



Cover Page



FREEDOM MOVEMENT IN ERSTWHILE NIZAM STATE – SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KARNATAKA LIBERATION AND INTEGRATION

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Abstract

Freedom Movement in Erstwhile Nizam State belongs to a category of social movements, with the ideology of class conflict as their basis, while Karl Marx considered the peasantry to be passive, Lenin, Mao and Fanon placed the peasants at the centre of the revolution, the significant movement such as Telangana peasant movement it challenged to Nizam’s autocratic power. The leadership emerged on the basis of communist ideology. This present research paper will discuss the role of leadership of peasant assertion of Telangana region. The Telangana peasant Movement (1946-51) is perhaps one of the great mass participation and intensity. The significance about the struggle was to demolish unjust power structure headed by the great Nizam and feudal landlords of Telangana. All the Telangana peasants were struggled against the Nizams all establishment and exploitative ethics and cultural and social practice based on cultural and social dominance. The Telangana peasant Assertion is one of the unprecedented movements in the peasant’s history of the world. It encompassed almost every part of the Nizam’s State. This research paper to be discussed “**Freedom Movement in Erstwhile Nizam State – Special Reference to Karnataka Liberation and Integration**”

Keywords: Class Conflicts, Feudalism, Social Practices, Caste and class, Rural Society, Leadership, Anti Hindu Movement, Nizam Dominion, Razakars,

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

In the beginning of the nineteenth century itself, the princely state of Hyderabad was subjected to British mercantile interests. Districts were as farmed out to bankers and “every public office... was put up for sale and the purchaser reimbursed himself by extortion”. Peasants has to pay, under such a system, half to two-thirds of their produce as land revenue.

However, the issue around which peasant resistance crystallized by inter-war period was primarily that of land rights. This was due to the agrarian policy adopted by the state during the late nineteenth century due to the consequences of Salarjung reforms. The question of land rights became the basic concern for a large number of new castes / communities who were inducted into agriculture to bring land under cultivation by the new land tenure holders created by Salarjung to repopulate the deserted villages. It was an elevation of their social position. But when they realized that the land they were cultivating was not of their own, due to certain rules with regard to makta, ijara and banjara (or due to illegal ownership transfers during the survey of land), the peasants could not reconcile themselves to this situation. The traditional peasant communities, who were losing lands were also inducted into the Makta, Ijara lands with inferior land rights. Therefore, the land tenural structure was important because it established new rights abrogating the customary rights making the traditional cultivators unite and fight the newly created tenure-holders.

In most of the big jagirs the big cultivators had held or exercised Patta rights over their lands either through the courts or by their might organizing all the villages behind them. There were also cultivators who were not accorded patta rights and all lands stood in the name of the jagirdar, but the actual cultivators were given a shikmi (occupancy) right to pay only affixed assessment. The patels and patwaris, however, acquired large tracts of lands either in lieu of their salaries or by fraudulent means being closer to the jagirdars. In this way in some jagir areas some of the cultivators emerged as pattadars or shikmidars (protected tenants) and got their lands cultivated by “asmi-shikmidars” (Tenants-at-will). they pay either double the assessment or batai’ A small group of influential cultivators acquired permanent rights but not under any specific rule which created confusion and discontent among the various categories of cultivators. However, a broad unity of all the cultivators had taken place, which resulted in protests against the jagirdars. Another source source of distress was the collection of numerous cases. The jagirdars used to collect house tax, grain tax, grazing tax, cattle tax and a number of other taxes such as tax on looms, grindars, carts and even collected shadi patti (tax on marriage) taxes for performing puja or conducting jatargas. On these issues jagir ryots had already been organized by the ‘nationalist’ leaders.

