

A Study of
Communal Conflict and Peace Initiatives in Hyderabad:
Past and Present

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Part I

Communal Conflict and Peace Initiatives in Hyderabad Deccan: The Historical Context

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In the last decade or so, communalism has come to be a major issue of concern when examining the Indian social fabric. Many efforts have been made to understand the various nuances of the problem. While the roots of present-day communal conflicts and riots could be traced to socio-economic and political causes, communalism has its roots in history. Colonialist policies, modernization, mass politics, competition, identity and culture are the different facets of this debate.

In Hyderabad, Hindu-Muslim relations have a long history, spread over four centuries. The immediate history of the last five decades is particularly significant to understand the issue of communalism in Hyderabad.

In the following pages, an attempt has been made to trace the roots of the communal conflict in Hyderabad. Some basic questions sought to be answered are: How did the Muslims arrive in Deccan? How was their settling down in the South different from their engagements in North India? How did the Hindus react to the new arrivals? How did the Muslims become a part of the Deccan and how did a composite culture develop?

The study is divided into five parts. Part I is about the first Muslim kingdom of the South, covering Allauddin Khilji's arrival and Mohammed Bin Tughlaq's involvement in the Deccan, up to the establishment of the Bahmani Kingdom and its achievements. Part II deals with Hindu-Muslim interactions and the growth of a composite culture in the Qutub Shahi period. Part III discusses the role of the Moghals in the Deccan and the establishment of the Asaf Jahi dynasty. This part covers the period up to 1900 A.D. Part IV is an extension of Part III, and starts from 1900 and covers the main events till 1947, including the communal conflicts in Hyderabad. This period was very significant not only from the perspective of Hindu-Muslim relationship and communal conflicts, but also when it came to the formation of the Hyderabad State. Part V takes into account the main events and trends from 1947 onwards. This section highlights the various important reasons for the subsequent communal conflicts and riots in Hyderabad, providing a broad context in which one can try to understand the communal conflicts in present-day Hyderabad.

This brief historical survey is largely based on secondary sources. The study focuses on providing factual details rather than an analysis. It attempts to outline each perspective and position independently. The terms and statements like communalism in medieval history, Muslim invaders, demolition of temples, Hindu resistance, forceful conversions and even composite culture were controversial because of the diverse interpretations given by Hindu, Muslim, British, Leftist and Rightist historians. This study does not go into these controversies, but tries to honestly present the contrary perspectives.

The Bahmanis of Gulbarga

The Deccan region, during the reign of Sultan Allauddin Khilji, saw the arrival of Muslims as soldiers and rulers. A few of the soldiers accompanying Allauddin and Mallik Kafur's army expeditions in the Deccan settled in the plateau and with it social interaction with the local communities began. Allauddin Khilji's policies influenced the political, social and economic life of the people in the Deccan. The Muslim influence was further strengthened during the rule of Sultan Mohammed Bin Tughlak, who ruled from 1325 to 1352 A.D. for a period of 27 years. When he decided to shift his capital from Delhi to Daulatabad, many of the inhabitants of Delhi left their homes and came to Daulatabad. Those who immigrated to the Deccan tried to settle down in the new capital pursued various professions and established many institutions, structures and practices similar to those existed in Delhi. With this, a new chapter began in the socio-political and cultural history of the Deccan.

The emerging Hindu-Muslim interaction in the Deccan can be seen in the circumstances in which Hassan Gangu founded the Bahmani Kingdom. Allauddin Hassan was born in 1290 A.D. into the noble family of Ghor. Political turmoils ruined the family, which forced him to go to Multan. From Multan he came to Delhi where on the banks of the Yamuna he was met by a brahmin astrologer, Gango Pandit, who invited him to be his guest. Gango Pandit, to support Hassan gave him a piece of land, a pair of oxen and two labourers to assist him. While working in the fields one day, Hassan discovered a treasure and informed the Pandit immediately. The Pandit, a royal astrologer, who was close to Mohammed Bin Tughlak, the heir prince, was impressed by Hassan's honesty and informed him about this incident. Tughlak, in turn, informed his father, the king, Ghyas Uddin Tughlak (1320–1325 A.D.). The king immediately made him an officer, putting him in charge of one-hundred horses.

Hassan adapted Gango's name out of gratefulness since the Pandit supported him in his hard times. Their friendship continued and turned out to be a legend in the history of Hindu-Muslim relationship.

The Bahmani Kings replaced the Chalukyas and the Rostrakutas in the Deccan. They ruled for nearly 170 years, without any dynastic changes. This was in complete contrast to northern India, where many dynasties changed hands during the period. The Turks were replaced by the Khiljis, who were replaced by the Tughlaks. The uninterrupted Bahmani rule was mainly due to their adoption of the Hindu system of lineal succession, which was respected by the nobles and the people. It assured security and stability to the people and provided the necessary conditions for the living, which in turn inspired the growth of art and culture and all round development.

The first capital of the Bahmanis was Daulatabad, which was shifted to Gulbarga and finally to Bidar in 1430 A.D. (Chopra, 1979)

Composition of Population

The most salient feature of the social and political life of the Deccan in the fifteenth century is the division of the elites into a number of groups. "There was, firstly the basic Hindu element most of which belonged to the so-called Dravidian stock with a leaven of fair-

complexioned aryans. They were divided into castes and sub-castes, much in the fashion of Hindu castes in the rest of India. As elsewhere, the Brahmans were the highest in the hierarchy. (Then) There were the progeny of the Muslims who came to Deccan either as soldiers or administrators along with the Khiljis and the Tughlaqs, who made the Deccan their home. They mostly settled down in the political centers of the region such as Daulatabad, Gulbarga and Bidar, rather strangely, they came to call themselves “Dakhnis” par excellence to the exclusion of other elements. The third element of the population were the African Habashish who crossed the Arabian Sea to the western Bahmani posts like Chaul and Dabhol; as they were small in number, they allied themselves with one group or another, and, in the fifteenth century, they took their umbrage under the Dakhani roof. The fourth and increasingly important element of the population was the so-called afaqis or gharibs who immigrated to the Deccan from Iran, Iraq, Khurasan and neighboring regions. Their language, which was mostly Persian, their way of life and even their Shia faith of Islam differentiated them not only from the Hindus but also from the so-called Dakhnis and Habashis who belonged mostly to the Sunni persuasion. The independence of the Deccan in 1346 had virtually put an end to an influx of the Muslim population from the north but there was no political hindrance to the migration of overseas men of learning, merchants and adventurers who came to the Deccan with their martial traditions and administrative background and began to make their mark in every walk of life to the chagrin of the Dakhnis and the Habashis.” (Nizami, p.222, 1975,)

This composition of the population and constant immigration of foreigners had a decided effect upon the culture and future history of the Deccan. Along with foreign influences, we find the native Hindu also influencing the cultural structure of the Bahmanis. The third king, Mujahid, was affectionately called by the Hindu sobriquet “Balwant” or ‘the strong’ by his subjects. Moreover, although the time had not arrived for inter-marriages between the Muslims and the Hindus, which was found in the reign of Firoz later, the relations between the upholders of the two great cultures must have been excellent, and the increasing influence of Hindu culture on the Bahmanis was becoming visible.

The twenty-two year period between the death of Muhammed- I and the accession of Firoz is a period of struggle between the cultures emerging into an attempted synthesis of the various cultural elements, including Hindu, the foreign influences represented by the afaqis, who were mostly Iranians and Iraqis, and the northern or Tughlaq tradition represented by the ‘Dakhnis’.(Sherwani, p.81, 1985)

But after the death of Feroz, the eighth king, in 1422 A.D, Ahmad Shah Wali Bahmani’s (who ruled from 1422–1436A.D) policies proved to be a turning point in the ethnic structure and the socio-cultural and religious life of the Deccan. The ‘pro-alien’ policies of Ahmad Shah and his successor not only changed the course of Bahmani history, but also influenced the successor States (Siddiqui, p.35, 1996). He “reversed the policy of his predecessors by giving preference in his administrative appointment to foreigners over Indian nobles.” (*Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment*, Aziz Ahmed, p. 48, 1964, as quoted by Siddiqui, M. Sulaman).

Role of Sufis

One group of people who had a strong influence in the Deccan is the Sufis. They played an important role not only in the lives of the commoners but also in the lives of the nobility. It is said that Nizam-Ud-Din Auliya of Delhi had deputed a few of his *murids* and *khulafa* to

Daulatabad much before it was converted to a capital by Mohammed Bin Tughlaq. As a result, a Muslim settlement consisting of Turks, Afghans, and Persians came into existence. When the capital was shifted to Daulatabad, many Sufis also migrated from Delhi. Most of them belonged to the Chisti order. This migration eventually destroyed the well-set Chisti organization in North India, but established the same in Deccan, and laid the foundation for the Sufi influences and the evolving socio-cultural forms.

When the Bahmani Kingdom emerged, the attitude of the new masters was different vis-à-vis the Ulema and the Sufis. The founder of the Bahmani Kingdom and his successors needed the support of all classes of people, specially the religious elite, to sustain their rule. It would probably be right to presume that the Ulema may not have backed the usurpers, as their loyalties must have continued to rest with their old master. Thus the choice of the Bahmani rulers was limited and they had therefore to look towards the Sufis for support. The Ulemas continued to be part of Bahmani Society, but their status was quite different from those of the Sufis. They were government servants in the department of judiciary. The Sufis now operated from a position of dominance. From the very beginning of their reign until its end, Bahmani rulers had played an active role in determining the social fabric. (Siddiqui, pp. 34-35, 1996)

Society

The Muslim society comprised government officers, Ulemas or religious leaders, traders and the slaves. Excepting the slaves, the other classes were well off. Most of the nobles lived luxurious lives; they also patronized art and education. The slaves led a miserable life, but some of them like Yousuf Adil Khan, Malik Hasan and Qasim Barid attained high positions by sheer dint of merit. Muslim women were, however, required to observe *pardah*. The Hindu and Muslim middle classes, which comprised traders, teachers, qazis, etc., were well off too. They were well dressed, ate well and kept horses and servants. The condition of the lower classes comprising peasants, artisans and labourers was miserable. It seems, however, that those engaged in cottage industries and such other vocations were a little better off.

