muttemwar appealed others emotionally to be tighter and stand against the CM Pruthviraj Chavan.

After the creation of Telangana state, it is clear that except Shiv Sena, no other party has opposed Vidarbha. On the other hand, Congress and BJP also weren't firm enough on their stands about Vidarbha. Due to this confusing situation, people could not support them. There was lack of leadership for long term.

Those unions and parties, which support Vidarbha, are not strong enough. Vidarbha veer Jambuvantrao Dhote has become too weak now. His influence has been decreased. He has re-entred in the Forward Block Party. The members of Sanyukt Vidarbha Kruti Samiti are not the elected leaders. And those who are elected are not putting the issue positively. It was only remembered in Nagpur Session. So, due to this condition, the protest for Vidarbha has been disarmed.

Balefire of Nagpur Agreement: (23 sept ,2013):

Nagpur Agreement was balefired on 28 September, 2013 by Vidarbha Sanyukt Kruti Samiti. Many Vidarbha follower unions had participated in it. At Variety Chowk, and in front of Mahatma Gandhi Statue, the Nagpur Agreement was symbolically fired and slogans were given against UPA government. The protesters had declared that Vidarbha has separated and showed their resolution for it. The agitated protester stop the bus and the protester on the road in front of Seetabardi Police Station. Many people participated in the protest. The former Director General of Police Pravir Chakravarti expressed his disappointment and disbelief towards both NDA and UPA and appealed them to get ready for the big protest for Vidarbha.

Opinion poll in Amaravati for Independent Vidarbha :

An opinion poll was conducted in Amaravati for the independent Vidarbha state. In that poll, 85% people from Amaravati were on favour of Vidarbha. The poll was affected due to rain. But senior journalist Chandrakant Wankhede appealed the government to pay attention towards inclination of majority of the people towards separation of Vidarbha from Maharashtra. The poll was conducted by Vidarbha Maza and Samaj Karya College. Total 72,598 voters voted in 128 ballot boxes. Out of the total votes, 61,675 (75%) people said 'yes' for Vidarbha and 9,226 (12%) people said 'no' to create Vidarbha as independent state. Like other polls, in this poll also 1,658 votes were invalid. The percentage of voting was less due to heavy rain that lasted for more than 6 hours. But finally people showed their resolution about Vidarbha State. Vidarbha was merged in united Maharashtra according to Nagpur Agreement. But Maharashtra government did nothing to keep the promise of equal justice for development in Maharashtra. At the same time, Yashwantrao Chavan had declared to transfer 16 offices from Pune to Nagpur. Out of these, no office was shifted to Nagpur except Forest Security Department in the last 50 years.

Vidarbha Vaidhanik Vikas Mandal was established in 1994. Presently the backlog is not reduced in Vidarbha till date. It can be made clear through Dr. V. M. Dandekar Samiti (1983), Yojana Aayog Satyashodan Samiti (May 2006) CAG Report and governor's orders, that there is no satisfactory development in Vidarbha.

Drawbacks of the Independent Vidarbha Movement:

The movement for independent Vidarbha could't become the mass movement due to the following two important reasons:

1. Equivocal stands of followers of Vidarbha.
2. Support for United Maharashtra from Vidarbha.

1) Equivocal stands of followers of Vidarbha:

It is clear that due to lack of efficient and active leadership, the protest for Vidarbha could not be enlarged and it couldn't get the proper support of the people. It had got the leadership of Bapuji Ane, for some time. But later on there was lack of coordination & unity among all the proponents of Vidarbha. In fact, there is no single leader who can put Vidarbha issue efficiently. Initially BJP supported Vidarbha state but in elections this issue was neglected and other issues were stressed by the leaders of BJP. 'Maha Vidarbha Rajya Sangha arsh Samiti' didn't fight election on all its seats. Those who fought some seats they had lost their deposits. One or two seats are exceptions to this. The leaders in favour of Vidarbha have been taking equivocal stands again & again. No leader has taken the firm decision on Vidarbha issue. Some of these leaders took part in the United Maharashtra Movement and neglected the demand for Vidarbha state.

Congress party had an influence in Vidarbha. Some proponents of Vidarbha had been the part of Congress and they demanded for Vidarbha. But for the sake of political stability, Congress has ignored the Vidarbha state issue. Whereas, some leaders had entered in Congress due to their frequent defeats in various elections. They had fear in their minds of end of their political career. This is the reason why Vidarbha movement could not be enlarged.

2)Support for United Maharashtra from Vidarbha:

The movement for Telangana State was going on for many years. The majority of the people supported that movement from Telangana region. It had got the support from various literateurs ,artists ,thinkers ,scholars and NGOs. The movement was opposed only by coastal Andra Pradesh. And leaders,parties,unions and people from Rayalseema.

On the other hand, there is different situation in Vidarbha. The root cause of the independent Vidarbha state is found in the Assembly of 1938 in the Central Province , in the resolution of separating Berar from other parts of Maharashtra. Since then the movement for independent Vidarbha is going on. But this is not seen clearly but through the thoughts of the people who opposed it. From the beginning , there were two streams of thoughts in Vidarbha. These opinion were made clear at the time of united Maharashtra movement.The first group was expressing the ideas about how independent Vidarbha is beneficial for the people & the second was opposing it. The latter always opposed the first group through the writing and speeches ,not through the protest. It has come forward through the argument of some scholars.

Need of Independent Vidarbha State:Senior Bar Council Member ShrihariAne's Demand (August 2016).

