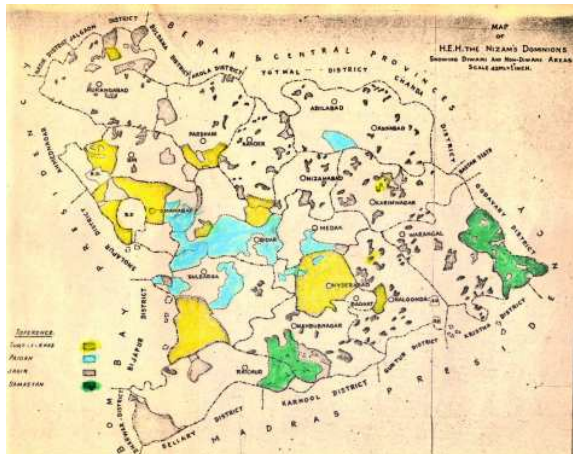


Hyderabad was an important princely state of South India under the British paramountcy. It was ruled by the Nizams who were allied with the British Viceroy and had to adhere to policies decided by them. The Viceroy appointed Residents in the princely states who supervised the policies of the state and also interfered in the administration from time to time. In this

chapter we will learn the condition of the people of this state under the British-Nizam rule and how they fought for freedom. The Hyderabad state comprised of regions in which Marathi, Kannada, Telugu and Deccani Urdu were spoken. In this chapter we will consider mainly the Telugu and Urdu speaking parts which form the Telangana districts.



Map 1: Hyderabad state map showing Nizam's Diwani and Non Diwani areas

network of police and spies who kept a close watch on people.

### Language and Religion

The Nizam rulers of Hyderabad state were Muslims who spoke *Deccani Urdu*. However, the majority of the people of the state were Hindus who spoke Telugu, Kannada and Marathi. Urdu was the official language and more than 90% of all high officials were Muslims. Urdu was the medium of instruction from primary school to the university. Even technical text books were translated and made available in Urdu.

The Nizams were slow in setting up schools in their kingdom. Many *jagirdars* did not even allow setting up of schools in their areas. The Nizams were also suspicious of private schools that they would become centres for propagation of anti-Nizam ideas. They actually discouraged the setting up of private Telugu medium schools and did not allow those students to join Osmania University. As a

result even by 1941 only 9.3% people of the state were literate (only 4.3% women were literate). In contrast other princely states like Travancore had 47.7% literacy rate, Baroda had 23% and Mysore had 12.2%.

- Do you think the problems faced by the people of Hyderabad state were in some ways different from those faced by living in British ruled states?
- Was there any difference between the attitude of the British and the Nizams when it came to democracy?

### Andhra Jana Sangham

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century a large number of books in Telugu were printed in the Andhra region and libraries had been set up in towns and villages. In 1901 Sri Krishnadevaraya Andhra Bhasha Nilayam was established in Hyderabad by Komarraju Lakshmana Rao along with Nayani Venkatarangarao and Ravichettu Ranga Rao, which continues to this day. However,



Fig 12.1: Nizam College



Swamy Ramananda Tirtha



Mulla Abdul Qayyum



Madapati Hanumanth Rao



Ravi Narayana Reddy

### Early years of Nationalism

In October 1888, in Hyderabad a small committee of influential persons circulated handbills and placards for holding a meeting to popularise Indian National Congress. The Congress attracted a large section of the educated classes. Mulla Abdul Qayyum of Hyderabad became a great champion of the Congress. He attended the Congress meetings and appealed to Muslims to actively participate in it. He attacked the nobility, and opposed the special favours granted to them in the Nizam state. He was also responsible for organising *Anjuman-e-maref* which aimed at developing social, intellectual and economic life of the people. Various newspapers were published from the state indicating the extent of nationalist influence. Papers like *Hyderabad Telegraph*, *Deccan Standard*, *Muslim-I-Safiq* etc. propagated nationalism. Many of them supported the nationalist cause.

The missionaries like Rev. Gilder of the Chaderghat Methodist Episcopal church supported the Congress. Thus Congress had gained roots in Hyderabad and served as a factor in awakening the people on the questions of independence, development

and forms of the Government with representative institutions.

In the year 1892 Arya Samaj was established in Hyderabad. Arya Samaj served as a training ground for workers in constructive activities and helped to rouse public opinion and build socio-religious awareness. It has credited many leaders to the nationalist movement in Hyderabad.

### Feudal system of the state

The Nizams were initially provincial governors of the Mughal emperors. They ruled with the help of hereditary *jagirdars* and subordinate kings. *Jagirdars* were given control of dozens and even hundreds of villages which they ruled as they desired and collected taxes from the people. The rest of the kingdom was ruled directly by the Nizam with the help of '*doras*' about whom you read in an earlier chapter.