The pattern of Hindu society in the South was different from that of the North. Brahmans in the South were not only spiritual leaders but also served as ministers, artisans, weavers, etc. The lowest class comprised jugglers, jogis, etc. Excepting the Brahmans there were no such restrictions among the other castes. Divorce was allowed on certain conditions such as physical disability, impotence etc. Husband too could seek a divorce if the wife was unchaste or failed to give birth to a son. Remarriage of widows was prohibited. But was permitted in lower classes. The custom of sati was prevalent. The system of dowry was prevalent, particularly among higher classes.

Hinduism in the south was divided into two main sects: Saivism and Vaishnavism. Both these sects laid stress on the "spiritual equality of all castes, the worship of idols, pilgrimages, suppression of desires, devotion and respect for animal life". The Bhakti movement, which was led in the South by Shankaracharya, Nathamuni, Ramanuja and Nimbarka was aimed at reforming the Hindu society. It condemned the caste system and unnecessary rituals, laid stress on the unity of Godhead and brotherhood of man. Jnaneshwar, a leading saint of the Bhakti movement, played a leading role in demolishing social and religious barriers. Nath Sampradaya was another sect of the Hindu Bhakti cult, which flourished in Srisailem (Kurnool District).

The impact of Islam was most discernible in the Lingayat movement, which was started in Karnataka by Basava in the 12th century A.D. Like the Bhakti movement, it advocated one God, and condemned rituals and discrimination on the basis of caste. But it went a step further and wanted its followers to adopt simple marriage rites and give up the cremation, and purificatory death ceremonies. This movement spread with rapidity during the Bahmani period. The settlement of a large number of Muslims in the south gave a further impetus to this movement, which led to softening of the rigidity of the caste system and re-emphasis on the oneness of God. (Chopra , pp.195–198,1979)

Thus it can be seen that life in the Bahmani Kingdom was devoid of religious strife. Both religious groups allowed each other's influences to take root. This attitude helped in the emergence of a composite culture.

Hindu Sacred Places

In spite of the ravages of Allauddin Khilji and Malik Kafur in the Deccan and the continuous rule of the Bahmanis, Bahmani successor States, Mughals and Asaf Jahs, lasting for seven centuries, the vast monuments of ancient Deccan remained intact. The great temples of Tanjore and Gangakandacholapuram constructed by Rajaraja the Great (985–1034 A.D.) and Rajendra (1018-1052 A.D.), the wonderful temples at Belur Samastipur, the seven Pagodas at Mahabalipuram constructed as early as the seventh century, the temples of Madurai, the great show pieces of Ellora—these great relics in stone and paint stand today in all their glory within a short distance from Daulatabad, which was ruled by Muslim dynasties for seven centuries.

Under the Bahmani rule the Hindu tirthas and mathas flourished, demonstrating a spirit of cultural compromise, which was the hallmark of the fifteenth century Deccan. Nasik and Triambak are two great places of pilgrimage for the devout Hindus, while Pandharpur was the great centre of the Bhakti movement in western India. It may be remarked that out of the twelve Jyotirlingas, five were located in the Bahmani Kingdom.

Vijayanagar Empire

When discussing the Bahmani Kingdom, it is necessary to take into account the history of Vijayanagar Empire, since both influenced each other. The Bahmanis were Muslims, while the Vijayanagar Kings were Hindus. Their engagements with each other were largely conflictual in nature, which influenced the cultural environment of the day. But the important point to be observed is that despite their conflicts they did not mistreat the people of the other faith, which shows that their strife was political and not religious.

The Vijayanagar Kingdom was established in 1336 A.D.—ten years before the Bahmani Kingdom came into existence. This kingdom emerged due to the political chaos, which resulted after Mohammad Bin Tughlaq's subjugation of the southern States. Also the harsh policies of the Delhi king made the people revolt against his rule. There were many revolts in the south and territories became independent, expelling the Muslims. The Hindus of Tiling and Karnatak, most of who belonged to the Saiva sect, were the first to rise in rebellion against the tyranny of the Muslims. (Stein,1993) Meanwhile, the Delhi Sultan did not like to involve the imperial forces in such a distant and long-drawn out battle and thought it prudent to appoint a person of his choice. There were two brothers Harihara and Bukka at his court. The Sultan appointed Harihara ruler of the province. (Chopra, p. 28,1979). According to one

source, the two brothers were forcefully converted to Islam, but later, under the influence of their spiritual and temporal teacher, Vidyaranya, they were reconverted to Hinduism. “Thus it happened that the trusted Muslim agents of the Sultan of Delhi, who were sent to restore his power in the Deccan, turned out to be the founder(s) of one of the greatest Hindu States of history, which later distinguished itself pre-eminently in the defence of ancient Hindu culture against the onslaughts of Islam. After establishing their sway over Kampili at first for the Sultan and conquering more territory in the same manner, the two Sangama brothers returned to the Hindu fold, proclaimed their independence and founded a new city opposite to Anegondi on the South bank of the Tungabhadra to which they gave the significant names Vijaya Nagara (City of Victory) and Vidyanagara (City of Learning)....” (Sastri, p. 239,1966)

Against this background, it appears that the Vijayanagar Kingdom was anti-Muslim, but the story of Parthal (the daughter of a goldsmith) suggests that there were close cultural ties between the two kingdoms: “When Devaraya II succeeded to the *gaddi* (throne) of Vijayanagar in 1425–26, he was a young man in the prime of his life. When he heard that the youthful daughter of the goldsmith was not only beautiful of face but also adept in music and song, he fell in love with her and wanted to possess her by all means in his power. He sent royal messengers to the poor goldsmith asking the hand of his daughter and a request, which was virtually an order, to send her to the capital at once. But Parthal would have none of it, for she said that whoever once entered the Raja’s harem never returned to a free atmosphere. This enraged the Raya and although the doab was then within the jurisdiction of Taj-uddin Firoz Shah Bahmani (1397–1420) he crossed the Tungabhadra and advanced towards Mudgal in order to take possession of the citadel as well as Parthal. Firoz retaliated and not merely threw the Vijayanagar army outside the doab but actually attacked the capital of the southern kingdom. He forced the Raya to sue for peace and agree to marry his daughter to the sultan. When it was decided that the Sultan himself should go to Vijayanagar to fetch the bride, the whole distance of twenty-one miles between his camp and the capital was turned into a vast city with Hindus and Muslims jostling with one another and shops of all descriptions dealing with myraid ware sprang up on both sides of the long route. The Sultan was (a) guest in the palace of his Hindu father-in-law for four days, and when he returned to his own capital Gulbarga he summoned Parthal and got her married to his son and heir, Hasan Khan. Parthal’s episode is a pointer to the way the cultural wind of the Deccan was blowing in the early years of the fifteenth century.” (Briggs p. 378; the story of Parthal mentioned in “The cultural picture of the Deccan in the 15th century”, Sherwani, in *Medieval India, A Miscellany*, Vol. 3)

Similarly, Devaraya’s (1425–1447 A.D.) decision to have Muslims in his army is another example of their acceptance. “In 1442 he (Devaraya) summoned his privy council and posed the question why the Vijayanagar forces had to eat the humble pie whenever they met the Bahmanis on the field of battle although his Kingdom was more resourceful and controlled a wider area than the Bahmanis. On pondering over the problem, the council split into two groups, the men of the sword and the men of religion. One group said that the world was passing through the Kaliyuga, irreligion was the order of the day and there was no hope for the true faith to prosper till the present *yuga* had passed away. The other group was more realistic and perhaps more optimistic. It averred that the Muslims were experts in the arts of war, were fine horsemen and bowmen, and if the Raya were to recruit Muslims in his army it would turn the scales. Devaraya was struck by the logic of this reply and ordered the recruitment of Muslim soldiers, both officers and men, in his army. At the same time he ordered the construction of mosque in the capital and allowed the Muslims freedom to carry

on their religious duties without let or hindrances. The question now arose whether the new recruits would have to bow before the Raya when he sat in State, for a Muslim bowed only before the Almighty. A kind of compromise was therefore struck and (the) masnad was spread by the side of the royal gaddi and a copy of the Quran placed on it so that the Muslim soldiers while bowing should feel that they were not making obeisance before a human mortal but the word of God".(Ibid.)

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The Qutub Shahs of Golkonda

The Bahmani Kingdom reached its zenith when Mahmood Gawan was the Prime Minister. He was an Iranian and rose to the highest office with his abilities. He served the Bahmanis for 30 years. His premiership saw the Bahmani State attain a position unequalled in the whole of its history. Apart from the purely cultural aspects of his term of office, the frontiers of the Kingdom were made secure by the effective occupation of many territories and, for the first time, the frontiers of the Bahmani realm extended from Arabian sea to the present day Bay of Bengal.He introduced many reforms in administration to manage the vast empire. He divided the empire into eight provinces and revolutionized the whole system of military administration. He was one of the first ministers in Medieval India to order a systematic measurement of land, fixing the boundaries of villages and towns and making a thorough enquiry into the assessment of revenue. He made it easy to determine the income of the State to furnish a record of rights, forestalling Raja Todar Mal's reforms by a century. He also tried to curb the power of the nobles and thereby raise the status of the royal government at the centre.

He recruited an equal number from the established groups of habashis and dakhnis and the newcomers – Iranians, Circasians and Central Asian immigrants – into the group of royal bodyguards, to balance the powers of these groups. In the same way, while filling the new governorship, he took care not to show any preference for one party against another.

His reforms improved the State machinery but reduced the powers of the nobles and ambitious groups. This made them jealous of his power and influence. They started influencing the king, who was a young man of twenty-eight, against him. They succeeded in forging a letter, which made the king, Mohammad Shah, order his execution. Thus Mahmood Gawan was killed in 1481 at the age of 73.

After Mahmood Gawan's death, there was no one in the Kingdom who wished to continue with his administrative system, either for fear that he too might meet the same fate like Gawan or else owing to the purely selfish reason of gaining ground for himself and his party. The political equilibrium which had been created was rudely upset, and the new government became subservient to the interests of one party, with the result that the land fell back to a state of nature and the kingdom collapsed. (Sherwani, 1974)

The Bahmani Kingdom disintegrated into five independent principalities, viz., the Adil Shahi dynasty of Bijapur, the Imad Shahi dynasty of Berar, the Nizam Shahi dynasty of Ahmad Nagar, the Qutub Shahi dynasty of Golkonda, and the Barid Shahi dynasty of Bidar.