A section of cultivators amongst the kapus had become rich and acquired higher caste status than the others, who were pushed downwards and gradually reduced to a lower status in the villages. To give an example, the Muthrasi, Balija, Telaga, Munnuru, Reddy, Velama and Kmmas were all placed in the same social position (as Kapus-Surdras). But slowly the Reddy,



Cover Page



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Velama, Kamma castes acquired wealth and rural power acquired higher social position. By the 1931 census the Velamas, Kammas and Reddys demanded higher caste status to enumerate them separately as 'landholders' rather than kapus whereas the Muthrasi, Balija and so on casts remained as Kapus thus pushed downwards to the position of poor peasants and consequently reduced to a lower caste status. However, some of the higher caste kammas had come from coastal Andhra districts and purchased land in this century from the individual landowners and the Government in auctions conducted as part of the state's land colonization policy. Most of them settled down in Nalgonda, Warangal and Nizamabad districts, particularly in the areas served by big irrigation projects. They were known for their innovative and intensive cultivation.

Rural Society in the Nizam's State, Emergency of leadership

In 1945-46 a unity was forged between the rich and poor stratum of the peasantry (including the landless). The Police and Revenue Member of the government in a memo of 1946 explaining why rich peasants became disaffected:

No per likes restrictions on his power to grow what he likes and to sell it where he likes... if he puts too much land under cash crops he breaks the law, if he sells his rice or wheat except to government he breaks the law, the law compels him to give up part of his grain in the levy, where monopoly purchases are in force, the law allows him to sell his surplus only to government...if he thinks that he will not sell and keep his grain in his grain pits or bins, he breaks the law... he finds restrictions on his social life because the law does not allow him to entertain more than a limited number of guests. Thus, the rich peasants' resistance to the appropriation of the surplus by the state motivated them to join the ongoing struggle of the poor peasants and vetti workers.

On account of the efforts of the educated middle-class leaders like Madapati Hanumantha Rao, Vaman Naik and Raghavendra Rao Sharma, Political conferences were held outside the territories of the Nizam, which petitioned the Nizam's Government to introduce a popular and representative Government in the state. Owing to the initiative taken by M.Hanumantha Rao, the first Hyderabad political conference was held in Kakinada in 1923 under the Presidentship of Madhav Rao Aney. These meetings had to be conducted outside the Nizam's Dominion on account of Gasti No.52 and 53, which made it impossible for any political meeting, howsoever peaceful in nature, to be convened in Hyderabad. Similar conferences were later held in Bombay, Puna, and Akola in 1926, 1928 and 1931 respectively At these conferences demands for the introduction of a responsible and representatives Government, the removal of restrictions on the freedom of the press and of association were raised, and further the absence of civil rights, the discriminatory policies in education and in employment against the Hindu majority came in for criticism.

Sensing the growing spirit of political unrest and the continuous urge for the introduction of representative democratic institutions and the charge in the political scenario in British India consequent to the introduction of the 1935 Act; the Nizam's Government announced the constitution of a committee in 1937 under the Chairmanship of Diwan Bahadur Aravamudu Iyengar to recommend to the Government, the model of constitutional reforms to be introduced in the state. The AMS which confined itself upto this time to mostly social and political affairs passed its first political resolution in 1937 at the Nizamabad conference demanding the introduction of responsible government. It also empowered K.V. Ranga Reddy to present a memorandum to the Government on behalf of the 'Hyderabad People's Convention.

Around the 1930's, two religious movements i.e., the Arya Samaj and ideology of Swami Dayananda Saraswathi, Majlis-e-ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (Council of Union of Muslims) both of which drew upon the educated middle class amongst the Hindus and Muslims respectively, came into rigorous confrontation with each other over religious issues in the State of Hyderabad.

Social Structure of Nizam's State

The autocracy of the Mir Osman Ali Khan, the last ruler of the Asaf Jahi dynasty undoubtedly had a pro-Muslim, anti-Hindu aspect to it. The Nizam of Hyderabad had made his intensions very clear in the month of June when the country was at the threshold of independence. Through a Farman (order) dated 26th June 1947, he declared his resolve not to participate in the Constituent Assembly and not to join the Indian Union. He also claimed that the removal of the British paramountacy entitled him to declare his independence. He even went to the extent of declaring the national flag of India as foreign. He was under the control of a fanatic organization by name "Majlis-I-Ittehad-Ul-Muslemeen", a cultural organisation of the muslims. But it became a fanatic organisation under the leadership of kasimrazvi in his bid to protect the Nizam's independence.The Volunteer of that Organisation was called a Razakar. Urdu was imposed on his subjects, and the Razakars' actions were targeted against Hindus. The Arya Samaj, which took up cudgels for the 'Hindu masses' against 'Muslim oppressors', took over the leadership of the anti-Nizam movement partly owing to the late arrival of the Congress; until 1940 the Indian National Congress did not take up the people's struggle in the princely state. Shri Ramanand Theertha as the president of congress in Hyderabad did a lot of work in building congress in north Karnataka and awakening people against the misrule of Nizam but lack of same commitment from many congressmen, saw congress becoming a