The Nizams wanted to retain the old system in which the king and his nobles controlled all resources and ruled as they wished. They did not allow any democratic system like local bodies or legislatures. The Nizams opposed the Congress led nationalist movement and passed several '*firman*s' or royal orders curtailing political activity in the state. They had a

Telugu remained discriminated in the Hyderabad state. In 1921 in a meeting in Viveka Vardhini College in Hyderabad a person was insulted for bringing a resolution in Telugu rather than in English or Urdu. Telugu speaking people felt greatly offended by this incident and were motivated to fight for the rightful place of Telugu.

In 1924 Madapati Hanumanta Rao and others formed the Andhra Jana Sangham to establish libraries and reading rooms, encourage students and scholars and collect Telugu manuscripts and promote Telugu literature. They published small booklets and held meetings in the villages to set up libraries. Some of these booklets spoke of the problems faced by small traders, peasants, labourers and other poor people. They also set up over 4,000 schools many

of which had to be closed down due to the opposition of the government. Nevertheless the movement grew in momentum as more and more people - women, students, singers etc. participated in it.

- What are the languages spoken in your area?
- What is the medium of teaching in schools and colleges today in our state?
- Do you think all teaching should be done in one's mother tongue?
- Why do you think it is important to publish books in mother tongues?

### Andhra Maha Sabha and the Library Movement

The leaders of various sections decided to unite into one large organisation and thus Andhra Maha Sabha (AMS) was formed in 1930. Among its founders were Madapati Hanumanth Rao, Ravi Narayana Reddy, etc. Its initial objectives were more educational facilities. They submitted prayers and requests to the government seeking the establishment of schools and redressing grievances of the people. In its annual conference in 1935 the



Fig 12.2: A Colonial officer as well as an Indian official from Nizam's court meeting people at Keslapur in Adilabad.

following demands were identified:

1. Compulsory primary education should be implemented.
2. Mother tongue (Telugu) should be the medium of instruction.
3. The legitimate rights of the people in *Jagirs* should be protected.
4. Child marriages should be discouraged.
5. Local self Government should be introduced.
6. Untouchability should be eradicated and the untouchables should be given due place in the society.

You can see that they combined both educational and social reform objectives. The AMS activities spread rapidly all over Telangana and libraries and cultural centres were established in even remote villages. Peasants and labouring people came to them to learn to read, listen to newspaper, discuss current topics, and also their own problems with the Nizam government and *doras*. Night classes and discussions were held in these centres. People read books by social reformers like Veeresalingam and nationalists like Gandhiji, Nehru etc. They also wrote new books on local problems. As Editor of the *Golconda Patrika*, Suravaram Pratapareddy inspired nationalistic fervour amongst the people. Kaloji Narayana Rao, Dasarathi Krishnamacharya, Dasarathi Rangacharya are some of the literary luminaries who fought for the freedom of Hyderabad State.

As more and more poor people joined the movement they began to expect that their issues would be taken up by the AMS along with education. The Nizam

government subjected these centres to a lot of harassment as they were becoming centres of new radical thinking. By 1940 many communists had joined the AMS and they insisted on taking up other demands of the rural people like end to *vetti*, land reforms, oppression by *doras* etc. Some of the old leaders of the AMS disagreed and wanted it to continue as educational and literary forum. Soon the radical elements gained leadership and a new movement of the peasants started.

- Is there a public library in your village or locality?
- If you have been to a public library describe what happens there to your classmates.
- Why do you think the libraries became the centres of anti-Nizam and anti-landlord movements?
- Why do you think the Nizams and jagirdars were not in favour of Telugu medium schools?

### Hyderabad State Congress

The Indian National Congress only functioned in the British India and did not function directly in the princely states. However, the common people faced more oppression and injustice in these princely states and they wanted to join the larger freedom movement of India. In such states the nationalists formed 'state congress' to fight for democratic rights, reforms, representative government etc. This happened in Hyderabad too.

In 1938, seeing the rising tide of nationalism in Hyderabad, the Nizam

banned the singing of '*Vandemataram*' the popular nationalist song. This caused a mass reaction and students in schools and colleges took part in agitations singing that song. The Nizam responded by closing down the colleges forcing many students to go to other states to continue their studies.