The administration of the Bahmanis was based on the pattern of the Delhi Sultanate. The king was at the apex and enjoyed absolute powers. The Imad Shahi and Barid Shahi dynasties also adopted this pattern. The State, during the Nizam Shahi period, was theocratic in nature. All the necessary elements of theocracy – the supreme leader representing the sovereignty of God and governance defined by spiritual leaders in accordance with the divine law – were present. The administrative setup in the Bijapur kingdom was on the same pattern as in its sister sultanate of Ahmad Nagar. The Qutub Shahi Sultan, like his counterparts in the other Deccan Kingdoms, was the pivot of the administration and enjoyed absolute executive, judicial and military powers. All these administrative systems inherited the traditions of the parent State, the Bahmani, with minor variations.

The cultural life in these five kingdoms was influenced by their new policy of closeness to the locals, which led to further cultural synthesis. The contemporary Moghal Empire under Akbar was also influenced by their approaches and perspectives. Out of these five, two kingdoms, that of Bijapur and Golkonda, gained prominence for cultural synthesis.

The Adil Shahi Sultan of Bijapur did not interfere in the life of the Hindus, who engaged in their professions without any hindrance. The caste system was observed rigorously and the Brahmans, the priestly class, enjoyed special privileges. The cordial relations between the Hindus and the Muslims continued even after the rise of Shivaji, who never departed from his moral code and did not plunder the Muslim shrines or places of worship; in fact he employed a large number of Muslims in his army.

Ali Adil Shah was a great admirer of Hindu philosophy and conversed with scholars and 'sanyasis' to learn the fundamentals of this religion, like Darashikoh in the North. Ibrahim II's liberal nature won him the title of *Jagatguru*. The Marathas served the Adil Shahis with

loyalty and devotion and extended the sway of the Adil Shahi kingdom to distant lands. It has been rightly said that the “Marathas were to Adil Shahi Sultanate what the Rajputs were to the Mughal Empire”.(Chopra,1979)

The fall of the Kakatiya dynasty in 1323 A.D. was a major catastrophe in the history of Andhra, as well as the Deccan. The overthrow of the Hindu rule and its substitution by Muslim hegemony was not a mere political change. The Muslim conquest resulted in a violent shake-up of the entire social fabric. The ancient institutions of the land were transformed into new ones. This created a strong resistance movement among the Hindus against the Muslims. As a result, within four years of the fall of the Kakatiya Kingdom, the coastal districts of Andhra were liberated and Muslims were driven out. The leaders of this movement were three generals of the fallen Kakatiya Empire, who fought under the leadership of Prolaya Nayaka (1325–1333 A.D.) and later his cousin brother Kapaya Nayaka (1333–1368 A.D.). Seeing these successful revolts, the governor of Deccan, Malik Bahauddin revolted against Delhi; he was later given shelter by the Kampili King. When Hassan Gangu revolted against Delhi, Kapaya assisted him with a contingent of 15000 infantry. In the wars of the Bhamanis, the Vellama chieftans of Nalgonda became allies of the Bahmanis, whereas Kapaya and the other Reddy kings of the coastal areas later became allies of the Rayas of Vijaynagar. The Rayas invaded the Telangana territories of Vellamas, since the latter were the allies of their opponents. Later Hassan Gangu developed differences with Kapaya, his ally, and invaded his territory. (Sekharam,1973)

These political events covering a span of hundred years saw a change in the reactions of the Hindus, who initially opposed the Muslim invading forces. They realized that in these dynastic fights religion played a secondary role; further the Muslims had become a new social reality to be accepted. This changed the attitude towards Muslim government and Muslims.

When the Qutub Shahs established themselves as an independent kingdom in 1512 A.D., in the Telengana region, after 200 years of Khilji and Tughlaq's invasion and 170 years of Bhamani rule, the conflict between the Hindus and Muslims had already reduced. This factor helped both communities to forge closer ties under the rule of the new kings.

The Qutub Shahs

The Qutub Shahs ruled for 175 years (1512–1687 A.D), through seven kings. Sultan Quli Qutbul Mulk (1512–1543 A.D), the founder of the Qutub Shahi dynasty, was a scion of the royal family of Hamdan and a survivor of the Qara Qyunlu tribe (Black Sheep) of Turkestan. His tribe was subjugated by the rival group of Aq Qyunlu tribe (White Sheep). Factional fights between the two led to the occupation of the Kingdom of Qara Qyunlu and the murder of almost all the male members of the tribe. Under such perilous circumstances, Sultan Quli fled to India. He came to seek his fortune in the Deccan towards the close of Mohammad Shah Bahmani's reign and settled down at Bidar, the capital of the Kingdom. He was graciously received by Mohammad Shah, and, in course of time, was enlisted in the Royal Body Guard. One of his intrepid acts in a hunting expedition resulted in his being presented with the district of Warangal as a jagir and 150 Arab horses in harness. He was awarded the title 'Khawas Khan' in 1487 A.D., when he saved the life of the Sultan from the rebellious Dakhnis in the fort. A rebellion in Konkan, led by Bahadur Gilani, was suppressed by him. This won him the title 'Qutbul-Mulk' or 'the pillar of the State'. On his return to

Bidar, he was granted the title 'Amirul Umara' and appointed as *tarafdar* or governor of Telangana, along with the fort of Golkonda.

As a result of the disruption of the Bahmani Kingdom following the murder of Mahmud Gawan, Sultan Quli's patron, province after province broke away from the centre. Bijapur, Ahmad Nagar and Berar asserted their independence as early as 1489 A.D. Sultan Quli waited until 1512 A.D., growing more and more powerful. (Satyanarayana, p. 442, 1983)

Sultan Quli controlled the province of Telangana for nearly 50 years, first as a general or governor for 24 years and later as an independent king for 26 years. During this period, he extended the boundaries up to the seaport of Masulipatnam, and 60 to 70 forts and fortified towns were added to the kingdom.

His son Jamsheed murdered Sultan Quli and ruled for seven years. Jamsheed was learned in many ways. After his death, power struggles among the nobles began. "Some of them, headed by the minister, Jagadeva Rao, and supported by all the *naikwaris* (Hindu soldiery) invited Ibrahim, the youngest brother of Jamsheed, who was taking shelter at Vijayanagar for 7 years when RamaRaj was the ruler. Ibrahim returned to Golkonda with 7000 troops, accompanied by RamaRaj up to a spot 25 miles from Vijaya Nagar". At Kovilkonda, "...He was met by a delegation representing all classes of the populations, Hindu and Muslim, and they swore on their honor and their wives' honor that they would only recognize *Hazarath Khwaja – Bandha – Musnad –i-Ali Mansub-i-Moale Mali Ibrahim Shah Qutubul Mulk Vodeya.*" (Sherwani, p.428, 1974 – as referred in Satyanarayana, 1983.).

This background gives the reader some idea about the nature of Hindu–Muslim relationship that existed then. The cordial environment was further strengthened by Ibrahim and Mohammad Quli Qutub Shah along with the other kings. Ibrahim Qutub Shah, who is known in Andhra as 'Malkibharam', was the real architect of the Golkonda kingdom. He ruled the kingdom for 30 years from 1550–1580 A.D. He promoted the local language, Telugu, and patronized Telugu scholars and poets like Telaganna and Gangadhara, who dedicated their works to the king.

The next period of 40 years led by Ibrahim's son and grandson was an era of peace, prosperity and cultural synthesis. Ibrahim's son, Mohammed Quli, born to him and Bhagirati, his wife and former princess of Vijayanagar, succeeded him. Mohammed Quli was a great writer and builder. The lay out of the city of Hyderabad was a great achievement of his regime. Linked to his life is also the legend of Bhagmathi.

Abul Hasan Qutub Shah (1672–1687 A.D.) was the seventh and the last ruler of Golkonda. He was popularly known as Tanashah in Deccan. He had a broader vision and administrative experience of a high order. He handled domestic as well as foreign affairs so successfully, that it took even the Moghal Government by surprise. Aurangzeb hated him for his successful resistance of the Moghals and also for his closeness with the Hindu nobility. The Moghal King expressed his feelings in a letter to his envoy at the Golkonda court: "This luckless wretch (Abul Hasan Qutub Shah) has given the supreme power in his State to a kafir and made Sayyid, Shaiks and scholars subject to that man. He has publicly allowed all kinds of sin and vice, viz., taverns, brothels and gambling houses. He himself is day and night sunk in the deadly sins through his excessive devotion to drink, and fails to distinguish between Islam and Infidelity, justice and operation, sin and piety. By refusing to respect God's commands and prohibitions, by sending aid to infidel powers and by promising one lakh of

huns to the Kafir Shambuji, he has made himself accused before God and man.” (Quoted in .Chopra p.134,1979)

Aurangzeb’s charges against Hasan were the following: appointment of Madanna as the Prime Minister; subjecting Muslims to Madanna’s un-Islamic rule; enforcing Hindu rule in place of an Islamic one; toleration of vices and immorality; sex indulgence; alliance with the Marathas. The terms of the surrender handed over to Hasan were: One crore and twenty lakhs for settlement of arrears, annual payment of 2 lakhs of huns as *peshkash*, removal of Akkana and Madanna from State service.(Satyanarayana, p. 458,1983). This, on one hand, reveals Aurangzeb’s mentality and jealousy and his misinformation campaign. On the other hand, it reveals the state of affairs in Golkonda and the Hindu–Muslim amity that flourished.