Cover Page



party of Brahmins and being restricted to meetings and protest resolutions in this region. Disillusioned by the congress, the youths came together at the sleepy town of Mundaragi, to set up the first camp of freedom fighters that would fight the Razakars and the Nizam rule and work towards merger of Hyderabad with India.

The condition in this camp was very bad and no food was available for the youths. The convenor of the camp, Shri. Alwandi Shivmurthy Swami was unable to make any progress and it appeared as if the Mundaragi camp would be closed down soon. It was then, that Shri. Annadanayya Puranik, a native of Dyampur village of erstwhile Raichur district and was studying B. Com degree at Osmania University of Hyderabad, came to this camp. Discontinuing the studies, he joined the camp and approached the Swamiji of Mundaragi Mutt for assistance. The Mutt liberally provided food and clothing to the youths of the camp and people of Mundaragi began to take active interest in the activities of the camp. Shri.Puranik convinced Shri.Hebsur, the Fauzdar of Mundaragi to provide training in using fire arms to the youth of the Mundaragi Camp. Soon, the youths began guerrilla type of attacks on the Razakars and Nizam Police. The success led to more success and the Nizam government began to notice that these attacks had support of the people and began to hunt down the youths of Mundaragi camp. Thus began the first armed struggle against the Razakars and the Nizam rule in Hyderabad province and soon these youths, now numbering 1000, from Mundaragi camp under the leadership of Shri. AnnadanayyaPuranik were able to liberate 85 villages in Nizam province and form a government in exile!!

Change in Political Scenario

Sardar Patel was so impressed by the success and commitment of these youths and Shri. Puranik that he sent Union minister Shri.Gadgil on a special mission to Mundaragi. Mr.Gadgil brought the support of Sardar Patel and gave instructions to the Mundaragi youths to become more active and also communicate the acts of misrule of Nizam and the atrocities committed by the Razakars to the outside world and what happened at Mundaragi Camp and how it helped in liberation of Hyderabad.

Under the directions of the Hyderabad state Action committee, about hundred Border camps, from where armed attacks could be carried out against the Razakars, were set up in the border areas of Bellary, Dharwad, Bijapur, Sholapur, Pune, Adilabad, and Vijayawada and in the areas of Rayalseema to stir accession movement in Hyderabad state. These camps were situated five to six kilometres away from the border line of Nizam state. The investigations have revealed that, of these, 30 camps were along the border of Hyderabad Karnataka with the Bombay and Madras presidencies. The nationalist workers were given training by soldiers who belonged to the erstwhile Indian National Army. From here the nationalist soldiers undertook raids against Razakar centres and even liberated and took over the administration of some areas (like Ittagi and its neighbouring villages in Yelburga taluks of the then Raichur District).

Every border camp was divided into two wings namely unarmed wing and CID wing. Each Camp was under the control of a Shibiradhipati (camp in-charge) who personified all powers of the Action Committee. The unarmed wing was consisted of Satyagrahis and other congress workers. Their duty was to propagate the ideas of Swarajya and condemn the atrocities of the Razakars in order to mould the public opinion in favour of integrating the Hyderabad State into the Union of India and secure the responsible government. They were to assist in collecting funds, food grains and cloth from the people and supplied them to different refugee camps.