Enthusied by the response of the youth of the state, the Nationalists of Hyderabad, who were sympathetic to the Congress movement in the country had set up the Hyderabad State Congress in 1938. Its prominent leader was Swami Ramananda Theertha. Several young leaders like B. Ramakrishna Rao, Jamalapuram Kesavarao, K. V. Ranga Reddy, J. V. Narasinga Rao were top leaders of the movement. Young Congress leaders like Dr. M. Chenna Reddy later became Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and P.V. Narasimha Rao became Prime Minister of India. The State Congress demanded that fundamental rights should be conferred upon the people. They wanted the circulars restricting the freedom of speech, association, press, religious processions, etc. be cancelled immediately. They also demanded that laws for the state be made by elected representatives and not the Nizam.

In 1942 they started *satyagraha* in tune with the national Quit India Movement. It was banned and its leaders arrested. In 1946, when the independence of India was imminent, the Hyderabad State Congress began a campaign for merger of Hyderabad state with the Republic of India to put an end to the rule of the Nizam.

- Find out more about the song – *Vandemataram*.
- Find out about the life of Swami Ramananda Theertha

### The Telangana Armed Struggle (1946-51)

You read about the *doras* and *jagirdars* of the Hyderabad state in Chapter 10. Recall the problems faced by the peasants and service castes of the Telangana region.

From 1929, Ryot sangams were established at Nalgonda, Pillalamarri, Karimnagar, etc. to fight against the exploitation by the *Patels*, *Patwaris*, *Deshmukhs*, Revenue and Police officials. AMS was also active in this area establishing libraries and night schools. The Communists working in AMS and Kisan Sabhas finally captured the AMS in 1946. They have given a radical programme against *vetti* and put forward the demand of land to the tillers. The AMS then spread to Nalgonda, Karimnagar, and Warangal districts. The AMS set up village level branches, which were known as *Sangham*. The Communist Party too actively gave leadership to these *Sanghams*. Initially the main demands of the peasants were limited to fight against illegal feudal exactions, levy system, excessive land rent, eviction of tenants, and for abolition of *vetti*. It was meant to draw all sections of the rural society (small landowners, landlords and service castes) into the struggle against the *doras* and the Nizam.

In those days the landlords were actively evicting small peasants and taking

over their lands to give them to new tenants at a higher rent. The *sanghams* became active to resist this. A notorious zamindar Visnuri Ramachandra Reddy tried to forcibly take over the land of a washerwoman, Ilamma. This was resisted



Ilamma

effectively by the *Sangham*. In retaliation the zamindar fired upon a demonstration of peasants in Kadivendi village and killed Doddi Komaraiah in July

1946. This incident sparked off the famous Telangana Armed Struggle. *Sanghams* were set up in village after village and processions were taken out singing songs of Doddi Komaraya. The *doras* and Nizam tried to violently suppress the movement. This forced the *Sangham* to build squads of armed fighters. They began to drive away the *zamindars* and set up their rule through village Panchayat.

Guerrilla squads to defend the villages and Gram raj committees to resolve villagers' problems were formed. Cultural groups were formed to sing *Burrakathas* with the message of the struggle and they went from village to village to arouse people.

The *Sanghams* tried to establish a parallel government and to establish 'People's courts'. Wherever they established their power, *vetti* was abolished, eviction of tenants was stopped, rents were reduced, wages of workers increased and excess lands of the landlords were redistributed to the landless.

The movement was transformed in 1947-48 into a broad anti-Nizam and anti-feudal struggle demanding merging of Hyderabad with independent India. The people burnt the records of the village officials and moneylenders and seized the grains hoarded by the land lords and the merchants. To broaden the scope of the movement and integrate various sections into it, the demand was raised to merge Telangana with the other Telugu speaking regions to create *Vishal Andhra*.

The fanatic Muslim enthusiasts formed *Ittehadul Muslimeen* an organisation to protect the Muslim domination of Hyderabad state and Nizam rule. They set up a force of volunteers called *Razakars*. They first attacked the Muslim intelligentsia who were fighting for democratic political set up in the state. They acquired weapons to fight the democratic political parties and spread communal attacks. They also began to fight the peasant *sanghams* of Telangana and the communist militants. Seeing this they were supported by the landed gentry and *doras*. There was bitter struggle between the Communist led peasants and *Razakars* supported by the *doras*. After India attained independence the *razakars* started attacking the political movement that was for the integration of the Hyderabad into Indian Union. They ruthlessly attacked the villages, people to create panic so that Hyderabad remain independent of India. The *razakars* burnt villages taken women hostages to create fear psychosis among the general public. In an incident a person called Battini Mogilaiah was killed by

*razakar* gang while hoisting national flag in Warangal Fort. In another incident of communal frenzy of the *razakars* was a large number of people were shot dead in Biranpally village of Janagan Taluq.