Thus Golkonda fell in 1687 A.D. to the Moghals and the history of the Qutub Shahi dynasty came to an end with far-reaching consequences. What happened to Hyderabad at the hands of the Moghal forces is depicted by Siddiqui: “It was really a heart-rending spectacle – thousands of peaceful citizens, men, women and children, fled pell-mell in various directions to save the life and honor. Purdah ladies found no time to conceal themselves in veil; most of them were either murdered or manhandled, and houses were set on fire... it was the greatest calamity which had ever befallen to (sic) the unfortunate city of Hyderabad... Rich property to the estimate of four to five crores was already plundered and carried away.”(Siddiqui. p. 266,1956)

But Aurangzeb, who succeeded in liquidating the Golkonda Kingdom and in merging it with his vast empire, had no time to consolidate his gains. The continuous warfare that he carried on relentlessly against the Marathas gave him no leisure to set up a stable administrative machinery in the conquered territory. The pace of cultural progress was halted for years and the grip on the East India Company at Masulipatnam and Madras relaxed; as a result the Company became the master of the sub-continent in due course. (Sarma, p.114,1995)

Society

During the Bahmani rule, the Telugu society had to face the onslaught of an invading race and religion bent upon expansionism. The Reddy and Vellama rulers, during this period, did their best to protect the society, its age-old traditions, its language and literature. However, with the end of the Bahmani rule, the aggression of the invaders mellowed down. The initial vehemence and confrontation of the Islamic rulers yielded to attempts at conciliation and co-existence between the locals and the Muslim newcomers. This attempt was quite evident in the Qutub Shahi administration, which was responsive to the march of time and the local conditions. The Qutub Shahs showed no discrimination between the Hindus and the Muslims in the matter of appointments to high posts. Despite constant clashes with Vijayanagar, Sultan Quli Qutubul Mulk allowed RamaRaj to hold a high position in the Kingdom. Under Jamsheed’s rule, Jagdeva Rao rose to an eminent position. Murahari Rao rose to great heights of power during Ibrahim’s rule. When Abdulla was the ruler, the Brahmins had considerable influence on the administration. Madanna, Abul Hasan’s Prime Minister, wielded enormous power; his brother, Akkana, was the minister in charge of the armed forces. One of his nephews, Linganna, was the *tarafdar* of Poonamalle, and later the governor of the army; and a third, Gopanna, the revenue officer of Bhadrachalam.(Satyanarayana,1983)

The Hindu subjects and their interests were as carefully protected as those of the Muslims. The Hindus enjoyed full security of life and property, As for religion, the Qutub Shahs adopted a policy of tolerance and even patronization of Hinduism and the Hindu subjects.

As far as conversions are concerned, there is no authority to prove that forcible conversions to Islam took place on a large scale in the Kingdom of Golkonda. “(The Qutub Shahi Kings) believed that it was expedient to allow a large measure of freedom to the Hindus, who formed the bulk of the people subject to their rule, so that they might establish their power on firm and lasting foundations. This fact perhaps explains why they condemned the acts of intolerance perpetrated occasionally by some of their over-zealous subordinates.”(Zore, pp.2–3,1962)

The Qutub Shahs paid equal attention to the administration of justice, an essential part of civil administration. Sufis and Kazis and Hindu Pandits were invited to attend the courts of justice and give their judgments according to their respective religious laws. Village panchayats, which were in vogue from time immemorial, were also encouraged to function. However, punishments for criminal offences were very harsh.

The society at the time of the downfall of the Bahmani kingdom was heterogeneous in character. The two main constituents of it were the foreign immigrants called the Afaqis and the local populace. The Afaqis, who had migrated from different parts of central and western Asia, were mostly Muslims by religion. Nusrati, the court poet of Ali Adil Shah II, in his *Masnavi*,(a form of urdu poetry) *Alinama*, mentioned the various races and creeds of these foreigners. According to him, the Bijapur army consisted of immigrants from the Moghal, Chughtai, Kazalbash, Uzbek, Quamdari, Kabuli, Qurasani, Asfahani, Sabzavari, Bouqari, Harati, Tusi, Lari, Turk, Garji, Harvi and Azari stocks. The author of *Tarikh-e-sultan*, Muhamad Qutub Shah, mentioned that the same applied to the Qutub Shahi Kingdom too. According to him, there was a continuous inflow of people from Turkistan, Khurasan, Arabia and other lands into the Qutub Shahi Kingdom.

The other constituent of the society, which formed the majority, consisted of the local populace, both Muslims and Hindus. The division of society did not stop there, but each had a number of subdivisions according to their origins, their sects, sub-sects and castes. The Muslims were divided mainly into two sects, the sunnis and the shias, while the Hindus, besides the four major castes, were divided into a number of sub-castes and tribes.

In spite of this heterogeneity, the culture which bound the society was based on religious tolerance, broad mindedness and a humane outlook. The Muslims and Hindus borrowed heavily from each other’s cultural traditions. The rulers, especially those of Bijapur and Golkonda, encouraged this attitude and the nobles and the sufis supported it. The literature, architecture, social and religious rituals and ceremonies of the period thus show a happy fusion of foreign and local traditions.

The Qutub Shahi Sultans encouraged learned men and scholars to settle in their dominions by bestowing stipends and pensions on them. Merchants and soldiers were also received with open arms. This interaction of cultures and intimate relationship led to the birth of what is known as Deccani Urdu.

The rulers encouraged the development of the local language, Telugu, besides the Deccani Urdu. Ibrahim Qutub Shah, who lived in Vijayanagar for seven years, was loved by the

Telugu poets so much that a number of Telugu poems were written in his praise, mentioning him as 'Malkibharam' (nativisation of Malik Ibrahim). Addanki Gangadhara Kavi dedicated his *Tapati Swayamvaram Upakhyanamu* (1560 A.D.), a *prabandha* in five cantos, to Ibrahim. The poet eulogises Malkibharam as Rama reborn.

Singala Charya, author of twenty works, was richly rewarded by Ibrahim. The poet wrote that he received elephants, white umbrellas, pearls, silk and satin robes, palanquins and *agraharas* from Ibrahim Qutub Shah. Kandukuri Rudraya, another poet, was gifted a village on the Paleru river near Kandukuru in Nellore district. The village still has an inscription which mentions this grant. It was not only Ibrahim who adopted this policy, but the other Sultans also did the same.

Ramdas (Gopanna), who lived during the rule of Abul Hasan, wrote a number of poetical works and songs in praise of his deity, Sri Rama. He regarded Abul Hasan 'a saint born as a Mussalman'.

The interaction between the Telugu poets and the poets of the other languages resulted in a happy exchange of thoughts. A number of Muslim poets borrowed subjects from the Hindu mythology and traditions, which became the themes of their poems, while the Hindu poets borrowed from the Muslim lore. The Telugu literature of the period boasts of poems written on purely Muslim subjects such as the tragedy of Karbala. The songs connected with Muharram formed a part of the Telugu folk literature.

In Ibrahim Qutub Shah's time, the tradition of bilingual, i.e. both in Persian and in Telugu, announcements and *farmans* had already started. It is said that the Kings were fluent in Telugu, Persian and Deccani.(Sherwani,1967)

The Muslim scholars, sufis, poets and even the sultans adopted Deccani as their language. Deccani itself was a happy combination of all the languages spoken during the period by the foreign immigrants as well as the local people. Ibrahim Adil Shah of Bijapur even adopted Deccani as the court language. The sufis of the Deccani kingdoms, especially of Bijapur and Golkonda, adopted this language for their works. For example, Shah Miranji and his disciple Shah Burhanuddin Janam composed poems in Deccani. Likewise, the Sufis of Golkonda adopted Deccani Urdu for their writings. Shah Raza, a prominent sufi of Abul Hassan's period, wrote a long poem, *Sohagan Nama* in Deccani, adapting the style of the local folksongs.

The Qutub Shahi rulers did not confine their patronage to Deccani and Telugu but also extended it to other languages such as Arabic and Persian, which was their mother tongue. The first Persian work of the period of Sultan Quli Qutub Shah is *Marghul-ul-Qulul* by Hasan Tibbisi. He followed it up by *Saidiyah* or *The Book of the Game*, in Ibrahim's reign. Under later kings, many works were written in Persian and Persian poets encouraged and supported.

In Bijapur, Ibrahim Adil Shah went a step ahead. He composed a book of songs entitled *Kitab-e-Nauras*. As a musician, he made no secret of his respect for Saraswati, the patron deity of music, and Ganapati, the God of wisdom. But, while expressing his devotion to the Hindu deities, he also bestows high praise on Prophet Muhamad and Khwaja Bande Nawaz of Gulbarga. The socio-cultural life of the people in the Deccani States was thus based on a common understanding. This admixture of different cultures of the land resulted in what is known as Deccani culture.(Sarma,1995)

It was Mohammed Quli Qutub Shah, the fourth king, who adopted the local customs extensively. His example was followed by the nobles and the people in general. The festivals provided an opportunity for both the Muslims and the Hindus to come closer to each other. The Muslims participated in the Hindu festivals of Ugadi, Holi, Diwali, Sankranti, Basant, etc. Mohammed Quli even wrote several poems on all these festivals, seasons and customs, showing his appreciation, happiness and respect. On the other hand, the Hindus also participated in Muslim festivals and religious events, particularly those connected to the Shia faith. In this aspect 'Ashurkhana' played an important role. An Ashurkhana is a building which houses the replicas of the standards carried by Prophet Mohammed's grandson, Imam Hussain, in the battlefield at Karbala in Iraq. The replicas, called Pirs in Telugu, were found practically in every village and town in the Qutub Shahi Kingdom. Everyone, irrespective of his religion, caste or creed, was allowed to visit the Ashurkhana and pay respects according to his own belief. Dr. Zore in his book *Hyat-e-Mir Momin*, writes that the entire population, Muslim or Hindu, used to pay homage in the Ashurkhanas and while doing so the differences between the rulers and the ruled and the differences of culture, religion and caste were forgotten. Most of the ceremonies of Ashurkhanas were indianized. For example, the practice of disguising oneself as a tiger, monkey, etc. was clearly Indian. Likewise, the ceremony of 'rang' (colour) in which the people painted their bodies with different colours and came reciting poems to the Ashurkhanas was adopted from Maharashtra. Similarly, the offerings to the Alams, which included parched rice, jaggery and coconut, are purely Hindu offerings, given in the temples. On the other hand, drinking of wine, partaking of meat, cutting of hair, etc. were strictly prohibited during Muharram. The Hindus also joined the Muslims and abstained from all the prohibited things during the first ten days of Muharram, which were regarded as sacred. Thus, the Ashurkhana became a meeting place of the people of different religions and castes who shared a common spirit.