Secondly, the wing entered the Hyderabad State in different disguises such as Koravanji, (a female of koravas who commonly in future teller) Tamburi (sting instrument) Players, Koracha (who manufactures and sells rope and house hold utensils, toys), Durugamma, Sadhu (saint), Begger, Kavalettu (an ox that has been taught to execute various clever performances) etc., and worked as C.I.D.'s to gather information on the latest attacking strategy by the Razakars and the Nizam police on Hindus. They gave advance information to the Shibiradhipaties in border camps through wireless to enable them to counter act the aggression of Razakars and the Nizam police on Hindus and to make plans to raid police stations and Karodgiri-Nakas of Nizam state. Basavaraj Chitguppikar, Channappa Wali, Kalappa Sanna Yarasi, Dambalada Somappa, Mudiappa Talawar, R.V., Bidappa, Dattatreya Rao Avaradi, V.B. Padaki, Poolchand Gandhi, Jayateerth Rajpurohit, Ranganath Saigaonkar were best among C.I.D., wing.

The armed wing was an important organization in each border camp. Under the instructions of Shibiradhipati, the soldiers of the camp led by specially appointed Dalapati marched to raid the specified police, Revenue and Karodgiri Nakas (customs office) Stations abruptly for loot and arson. There was a direct fight between the Razakars and armed wing of the border camps, causing heavy casualties on both the sides.

Revolutionary Activities

The border camps, though came into existence from the beginning of October 1947, started to work vigorously and took daring actions to intensify the Accession Movement in Hyderabad State from January 1948 to September, 1948 i.e., up to Police Action.



Cover Page



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In the initial Period i.e., from October 1947 to January of 1948, the workers in the border camps mainly concentrated their attention to protect lives and properties of Hindu and Muslim nationalists from the depredations of the fanatic Razakars. In the meanwhile, the Arya Samaj was striving hard for the same cause

In order to understand how the militant nationalists fought against the atrocities committed by the Razakars, it is essential to know how they attacked Karodgiry Nakas and liberated the villages of Nizam state before the historic Police Action. It is necessary to explain revolutionary activities of freedom fighters working in border camps. Since it is not possible to keep the services rendered by the nationalists on record who worked in about hundred border camps, I have taken few samples (Military camps) to enable the reader to evaluate the importance of 'Border Movement'.

Talikota Camp

This camp was under the command of Barrister Raja Venkatappa Naik of Surpur. Advocate Apparao, the Dalapati of this camp was over all in charge of all operations undertaken in this camp. Team of 25 youths led by Virupakshappa Patil assisted him in the raids. This camp was able to overthrow the rule of Nizam in many surrounding villages. The important fight by this camp were the raids on Malnur and Nelavigi villages of Surpura taluka. The Razakars and the Nizam's semi military forces fought a pitch full battle with the camp workers. In this fight, Virupakshappa and Sharanappa, the spirited youths of this camp were shot dead by the Razakars. The dead bodies were taken on Surpur by the Razakars and paraded them in the streets of the town to strike terror in the minds of the people. In memory of the martyr- Viz. Virupakshappa of Surpur, "The Upper Krishna Project Canal" is named after him. While liberating the villages of the Nizam dominion, the camp in charge - Raja Venkatappa Naik Organized 'Guerrilla Warfare' of camouflage concealment to crush the ferocious atrocities of the Razakars.

Dudani Camp

The Sibiradhipathi of this camp was Gurubheema Rao Patil of Revoor. This camp carried out 19 raids on the Nizam territory. In the raid on Arjunagi village, 30 ML guns were seized from the Razakars. In the raid on Sangoligi village, 5 ML guns and in the raid on Arjunagi village 10 ML guns, 10 swords, 4 spears were captured on 26th July, 1948 by the camp workers. Similarly in the raids on Sirudge, Gavoor, Nimbaraga many arms and ammunitions were seized from the Razakars. About 20 Razakars and few Nizam police were killed. From the camp side, Sivalingappa of Madaguniki, Shivalingappa and Kashiraya of Madanahipparga lost their lives for the cause of independence and integration of the state on 12th June 1948.

The chief Dalapathi of this camp - Shivaraya became martyr while liberating of Nimbaraga and Yelasangi village on 20th June, 1948. The workers of Goudgaon and Madanahipparga camps and the Indian police helped the camp in charge of Dudani while liberating the village of Yelasangi. (Aland Tq. Gulbarga district) Hundreds of Razakars were killed at Yelasangi. In protest of this, the leader of the Razakars - Kasim Razvi observed 'Yelasangi Day' to take retaliating steps on Hindus at Gulbarga.