The Nizam did not intervene and just watched the situation. In 1948 the independent Indian government took action and merged Hyderabad with India. The Telangana Armed Struggle continued even after the merger to enforce land reforms and protect the peasants from the *doras*. However, it was suppressed by the Indian armed forces and it gradually declined by 1950.

- What role do you think was played by the AMS in making the Telangana Armed Struggle possible?
- Was Telangana Armed Struggle only for removal of the grievances of the peasants or did it have other aims?
- Why do you think the *doras* who were Hindus helped the *Razakars*?

### Merger with India

When India became independent in 1947, Osman Ali Khan, the Nizam wanted Hyderabad to remain as an independent kingdom. The common people of the state wanted to join Independent India and a large campaign was organized by the Hyderabad State Congress led by Ramananda Theertha. The *Razakars* attacked them too. Then the Indian government decided to end this anarchy and sent armed forces to Hyderabad. Hyderabad was finally integrated into Indian union in September 1948. The Nizam however was asked by the

government of India to continue as the ruler till the transition to democratic setup was complete. The Nizam was forced to abolish the feudal system and initiate democratic processes of elections. When the Constitution of India came into force on 26 January 1950, the Nizam rule came to an end but Osman Ali Khan continued to be the *Rajpramukh* of Hyderabad (head of the state). But he had to act on the advice of Government of India's officials. Elections were held in 1952 and an elected government was formed in Hyderabad state. Burgula Ramakrishna Rao was the first Chief Minister of the Hyderabad state. The Nizam continued as *Rajpramukh* till 1956. With the formation of Andhra Pradesh merging Andhra and Telangana regions, the *Rajpramukh* was replaced by a Governor appointed by the President of India. Thus ended the Nizams rule of over Hyderabad state.



Fig 12.3: Osman Ali Khan and Sardar Vallabhai Patel

- Why do you think the Nizam was allowed to retain power even after the merger?
- Why do you think the Nizam agreed to pass the *firmanas* abolishing the feudal system?
- Why do you think the Nizam's rule ended on 26 January 1950?

### Women in the Telangana Struggle

Women suffered most under the rule of Nizams and *doras*. They were constantly harassed. They not only had to work for the landlords but also to serve the visiting officials. Many women were made slaves of the landlords. Such women attended the night schools of Andhra Maha Sabha and decided to join the *Sanghams* and the Communist Party. Some of them took arms and fought the *Razakars*, some of them sang songs and



Fig 12.4: Women Guerrilla squad

inspired people, some of them acted as doctors and nurses. But they had to make supreme sacrifices for the sake of the movement. Read below an interview given by one such woman:

*"My name is Kamalamma. I come from the village in Manukota Taluqa. Ours was a bonded labour family... My mother was a slave in the house of some landlords... My father died when*

*I was fifteen. The Telangana struggle had started then. The dorasani wanted to send my sister as a slave to one of her daughters... The dorasani used to beat my husband. That was the life of a bonded labourer, graze buffaloes, collect dung, one had to do everything. They even used him as a goonda. Unable to bear the trouble in these landlord's houses we came into the struggle...*

*First my brother became a squad commander... My husband and I also joined the Communist Party... My work was in the cultural squad. My voice was good; I used to sing songs, and travel to several places... We worked in the forest and helped the Koya tribal women... I was also in a hospital centre and learned first aid and to give injections... then my son was born in the forest... Then the comrades told me, 'The boy will cry and all of us will get caught because of this child. You give him away to someone or leave him somewhere...' But no one would take him. I walked for two days and left him with a coal miner... After that neither my body, nor my mind stayed in my control. There was one torrent of tears from eyes to the earth..."*

### Key words

- |                      |                              |                     |
|----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Firmanas          | 2. <i>Vetti</i>              | 3. Feudal System    |
| 4. Subordinate kings | 5. Legitimate rights         | 6. Guerrilla Squad. |
| 7. Jagirdars         | 8. Representative Government |                     |

### Improve your learning

1. What aspects of the Nizam rule would you consider to be 'undemocratic'?
2. Why do you think the literacy rate in Hyderabad state was lower than other princely states?
3. Describe the activities of the Andhra Maha Sabha for the promotion of education.
4. What were the demands of the Hyderabad state Congress and how many of them were fulfilled after 1948?
5. Do you think the Telangana Armed struggle helped to end the rule of the Nizam? Give your reasons.
6. Read the paragraphs under the heading 'Feudal System of the State' and answer the following: Do you support the Feudal system of the Nizams? Why?
7. Many movements were led against the rulers in the past. Do you find any movements taken up nowadays? If yes, what are they?