The Deccan architecture – especially during the period of the Qutub Shahs – borrowed heavily from the Hindu style of architecture. The Hindu symbols like pot, lotus and elephant trunk were used in purely religious buildings like the mosques. The mosque built in Mushirabad during the period has elephant trunks supporting the roof of the prayer hall. About Toli Masjid, built in 1671, Dr. Sherwani says: "It is remarkable in many ways, namely its size, its once-flourishing gardens and, most importantly, its blending in the best possible manner of the Hindu temple architecture and the Muslim mosque architecture. Almost without doubt, the circular earthen pot, so common a theme in Hindu architecture ornamentation, is largely adopted here." Similarly Charminar, the representative building of the Qutubshahi period, is a beautiful mixture of Hindu and Iranian architectural principles.

It was not the mosques alone where these symbols were used. Even the tombs of the sufi saints were decorated with them. Calligraphy had assumed a special significance under the Deccani rulers. This was a pure Islamic art and was not influenced by Hindu traditions. The costumes worn by the sultans, nobles and people – especially the Muslims – gradually changed to the Deccani style. Among the rulers of the Golkonda, it was Sultan Quli, who first adopted the Deccan costumes. Two paintings, belonging to the Qutub Shahi period and consisting of a group of the rulers, show Sultan Quli in a Deccan costume with a long embroidered *angavastram* or kerchief on the shoulders. The example of the rulers was followed by the nobles. They wore a tight-fitting pyjama, a shirt and a large coat of silk or cotton, pointed turbans and two pieces of cloth, one used as a belt around the waist and the other thrown over the shoulders.

The Qutub Shahs also patronized the local dances. A local dance-drama form called Kuchipudi, after the village situated between Vijayawada and Masulipatnam, was patronized by Abul Hasan. He made a perpetual grant of the village to the Brahmins, who performed the dance-drama in his presence while he was staying in the neighbourhood.

Thus the socio-cultural life of the people during the Qutub Shahi regime was marked by a spirit of broad-mindedness and catholicity based on sharing and adopting of mutual traditions and customs. In such environments, inter-religious conflicts could not have existed, and even if it existed was controlled and solved immediately with the help of an efficient administration and common culture. The emergence of a composite culture is necessary for national integration and for conflict resolution in societies. Common grounds can be found and created in the spaces of culture and customs. This was done successfully by the Qutub Shahs.

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Asaf Jahs of Hyderabad: I (1724–1900 A.D.)

The kingdom of Bijapur was annexed to the Moghal Empire in 1686 A.D. and Golconda in 1687 A.D. The other three smaller kingdoms of the Deccan were already annexed by Moghals and, with the absorption of these States, the Moghal Empire extended to the largest part of the subcontinent. The policy of expansionism was vigorously pursued by Aurangzeb. One reason for this pursuit was his strong dislike for the composite culture of the Deccan.

Aurangzeb died in 1707 A.D., twenty years after annexing Golconda. During this period, he was mostly busy fighting against the Marathas and other rebels, because of which he could not consolidate his gains in the Deccan. As a result, chaos spread to all parts of the Deccan. The systems of the Qutub Shahs had already collapsed and new power centres emerged. The Moghal governors tried to bring order but were unsuccessful because of the Maratha and other local rebellions.

The Moghal Empire faced crises too. After the death of Aurangzeb, the forces of disintegration once again raised their heads as they did under the later Mouryas, the later Guptas and under Muhammad Bin Tughlaq. Aurangzeb was partly responsible since he suggested a division of the Empire among his three sons in his will. This led to the division of loyalties among the nobles and gave rise to factionalism. The groups of Iranis led by Zulfiqar Khan, Turanis led by Central Asian noble Ghazi-ud-Din Firoz Jung, Afghanis led by Munim Khan, Indian Muslims led by Sayyids of Barha (king makers) and Rajput princes started taking sides based on what they thought would best serve their own interests. This led to civil war, which destroyed the energy and vigour of the Moghals.

The political conditions in Delhi affected the Deccan also. The governors lacked the political will to act and chaos and lawlessness further increased. The socio-cultural achievements and economic prosperity of the Deccan under the Qutub Shahs disappeared, and the region fell into turmoil, which continued for three decades.

In this period of chaos, decline and lawlessness, Mir Qamaruddin, who later became the first Nizam, played an important role. He was appointed the governor of Deccan twice, but for a short time. The third time he became the governor by force and preferred to be in the Deccan, since he was disgusted with the court intrigues of Delhi. Mir Qamaruddin's responsibility was to reorganize the administration and revenue, and restore order. He acted with an iron hand from 1724–48 A.D., and achieved his objective. He reorganized every aspect of the administration and created order, peace and security in society. His reforms and institutions were based on Moghal principles since he was a Moghal Noble, and thus introduced new ways of managing the society.

Mir Qamaruddin Asaf Jah I

Mir Qamaruddin was born in 1671 in India into a family of Turkish nobles. His father and grandfather immigrated to the Deccan from Samarqand. They were the descendants of Shaik Shahabuddin Quraishi of Kurdistan.

He remained loyal to the Moghals till his death. He rose to prominence and was considered next to the emperor in importance. When Nadir Shah invaded Delhi in 1738 A.D., he

negotiated with Nadir Shah and stopped the massacre. Nadir Shah was impressed by him and offered him the throne of Delhi.

Mir Qamaruddin was courageous, wise, a good administrator and a shrewd politician with a strong personality. He was also a wazir for 10 months in the Moghal court, but developed differences with the king, who was interested only in himself. He then preferred to be in the Deccan, away from the destructive court intrigues. He was given many titles; among them the most important ones were *Nizamul Mulk* and *Asaf Jah*, by which his descendants became famous. He died in 1748 A.D., after ruling Deccan independently for 24 years, at the age of 77.

The period from 1724–1900 A.D. was one of civil war, wars with the Marathas and Hyder Ali, growing influences of the French and the British, loss of many provinces to the British, revolts against the British, administrative reforms of Salar Jung, etc. This span of 175 years was difficult because of the constant wars and then the loss of power to the British. In the first phase of hundred years, the pace of cultural growth was slow since the kings had little time for anything but battles. The following seventy-five years were comparatively peaceful, allowing the arts to flourish.

As a whole, the Asaf Jahi dynasty is known for its cultural achievements and Hindu-Muslim amity, even though there were alleged instances of discrimination. But it is the socio-cultural achievements of the Qutub Shahs that facilitated this bonding between the Hindus and Muslims during the Asaf Jahi period. The process initiated in the earlier phase continued on its own despite the fact that the kings were busy in wars and administration. In the Qutub Shahi period, the North Indians were insignificant, whereas they played an important role in the Asaf Jahi Kingdom from Nizamul Mulk's time onwards.

The Asaf Jahi dynasty ruled for 224 years (1724–1948 A.D.) with seven kings. During the reign of the last two kings, a strong composite culture emerged. The first Nizam, Mir Qamaruddin, laid the foundation for building a new perspective about Hindu-Muslim relationship. He drew up a clear policy regarding Hindu-Muslim harmony, which all the subsequent kings followed. Although he and his family were close to Aurangzeb, he was tolerant towards the Hindus, which could be attributed to his political sagacity. To him, the welfare of the State was the first consideration. He thought it undesirable that a comparatively young religion like Islam should be considered to possess the monopoly of truth. He respected other faiths and never hesitated in appointing non-Muslims to high posts of responsibility. (Kate, p. 164, 1987)

“Lala Mansaram was a secretary in the office of the Sadarat (Religious establishment) during the time of Nizam-ul-Mulk. Mansaram's grandfather, Balakrishnan, served under Khwaja Abid Khan, the grandfather of Nizamul Mulk. Mansaram's father, Bhavanidas, served under Gaziuddin Khan, the father of Nizam-ul-Mulk. It will thus be seen that the family of Mansaram was associated with the Nizam's family for three generations. So closely associated was Mansaram with Nizam-ul-Mulk that he was present at the bedside of the Nizam, when he breathed his last.” (Madhava Rao, p. 46, 1963). This shows that Nizam-ul-Mulk was close to the Hindus despite his being a devout Muslim.

Mansaram wrote two books in Persian on Asaf Jah I. In *Risala-e-Darbar-e-Asafia* (1761 A.D.), he quoted Nizam ul Mulk's sayings, which reveal his love of humanity and tolerance towards other religions. The later Asaf Jahi Kings based their actions on these sayings.

“Mankind has been (the) creation of God. In seeking to destroy them (sic), you should be extremely careful. Mankind are not like ears of wheat and jowar which can be grown every year by the cultivators.”

“Consider that the affairs of all the people have been entrusted to you through the grace of God. After performing your religious duties you should suitably divide your precious time to devote yourself to duties of administration.”

“The world and the sky are form(s) of eternity. So also the human creation. So you should not think that the world belongs only to you and deprive people of their rights. You should always be considerate.”

“After me it would be fitting that every family should be taken care of and should be employed in the services of government according to their merits, whether they belong to (the) Muslim or Hindu community.”

“It is necessary for the ruler of the Deccan to seek peace, achieve accord with the Marathas as they are the Zamindars of this country. He should consider the maintenance, the dignity and prestige of Islam as of outstanding importance.”

Surprisingly he was against the Brahmins. The reasons obviously were political. According to him, the Deccan Brahmins were fit to be killed and their heads deserved to be severed, especially the two leaders of the community—Moru Pandit and Ramdas, who sought to undermine the State constantly. He imprisoned them and ordered that they should never be released. The same Brahmins were important pillars of Qutub Shahi dynasty. In general, Nizamul-Mulk was tolerant towards all religions, and considered it practical to separate religion from politics.(Madhav Rao, p. 65,1963)

Nizamul-Mulk, while migrating to Hyderabad, brought along with him a number of his followers, both Hindus and Muslims. They were the founders of the Hyderabad nobility. By the late eighteenth century, there were ten leading nobles in Hyderabad State. Five of these families were Shia Muslims, four Hindus and only one a Sunni family. The ten families showed diverse patterns of origin and achievement. Out of the four Hindu families, one was Deccani Maratha, the other Chitpavan Brahmin, and the remaining were Kayastha and Punjabi Khattris from North India. The Maratha family was the first of these ten highest ranking noble families to establish itself, and it did so through military leadership. The rest of these Hindu families attained noble status through administrative service at a later stage. Hindus were mainly appointed to administrative posts in the departments of finance and revenue and were granted jagirs in recognition of their services. The Shia Muslim families had connections with earlier Shia rulers of the Deccan Sultanates. They attained their high rank through military and administrative service. The Sunni Muslim family achieved noble status later than most of the other families, through military service in the late eighteenth century (Raj, p. 46,1987). The nobility serves as yet another example of the harmonious links between the Hindus and the Muslims. This closeness was a result of Nizamul-Mulk’s policy, which enabled a cultural synthesis for the second time.