Goudgaon and Madanahipparga Camps

Dharama Veera Nelogi and Saibanna were Sibiradhipathis of these camps. The circumstances forced them to work together while liberating the villages of Jambigi and Tirukachincholi in the month of August, 1948. The active workers of these camps were Byrappa Patil of Boosnur, Dharama veera Suryavamshi of Afzalpur, Kusumakar Desai of Gulbarga and Appa Rao Patil of Mahagaon. There were about 100 workers in these camps and they covered 20 miles distance of Nizam territory and incited the people to burn the customs offices and police stations during the period from June, 1948 to 10th September, 1948. Apparao Patil of Mahagaon laid down his life while fighting to arrest the Razakars from their hide-outs in the village of Tirukachincholi on the day of Vijay Dasmii.e, 10-10-1948.

Wagdhari Camp

This camp functioned under the camp in charge of Annarao Veerabhadrapatil of A land. He took over charge from Gopaldevashastri of Basavakalyana who was seriously injured while raiding the village of Heroli (Aland Tq) in December, 1947. Gurnatha Rao Dhage, Digambara Kathare, Shankar Setty Patil and Marutirao Bulbuli were active workers of this camp. This camp liberated the villagers of Heroli, Sarasamba and Gangapur and burnt the custom offices at Chitaguppa, Bhalki and Bhoosanur. They cut toddy trees which lie in between Aland and Bhalki. The workers of this camp incited the people to rebel against the Nizam to integrate the State of Hyderabad into the union of India.

Kasarajavalaga Camp

This camp lies on the border line of Sholapur district. Most of the workers of this militant camp were dedicated college students and they received military training at Dehradun, Poonaa and Patiala. The Sibiradhipathi of this camp was Digambara Rao



Cover Page



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Kalmankar. The outstanding achievement of this camp was the liberation of the village Padasavalagi on 20.07.1948. The militant workers of the camp raided and looted the police stations of Nimbarga (Aland taluk) to secure the arms for the protection of non-Muslims. In the terrific fight against the Razakars at Padasavalagi, the camp workers killed three pathans in the firing and seized new revolvers. It is to be noted that the findings of these new revolvers confirmed the fact that these arms were supplied to the Nizam on large scale by Mr.Sidney Cotton, an Australian arms seller.He was reported to be engaged in aerialgun running with Karachi. When Mr. Cotton was taken to meet Laik Ali, the Prime Minister of Hyderabad,had agreed to supply 500 tonnes of machineguns, grenades, mortars and anti-aircraft guns.¹¹Above all the brave workers of this camp successfully raided the Nizam's post offices and arrack shops in and around the border places of Aland Taluka.They hoisted the National Flags on Government buildings and educational institutions to wise the will of the people in favour of the responsible government. As on 8th August 1948, the Nationalists working under the directions of the state Action Committee in different border camps of Gulbarga district were able to liberate the Seventy-Five villages of Aland, Afzalpur and Solapur talukas.

Mundargi Camp

In the epic struggle for the liberation of Hyderabad state, theMundargi border camp was the biggest. Thecamp was situated at Mundaragi (Dharwad District) in the premises of old Annadana Swami Mathan 15th August 1947. It worked under the leadership of Alavandisivamurthyswamy. Dr.C.M.Churchihalmath Mundaragi discharged the duties as Upa-Sibiradhipati. The outstanding feature of this camp was that under the directions of this camp, eleven sub sub camps were established at Hesarur, Hallikeri, Ilakal, Sudi, Timmapura, Naregal,Nidugundikoppa,Mugali, Hampasagar, Tambrahalli and Bachigondanhalli on the border lines of Bellary and Dharwad districts.

During the thick of the accession movement i.e., from December 1947 onwards, even the workers of Ittigi border camp led by Ramachara B.Purohit and workers of Gajendragada camp which was under the command of Pundlikappa Gnanamoti, fought with greater unity and harmony with Mundaragi border camp in attacking the centres of Razakars, raiding the police stations karodgiriNakas and in freeing the villages of the Nizam dominion.