The people from Vidarbha demanded the liberty to take their own decision by getting separated from Maharashtra. It is a movement. The outsiders don't have information about the feeling of the people, the logic in it , injustice in their lives etc. Such issue are to be focused through the discussion in legal aspect, said ShrihariAne in august, 2016. Member of parliament Nana Patole raised this issue for the discussion and it has been dissussed at least twice a year.

While demanding the independent VidarbhaShriariAne mentioned various phases of the protest.

1st Phase:

It begins with the formation of State Reorganization Commission in 1965. It was the time when demand for Vidarbha was raised. Later Vidarbha was merged in Maharashtra. It was opposed by ShrihariAne and BrijlalBiyani by stating some problems of doing it.

2nd Phase: (Post 1980 period):

The people from Vidarbha were upset due to nonconformity of the promises, necessary for the development of Vidarbha. It resulted into the fierce protest against it. For instance, a big protest was raised when an attempt was made to transfer the Agriculture University from Akola to Rahuri. The people were aware about growth and development of other regions. The government appointed V.M. Dandekar Committee. This committee checked the backlog of Vidarbha based on 9 point like irrigation, roads, education, technical education, health facilities, water supply, land development, veterinary services and rural electricity supply. In order to remove this backlog, 74% amount from the budget should be kept aside. The decision about it was taken, but the fund was not available so the demand for Vidarbha State was raised again. According to Shrihari Ane it was the third phase of protest.

Presently a different issue is raised to oppose Vidarbha State. The Chief Minister and the Finance Minister are from Vidarbha. So, they will help to open the ways for development of Vidarbha. Therefore, it is argued that there is no need of independent Vidarbha. The Vidarbha region also had leadership in the past, but still there was no such development. Now the question arises that how will the government manage to raise the fund for the development of Vidarbha. The fund is not available to repair the roads in Mumbai then how can they send money to remote Vidarbha region. Though Devendra Fadnis is from Vidarbha, he has different priorities as the Chief Minister of whole Maharashtra. In order to maintain the status of Maharashtra at national level there is the desperate need of an international airport in Navi Mumbai. It is the need of time to link it with all roads and sea ways. The government will need a lot of fund for it. Thus, due to this problem, the Chief Minister cannot provide fund for Vidarbha to prevent farmers' suicides.

According to the list of priorities, Maharashtra has many questions to handle. In context of the government, farmers' suicides don't have that much importance and priority. It won't be such in independent Vidarbha. 27,000 farmers have committed suicide. It is said unofficially that this number is almost 42,000. It will be the secondary issue for Maharashtra but for Vidarbha, to deal with this issue is the first priority, because it is the cause of our pains.

Melghat, which is a naturally rich region, is affected by the problem of malnutrition. Four districts from Vidarbha are the target of Naxalite Movement. Vidarbha, as an independent state, will

effectively try to solve these problems. Vidarbha has the problems which are different from Maharashtra. They can't be solved in Maharashtra. The people from different parts of Maharashtra should understand this fact. Another question is raised that whether Vidarbha will be economically strong or not. All the states are under GST system, so Vidarbha will be able to make progress like other states. Ane said that others need not worry about it.

He further said, that I am not a politician. Therefore I won't have any role in making people think on Vidarbha issue. Those, who don't support Vidarbha should think about the factual condition of that region. These people need to think over the opinion poll conducted by Lokmanch and also about its result in favour of separate Vidarbha State. If they don't believe in this poll then they should check it with the help of any other institution and try to know people's opinions. Ane also said that we have no objection to such poll which was conducted in Goa. The similar demand was raised by Nationalist Congress Party. If these people think that such voting is not good/proper for making any new state. We are open and ready for any other way. After all no roll was conducted while forming the states like Uttarakhand, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. It is wrong and unjust to talk negatively about the demand for Vidarbha before knowing the factual condition. He also said we, the proponents of Vidharbha, will present the statistics of votes for BJP, for the demand of independent Vidarbha. This issue was in their manifesto and declaration. 44 out of 66 seats from Vidarbha were won by BJP. It means people are in favour of Vidarbha State. If you deny this point, it means that you expect fierce protest from us. The Vidarbha movement is the third and final phase. We are demanding the independent state by the democratic way. 1200 people were unduly killed in the violent protest for Telangana. The similar condition should not occur about Vidarbha. It is the responsibility of everyone from the state and the country. It is unfair to treat Vidarbha negatively and blame that the movement for Vidarbha was the movement of some limited no. of people. The people, who don't belong to Vidarbha, don't know the real condition of Vidarbha. It is also doubtful that whether they want to understand the situation or not. It is necessary to understand that there is no problem to make two different states of Marathi speaking people. The national conference has been established for the small states. The demand for Bundelkhand is made on this forum. The great people like Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and Acharya Vinod Bhave and others agreed to make small states. Shrihari Ane further said that the people want the separate state. For this, take opinions of various

people and pass the resolution. But there is no other option to separate state. It is the humble request of all the people from Vidarbha.

Progress of the movement from 2016 to 2018:

After August 2016, Mr. ShrihariAne appealed to the people from Vidarbha region to take their own decision about the formation of the independent Vidarbha State. But the people from Vidarbha didn't respond it properly. After that, Shri.VamanraoChatap and some journalists from Vidarbha wrote some articles in favor of independent Vidarbha during September, 2016 and October, 2018. They tried to create atmosphere in favor of their demand but it couldn't get satisfactory support. Mr. Ashish Deshmukh, an MLA from BJP, arranged various rallies of college students from Amaravati for the demand of independent Vidarbha State. But many students, who participated in those rallies, were not aware of the proper reasons for the rallies. They couldn't express their views properly. In October, 2018, Mr. Ashish Deshmukh resigned from BJP and entered in the Congress Party. It can be said briefly that the protest for the independent Vidarbha seems to be pacified.

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