Society

After the fall of Golconda in 1687 to the Moghals, radical changes in the social fabric of the city occurred together with political changes. The Moghal feudal system replaced that of the Qutub Shahis and dominated the social and economic environment of the city. A large part of the feudal aristocracy, both Hindu and Muslim, came to Hyderabad from the north during different periods of the Qutub Shahi and Asaf Jahi rule, and subsequently Hyderabad became the meeting ground of practically all the elements of the population of the country. Many families from the north came in the early eighteenth century and some in the nineteenth century. These communities played a significant role in the political, social and cultural life of Hyderabad.

During the early rule of the Asaf Jahi dynasty, the highest posts concerning revenue and civil administration were entrusted to the Hindus. These Hindu officials were held in the highest esteem and enjoyed the same privileges as their brethren, and were included among the highest nobles of the State.

The contact of different communities with each other helped in the process of cultural assimilation and led to the synthesis of culture. Apart from the local population, the other important communities were Brahma Kshatriyas, Iranis, Kayasthas, Khatrias, Marvadis, Parsis and Tamilians. The local Hindu structure more or less remained the same from the times of the Qutub Shahis, especially in the rural areas. There were four languages spoken: Telugu, Marathi, Kannada and Urdu. (Prasad,1986)

The first official census in Hyderabad State was taken in 1881. Out of entire population, there were 90.32 % Hindus, 9.40% Muslims, 0.09% Christians, 0.08% Jains, 0.006% Parsis, 0.031% Sikhs and only 47 Jews.

British Influences

The arrival of the British in Hyderabad was a significant event, since it affected all aspects of society. The French were also involved in Hyderabad politics, but soon were overtaken by the British.

The influence of the Europeans grew overnight when there was a civil war between the five sons of Asaf Jah I. To gain the throne, these sons took the help of the British and the French. During the fifteen years of civil war, the British gained a strong foothold in Hyderabad. Nizam Ali Khan, the sixth son of Asaf Jah I, who was called Asaf Jah II (1763–1803 A.D.), maintained good relations with the East India Company, with which he entered into a treaty, in 1766 A.D., for mutual military assistance in times of need. The Nizam, however, felt that the English were encroaching on his sovereignty and began to conspire with Hyder Ali and the Marathas to form a triple alliance and drive away the English. When they learnt about his designs, the English marched against the Nizam in 1779 A.D.; the latter had to sue for peace, agreeing to the presence of an English Resident along with the army. The treaty of 1779 A.D. was revised in 1798 A.D. to raise the Resident's force to six battalions, costing the Nizam over 24 lakhs of rupees. The terms were revised again in 1800 A.D. to increase the English army to eight battalions and two regiments of cavalry. In lieu of the cost of maintenance of the force, the Nizam had to cede to the Company an area comprising the districts of Rayalaseema and Bellary. With this, the Nizam lost not only territory but also reputation and power. He was reduced to the status of one of the many princely States. (Satyanarayana,1983)

In 1804, the British Resident submitted a proposal for the Nizam to pay for the regular upkeep of the British troops since the Nizam's army proved inefficient in the war against the Marathas in 1803. After manoeuvring, the British succeeded in their plan with the help of Divan Mir Alam, who was pro-British. The Nizam, Sikandar Jah, was against it, but in the end relented. This resulted in the loss of Berar district, all the revenue from this district went in the maintenance of British army. The Resident took control over the Nizam's soldiers. While these arrangements were being implemented, two rebellions broke out in the Nizam's army against the British in 1812. (Regani,1988)

During Sikander Jah's (Asaf Jah III) reign, (1803–1828 A.D.), the followers of Wahabi Movement revolted against the English. This movement, which had spread at that time to many parts of India, had a good following in Hyderabad, mainly due to the efforts of Mubariz-ud-Doula, the son of the king. Coming to know of it, the Resident sent his forces to surround the palace of the prince and bring him dead or alive. However, on the intervention of Raja Chandulal, the English spared the life of the prince and imprisoned him in Golconda fort. The prince died in captivity a few months later.

1857 and the Freedom struggle

The First War of Independence, led by Bahadur Shah, was mostly conducted under the guidance of the dispossessed feudal lords and discontented sepoys. In the south, the response was lacklustre because Salar Jung and the fifth Nizam, Afzal-ud-daula, remained sincere in their friendship to the British. Some effects of the Mutiny were felt in the Hyderabad State, in the shape of a raid by some soldiers against the Residency and a rebellion by the Gonds in the Adilabad district. The raid against the Residency was carried out by the Rohilla and Arab soldiers led by Turra Baz Khan. But with the Nizam's help, the Company's forces managed not only to kill many of the rebels but also imprison Turra Baz Khan, who was shot dead as he was trying to escape.

The Gond Rebellion in Adilabad led by Ramji Gond and assisted by the Nizam's Rohilla sepoys stationed at Nirmal, succeeded initially in driving away the British soldiers. The rebels spread over the rest of the districts in the State and embarrassed the Company's forces. However, in 1860, the Company brought in fresh reinforcements and succeeded in suppressing the rebellion. Ramji Gond was captured and hanged later at Nirmal. The rest of the nineteenth century passed away without any event of major importance, though occasional rebellions of the peasants revealed their dissatisfaction. (Satyanarayana,1983)

After 1857, the power of the Moghal Emperor vanished and the practice of incorporating the name of Moghal Emperor on the coins of the Deccan was discontinued. With this, the nominal allegiance of the Nizam to the Moghal emperor came to an end and the Nizams became independent rulers. (Kulkarni,2000)

All these rebellions against the English later became the basis for the emergence of mass movements since it created a consciousness in the people. The British educational systems also brought new ideas, opening up a new world for the Indians. Many of these early revolts, like the Wahabi revolt, were initiated by the Muslims, but later the Hindus also participated in these struggles in large numbers. Thus, British presence played an important role in the emergence of mass consciousness and mass movements.

Administrative Reforms

The administrative reforms introduced by Salar Jung (1853–1888 A.D.) had far-reaching consequences. It was an effort to modernize medieval Hyderabad, which affected all aspects of Hyderabadi society. Prior to Salar Jung's initiatives, the administration was based on individuals not on systems. The activities were not segregated properly into different departments. As a result, there was little efficiency, and corruption and chaos thrived. When Salar Jung took charge as Prime Minister, the State finances were in a mess. He solved these problems and introduced financial stability.

Salar Jung was undoubtedly one of the foremost administrators and diplomats of India. He became Prime Minister at the young age of twenty-four and served Hyderabad for thirty years. He reformed every aspect of the State's administration – the land revenues, the dispensation of justice, the police, education, sanitation, and finance. He stopped bribery and corruption, especially among government servants.

Salar Jung in his zeal for modernization and creation of a new centralized administration, tried to staff his bureaucracy with men from British India, since the local nobility and common people lacked the necessary skills. The process, however, gave rise to the Mulki and non-Mulki conflict. These new men had an English education and were familiar with the administrative practices in British India, and the Muslims among them were associated with the Aligarh Muslim University. They tried to secure their interests and prevent the infiltration of the local nobility into the administration.

These reforms were based on European principles and ran on western lines. The British Residents were regularly consulted by Salar Jung. The people of Hyderabad did not appreciate such sudden and Europeanized changes made under British influences. They had a deep-seated resentment and hostility against the British. As a result, there was an attack on the lives of Salar Jung and the Resident when they were going to attend the court.

In 1867, Ram Rao of the Satara family, tried to induce the local people to supply men and arms to subvert British and Muslim rule in the Deccan. The conspiracy failed and Rama Rao was arrested near Jhalki. After the 1857 mutiny, the Resident felt that the British could not afford to ignore even abortive attempts against them.

First Public Agitation

The first public agitation in Hyderabad is a significant event since the society was a feudal one and the socio-political structure of the State did not have any place for public participation. This first public agitation indicates a shift towards mass politics and the people's readiness for democracy. The agitation made the different political groups confident that the people of Hyderabad were ready for political change and would respond to such a demand.

This agitation came to be known as the Chanda Railway Scheme Agitation. In 1870, an agreement was made between the Indian Government and the Government of Hyderabad to construct a railway line from Wadi on the Madras–Bombay route to Hyderabad. Meanwhile excellent coal was discovered at Singareni in the Nizam's dominion. As there was great demand for coal due to the expansion of the railways, it was decided to extend the line to Dornakal and Yellandu, the site of coal mines, and to Vijayawada. It was also decided to

extend the line up to Chanda in the north, where coal had been found. These proposals were approved during the Diwanship of Salarjung I. To construct these lines, a British company, known as the Nizam's Guranteed State Railway Company, was formed with a share capital of 3,00,000 pounds. Pressure was brought on Salarjung to make the Nizam's Government advance the money towards the capital. The details of the scheme were not made public. Though the scheme was approved during the last days of Salarjung's administration, it was implemented during the term of the Council of Regency. In the meantime, a rumour spread that the scheme was unremunorative and would result in a great financial loss to the State.

By 1880, there was a small but very articulate group of intellectual elite in Hyderabad which took interest in public affairs. When the scheme was to be implemented, this group formed "the committee to consider the chanda railway scheme". Two important members of the group were Dr. Agnornath Chattopadhyaya, principal of Nizam College, and Mulla Abdul Qayum, a senior civil servant. The committee requested the government to place the full details of the scheme before the public. For the first time, such a request was made to the government, which functioned in a high-handed manner. The request was too much for the Regency Council. As a result, Dr. Chattopadhyaya was suspended from service and deported from the state on 20 May 1883. With the deportation of Dr. Chattopadhyaya, the agitation collapsed and the scheme was implemented.