About 250 energetic youths worked as soldiers in the Mundargi camp.The advisory and Executive body of this camp consisted of Desai of Sydnekoppa, Virupakshappa of Madanur, Sirur Veerabhadrappa of Adur, Dambal Somappa of Koppal, Channappa Wali, R.V.Bidappa, Aannadanppa Doddameti, R.R.Diwakar, S.Nijallingappa and Hallikeri Gudleppa, Devendrakumar Hakare of Chikenakoppa and PanchakshsriHiremth of Bisanalli Assisted Shivamurthy Swamyin making correspondence of the Mundargi camp in and outside the state of Hyderabad while intensifying the border movement.

Prabhuraj Patil of Yelburga and Shankreppa Yerasi of Bannikoppa worked as commander and Deputy Commander of Mundargi camp respectively. The patriots like Siddanagouda, Karisidda Swamy Inamdar and Shankaregouda Tegginmani worked as section commanders. In the C.I.D. wing of Mundargi camp Kallappa SannaYerasi and Mudiyyappa Talvar rendered outstanding service. The soldiers who worked in this camp and its branches received military training for 20 days at the Cave of Kappatgudda (near Mundaragi) under the instructions of two I.N.A. officers,Captain Ramachandra Sing and Captain Jagat Singh,Every soldier working in Mundargi camp led by ShivamurthySwamy took an oath of Panchasree 1)Veer sree 2)Dairy sree 3)Sahassree 4) Sangharshsree 5) Abhimansree to the last in order to dismount the tyranny of Nizam and savage acts of the Razakars. Six jeeps and a private but (the owner of the private bus was BasarigidadaVeeappa, an outstanding doner of the days) with adequate arms and ammunitions were at the service of Mundaragi soldiers in their fight against the Nizam and Razakars.

Revolutionary actions of Mundargi Camp

As per the directions of Alavandishivsmurthy Swamy, the Commandar Sankarappa Yerasi led the soldiers in the raids.The Nizam Government stored arms and ammunitions on large scale in police station at Kuknur (YelburgaTq:) The workers of Mundargi camp determined to secure these arms to resist the savage acts of repressions perpetrated by the Moghalai officials during the period commencing from September, 1947. At the villages Kawalur, Alavandi, Belagatti, Bannikoppa, Mudol, Hirehanchinal, Yelburga and Hesarur, there was a regular looting by the very persons realised that death was preferable to such a life. The women folk were molested. Therefore, the nationalists of Mundargi camp under the command of PrabhurajaPatil decided to raid the police station of Kuknur. As a result of this,there was a terrific firing between the patriots and the Nizam Police. At last, three Nizam police were man-handled by the spirited workers and looted the police station of Kuknur on 23-12-1947.

They captured hundred rifles, guns and huge explosive weapons.The arms were transported in three carts to the cave of Kappatgudda. The militant nationalists, KappatappaBele of Hirevaddatti and Panchakshri Hiremath of Koppal were appointed to safe



Cover Page



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guard these weapons and authorized them to supply the needed arms to the freedom fighters to intensify the border movement against the forces of the Nizam State.

For looting the police station of Kuknur, the Nizam police filed a criminal case against hundred congress workers of Mundaragi camp in the J.M.F., Court Koppal on 21st Aridibehest, 1357 Fasli¹² under the sections 368, 33 and 37 of the Defence Act of the government of Hyderabad (vide Judicial records in appendices). The case was struck off by the Munsiff MoulviKhaja Mohamad Abdul BagiSaheb after Police Action i.e., on 31st Teer, 1358 Fasli.

Summing Up

The Mundargi camp militant nationalists also raided on Ylburga, Hallikeri and went underground to assist the nationalists working in different military camps situated on the border lines of Telangana. In Hyderabad Karnataka, the camp workers liberated 14 villages near by Ittigi and Shantagiri (Teleyal Mugali, Sarapur, setup a parallel government and helped the villagers to run the administration independently. The Union Government of India Commenced Police Action against Hyderabad on 13th September 1948 at 04.00 early in the morning. Union forces pierced Hyderabad borders at eight different points. After five days Major General of Indian troops J N Choudhary accepted the surrender of the Nizam's State forces from El-Edroos, Commander of the operation on the Nizam's side. On 20th of September the tricolour flag was officially unfurled in Hyderabad.

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Cover Page



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