The Chanda Railway Scheme agitation was the first landmark in the mass politics of Hyderabad. It was the beginning of the growth of public awakening and participation in the affairs of the State in Hyderabad. (Rameshan, 1957)

Constitutional Reforms

As a result of the growing public awareness after the Chanda agitation, there was pressure on the government to be more transparent in its operations and accountable to the public. People were interested in participating in decision making. Against this background, in 1893, certain constitutional and administrative reforms, known as *Qanooncha-e-Mubarak*, were introduced.

Under these reforms, the initiative was taken to make a three-fold division of administrative functions into: Legislative, Executive and Judiciary. A legislative council consisting of officials was formed. A cabinet with the Diwan as the Chairman and the Peswa as one of the members was formed. The *peshkar* was kept in charge of the Army and also the civil services.

The Diwan, Asman Jah, an experienced administrator, did not approve of these reforms as he felt that his powers were curtailed, and resigned from his position. On the other hand, these reforms instead of satisfying the people generated further criticism of the government. The main point being that people were not given any representation in the legislature, which only proved that the government wanted to retain all its powers. The press played a major role in ensuring a responsive government, and started playing a responsible role in shaping public opinion in the Hyderabad State.

Even though these reforms achieved nothing significant, it was an attempt from the government's side to respond to the changing times and democratize the administration. It was also a fact that nothing significant happened in the Nizam's State without the British Resident's approval, whose interests were placed above the society's interest.

Religious Policy and Communal Conflict

Under the cultural impact of the Bahmanis, the Nizam Shahis and the Qutub Shahis, Hyderabad had already achieved a feeling of closeness between the Hindus and the Muslims. Nizamul-mulk's pronouncement on a policy of religious tolerance contributed further to this closeness.

In the civil war between Nizamul-mulk's sons, which continued for 15 years, the provinces of Khandesh, districts of Ahmed Nagar, Sangamner, Nasik, Jalna, Solapur and Bijapur were lost to the Marathas in 1760 A.D. Nizam Ali was waiting for an opportunity to take revenge. In November 1761, he marched directly upon Poona with a powerful army of sixty thousand men with the intention of capturing the nerve centre of Maratha power and crippling it permanently. His forces destroyed the religious centres of Toka and Pravara Sangam, though he did not harm the Hindus. (Kate,1987). This event is alleged as the first communal act by the Asaf Jahi Kings, but again this conclusion is contested since relations with the Marathas after this event, despite political conflicts, were never communal.

During Afzal ud Dawla's reign, Hindu and Muslim ties were further cemented because of the 1857 event. This policy of tolerance continued during Salar Jung's Prime Ministership, and Claude Campbell in *Glimpses of the Nizam's Dominions* writes: "There is no state in India under a Hindu or Mohomedan ruler, where greater toleration is shown towards the various religions than there is in Hyderabad. It is not only the toleration (from which even many European countries might take a lesson) which is noteworthy, but the assistance given by His Highness the Nizam's Government towards the promotion of all religions, (which) is liberal in the best sense of the word, for they guarantee that no form of religion professed by any section of people in the Dominions shall be interfered with. Jagirs, inam, grants of land, money settled in perpetuity or money given annually are some of the forms in which the various religions, are supported.

It is gratifying to note that even alien religions like Christianity, Zorastrianism have enjoyed the same amount of patronage and received assistance by means of annual subscriptions towards the actual propagation of the gospel. Apart from this help, these missions received donations and subscriptions for educational purposes."

Thus the policy of religious tolerance continued, but during the reign of Mir Mahboob Ali Khan there was a gradual departure from this policy. The government imposed some restrictions on the observance of Hindu festivals, particularly when Hindu and Muslim festivals coincided. It created discontentment and a feeling of uncertainty among the Hindus of the State. These restrictions were imposed in order to avoid clashes, but instead of averting clashes, these restrictions increased the scope for misunderstanding.

In 1885, both the Dasserah and Mohurram festivals fell on the same day. The Government imposed several restrictions with regard to the observance of Dasserah. In its order it stated:

- (1) The Hindus are to perform their puja within their houses, but without any music and fanfare.
- (2) They are not to move out in procession.
- (3) They are restricted in the use of music to the large temples enclosed by compound walls.

- (4) Anyone, whether Hindus or Muslims, transgressing these orders will be liable to penalty and shall be dealt with according to the police and criminal procedure.

In short public peace was to be maintained by suppressing the Dasserah celebrations while the Moharram celebrations were in no way to be interfered with. The Hindus outnumbered the Muslims, and these restrictions made them think that the the Nizam's Government was showing a preference for the Muslims.

Similarly, in 1899, another circular was issued, which warned the Hindus that if a considerable population of Muslims occupied a certain locality, the existing temples and *mathas* should not be extended or improved in that locality. Similar circulars were regularly issued in the early decades of the twentieth century. The effect of these circulars was very damaging on the Hindus. They started feeling insecure and restricted. Their rights were being curbed at the cost of the other community. As a result, bitterness and resentment in Hindus was growing, offering a fertile ground for anti-government ideologies.

Arya Samaj

Against this background, the Arya Samaj was established in Hyderabad in 1892. Though its aim was religious reform, it strayed into politics. The Arya Samaj believed that the majority community in Hyderabad was living under severe religious disabilities. Its activities before 1900 were largely non-political and related to lecturing and public contact, but its lectures evoked strong reactions from the Muslims and in the Hindus. Muslims reacted to the *shuddi* and attacks on Islam, Hindus reacted to its anti idol worship stance.

From 1892 A.D. onwards, the Arya Samajists not only gave public lectures, but also held debates with the *Sanatanists* (believers of idol worship) causing tensions among the Hindus and the Muslims. As a result, the Government imposed restrictions and deported their preachers. The Arya Samajists considered these steps illegal and appealed to the higher authorities. In their letter to Nawab Vikar-ul-umra Bahadur, the Prime Minister, they identified the reasons for the tensions. They wrote "that such enemies under the leadership of a Brahmin, generally known by the name of Panchapakshi, with no pretensions to any deep or even fair knowledge of the Vedas, have been busy in spreading false and malicious rumours that (the) petitioners denounce the Quran and Mohammadan religion, and he, the Panchapakshi, had the audacity to inform the city *Kotwal*, Nawab Akber Jung, that (the) petitioners belong to a sect which condemned the Mohammadan religion, and he even went to the length of submitting some false petitions in the name of a few Mohammadans and that the kotwal having at a public meeting held at the house of Raja Shivaraj Dharmavant pledged himself in writing to the said Panchapakshi, that he would support him in every possible way against (the) petitioners in maintaining his principles, sent for them and enquired of them what they had preached and though he was fully convinced that the punchapakshi had misled him, the Kotwal nevertheless asked petitioners to leave his jurisdiction and thus avoid conflict with Mohammadans, who he said do them badly harm and (the) petitioners out of deference to constitute authority, at once left the Kotwal's jurisdiction and went into the Residency." (Rameshan, pp. 57-58, 1957)

It appears that the tensions in the Hyderabad State were created by the Arya Samajists and that the government favoured the *Sanatanis* and did not give freedom to the other groups. Whatever the facts, the Arya Samajists established themselves firmly, and wielded considerable influence over the public minds. Their tactics became bold in the twentieth

century, and through the Samaj's well-organized activities influenced events especially during 1930s.

Ganesh Utsav

In 1895, for the first time, Ganesh *Utsav* was celebrated with public participation in Hyderabad. Bal Gangadhar Tilak had originally initiated these celebrations in Maharashtra to counter the government ban on people assembling in large numbers. The week-long celebrations were held in Shahali Banda, where the Maharashtraian community resides, and at Chaderghat. This utsav was a part of the growing nationalist movement in Hyderabad. The purpose of the celebrations was to arouse public opinion and provide training to social workers in constructive social action (Rameshan,1957). Though Ganesh Utsav was started for a different purpose, it got associated with the Arya Samaj and its activities, since both emerged during the same period, adding to the confusions of the Government as well as the general public. The initiatives of the Nizam's Government in this regard and the Hindu responses aroused suspicions and tensions among the communities, intensifying the antagonism and bitterness.

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Asaf Jahs of Hyderabad: II (1900–1947 A.D.)

The period from 1724–1900 A.D. was significant in the sense that it provided the base for the events that would emerge later. The administrative reforms of Salarjung and Mir Mahboob Ali Khan, subservience to the British, the growing western influences, the effects of the 1857 mutiny, social reforms in other parts of India along with the growing nationalistic feelings – all these events had their impact on the Hyderabad State too, and prepared it to respond to the events that were to unfold in the future.

The period starting from 1900 saw the emergence of movements, organizations, parties, agitations, unions, newspapers, colleges, social reforms, mass contacts, public awakening, peoples' participation, pressure groups, various demands and expectations, compromises, challenges and intrigues, in other words medieval society was giving way to a new order, as a modern society and polity developed.

Various players were struggling for public attention and success through various strategies and approaches. The freedom struggle, which generated intense nationalistic feelings, became a bigger context for all these players.

The emerging public consciousness was not only shaped by these players but also gave direction to the various thoughts and emotions in the public sphere. There were extreme pressures on the Government, the nobles as well as the common public. They had to choose and reject, respond to the internal pressures and the changing internal dynamics and to the external realities of the freedom movement, British withdrawal, emerging trends, changing socio-political meanings and positions. The Hyderabad State and society had to adjust to these circumstances and also plan for the future.

The five decades witnessed successes, achievements and gains and failures, tragedies and losses at all levels of society. It was like a drama in which the plot unravels slowly, different actors emerge on the scene, stories run at different levels and all the threads merge into a climax. This real drama had a strong impact on the subsequent lives of the people of Hyderabad, which included the ties between the Hindus and the Muslims.

Section IV deals with the events which had a direct impact on Hindu–Muslim relationship and the composite culture; it will also help in understanding the genesis of communalism in Hyderabad during this period.

Mir Mahboob Ali's reign is generally remembered as a beautiful phase in Hyderabad's History, when there were close ties between the Hindus and the Muslims. After his death in 1911, his son Mir Osman Ali Khan became the king – The VII Nizam – at the age of 27 (Kulkarni,2000). His personality was as important as any decisive event of this period, since his decisions, policies, attitudes, habits, likes and dislikes affected all the major events.

At the time of his accession, the Hyderabad State spread over 82, 698 square miles, of which Telangana formed 41, 502 square miles, Marathwada 27, 591 square miles, and Karnataka 13, 605 square miles. The population of 17 millions was distributed among 22,500 villages and 80 towns. Out of the total land, 8,109 square miles belonged to the private estate, or sarfi-khas, and 25, 629 square miles was owned by 11,000 jagirdars. There was a railway line of

1195 miles, and 4876 miles of roads. There were only 110 cars in Hyderabad city (Prasad,1984). Linguistically, about 90 lakhs spoke Telugu, 40 lakhs spoke Marathi, 20 lakhs spoke Kannada, while Urdu, being the official language, cut across the linguistic barriers. The population consisted of 12% Muslims, 87% Hindus, and 1% Christian and others (1911 census).

Religious Policy

The circulars issued to avoid the dangers of communal conflict continued under the reign of Mir Mahboob Ali Khan. One circular of 1909 created deep suspicions in the Hindu minds regarding the King's intention. This circular dealt with giving assistance for the maintenance of religious institutions. Though the Government gave assistance to other religions too, the words of this particular circular became a cause for concern because of its wording: "In view of the fact that this is an Islamic State ...". The term, 'Islamic State' was used for the first time.

But when Osman Ali Khan became the King in 1911, he articulated his glorious and famous religious policy. He said, "Whatever may be the religion of my house and my own personal beliefs, I am, as a ruler, the follower of another religion as well, which must be characterized as 'love towards all', because under me live people of different faiths and different communities and the protection of their houses of worship has for long been part of the constitution of my State. I do not desire, therefore, to injure with narrow mindedness, the susceptibilities of any community or faith or to distort the practice of my own religion in such a manner as to earn the title of bigot. It has throughout been my principle and that of my forefathers to look upon all religions without difference or distinctions, and to cause no weakening of our by interference in the practice of any religion. In my capacity of (sic) a ruler I consider myself to be without any religion, not in the sense of being without bias as a ruler for or against any particular religion or community. In that faith I and my forefathers have taken just pride and will continue to do so, and I trust that my decendants will also, god willing, follow the same principle." (Kate, p.176,1987). This policy and related experiences made T.H. Thorton, say, "Having had for generations to govern and conciliate a large and not unwarlike Hindu population, the ruling classes of Hyderabad are singularly free from religious bigotry." (Syed Abid Hussain, *Whither Hyderabad*, as quoted by Kate)

But in 1917, Dasserah and Mohurram coincided again, and again circulars imposing restrictions on Hindus were issued to be followed by similar circulars later.

Circular 1, issued in 1917, spelt out the following restrictions:

1. All the Hindus of Hyderabad city and districts should perform their worship without any sort of music.
2. Bathkamma (Goddess) should not be brought out; the Hindus should not play music even in their household temples.
3. If Hindus want to go for "Simollanghan" they should go in silence as if in mourning.

It asked Hindus to celebrate Dasserah on the 15th day of Mohurram, i.e. five days later.

Circular 2 banned any religious celebration without the previous sanction of the Ecclesiastical Department.

Circular 3 prohibited the playing of any music in front of a mosque or within a distance of 300 paces from a mosque.

Circular 4 (1920) says: “Whoever starts any religious festivals for the second time or if any person or a class of persons desire to perform any religious ceremony newly and publicly at a public place and by their so doing any other section is offended or if there is any chance of breach of peace or if it affects public health, such a religious performance can be put a stop to.”

Circular 5 stated that no old temples should be repaired or extended in the city of Hyderabad or any place in the districts where there was a large population of Mohammadens.

Circular 6 announced that Hyderabad was an Islamic State.

Circular 7 required that no procession be taken without giving ten days’ previous intimation to the Tahsildhar and the Police Commissioner in the city of Hyderabad. (L.B. Phatak, A Pamphlet: “Religious disabilities of Hindus of the Hyderabad state”. (As quoted by Kate)

These circulars intensified the frustration among the Hindus since many administrative hurdles were created for them, whereas no such restrictions were imposed on the Muslims. From one perspective, it appeared that the State was practising communalism and from another that it wanted to discourage the growing nationalist movement and control the related social tensions. On one hand, if the government allowed religious freedom it became a vehicle for the freedom movement – and the Nizam was a British ally; on the other, if it controlled the Hindus, then it would be alleged that the government practised discrimination. The Nizam’s Government thus seemed to be caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. In this situation, it also played with the idea of supporting the Muslim communalism, to counter the activities of Arya Samaj and growing nationalistic feelings. As a result, the government supported the Majlis and Bahadur Yar Jung. From a third point of view, the Nizam’s Government viewed the steps that it took as the best way of dealing with the law and order situation; it was not against the Hindus as such. It was confident that all these circulars, which were drafted by a committee which included Hindus, would not antagonize the Hindus. But, in reality, the Hindus interpreted these circulars as an indication of the Muslim government’s anti-Hindu attitude. As for the Hindu Committee members, the other members of the community had little regard for them and considered them as establishment Hindus. There was another fall-out of these circulars. It was observed that it created a superiority complex in the Muslims, which resulted in aggressive tendencies towards Hindus. This became a cause of communal conflict. In 1928, in Nanded, the Muslims planned to attack the Ganesh procession, and in 1929, in Ashti, Bhir District, it was attacked and the idols destroyed. These conflicts were more in the Marathwada area since the Marathas were responding more actively to the national movement.

Arya Samaj grows in strength

Against this background the Arya Samaj intensified its activities. It continued with its social and religious reforms, but now also sought to actively disobey the circulars. Its unwritten aim was to offer tough resistance to the government and unite the Hindus against the restrictions on their religious freedom. This demanded opening of many branches and recruitment of more activists. As a result, in the 1930s, it grew to be a more disciplined and well-organized organization than any other of the time.

Two important developments further stimulated the Arya Samaj: first, the activities of Siddiq Dindar in 1929, who declared himself as the 'Avatar of Chenna Basweshwar', and belittled the avatars of Rama and Krishna. This provoked the Arya Samajis and they started calling preachers from the North to counter the Dindars. Arya Samajis and Dindars continued their propaganda aggressively, which included spreading rumours, causing great harm to Hindu-Muslim ties.

The second development was the emergence of the Majlis-E-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen on the scene in 1927 as a social and religious organization. It adopted the policy of conversions to increase the Muslim population under the leadership of Bahadur Yar Jung in 1930. The Arya Samaj, as a reaction, intensified its *shuddhi* (purification) and reconversion doctrine. These factors increased misunderstanding and mutual suspicions. Communal feelings took root and tensions started building. The Government was the only authority in the society who could control such elements and restore order, and it did taking strong measures by imposing restrictions on the Arya Samaj's activities and leaders.

"In 1935, the first Taluqdar of Bidar ruthlessly dealt with the Arya Samaj at Nilanga. The Hawan Kund and the Arya Samaj Mandhir were desecrated and destroyed. The Samaj registered its protest against this severe action of the Taluqdar. Nawab Zulqadar Jung, the police secretary of the Sate, ordered the Taluqdar to re-construct the Mandir and the Hawan kund spending money from his own pocket." (Rameshan,1966)

In 1936, at Humnabad, Manik Nagar, a communal clash between the Arya Samajis and the Muslims broke out. In 1937, the Government issued Circular-37 banning all kinds of meetings. The Arya Samaj protested by engaging in celebrations without prior permission. In 1938 a communal riot broke out in Gulbarga, when colour was thrown on a Muslim on the occasion of the Hindu Holi festival. In the same year, a riot took place in Udgir during Dassera celebrations.

The first communal riot took place in Hyderabad in the Dhulpet area on 16 April 1938 and created unrest in the city. According to one source, it was between the Arya Samajis and the Dindars on the issue of conversions (Varshney,2002) and according to another, the procession of Majlis was attacked by the Arya Samajis (Naidu,1990)

According to the Arya Samajis, only the Hindus were arrested and so they decided to fight the Government through *satyagraha*. They convened a conference at Sholapur on this issue and gave a call for a country-wide "Hyderabad Day" to be observed to highlight the situation in Hyderabad. Many responded to the call and started to congregate at Hyderabad to participate in the *satyagraha*. It was launched on 24 October 1938 and continued till 21 July 1939. During the *satyagraha*, 12,000 satyagrahis were arrested, out of which only 5000 belonged to Hyderabad State.

The situation was never peaceful in Hyderabad State after this *satyagraha*. Numerous small incidents occurred in Marathwada, Karnataka and in Nizamabad.

"On 3rd March, 1942, when the Aryan procession was peacefully passing at Humnabad, Sri Shivachandra and his four colleagues were shot dead by the Musalmans. At Nagar Kurnool and Hingoli, a deadly assault was made on the Hindus by the Muslims and the culprits were discovered by the police only among the Aryans, who were later sentenced. The same

miserable tragedies were enacted at Jogipeth and Tara Kheda. On the 10th of December, 1942 the shops of the Hindus were looted at Gulbarga to ensure that they were paralysed financially so that they may not patronize the Samaj activities. No steps were taken by the Government to punish the real wrong-doers or to root out such tendencies.” (Rameshan, p. 95,1966.). The preceding quote reveals that communal riots were no more a spontaneous reaction to a situation but was slowly becoming an organized affair. The responses of the Government in the 1930s and 1940s were similar to the responses of the Government in the 1980s and 1990’s – only the group that was favoured had changed!

Vandemataram Movement

Among the arrested Satyagrahis of the Arya Samaj, Ramchandra Rao became famous as ‘Vandemataram RamchandraRao’. He would sing the Vandemataram instead of saying his prayers in jail, which was disliked by the authorities. He was caned for his patriotism, and on every strike of the cane, he would loudly utter vandemataram. He continued thus until he became unconscious.

This song was also sung by the students of Osmania University in their hostel prayer rooms, to which the university authorities objected. They banned the students from singing the Vandemataram, but the students defied the orders and then called for a strike, which continued from 29 November to 10 December 1938. The strike spread to all the other colleges because of the government’s highhandedness. As a result, nearly one thousand students from Osmania and other colleges were expelled. This brief movement was supported by Gandhi, Nehru and Bose, and, within a short period spread, to all parts of Hyderabad. (Prasad,1984)

This movement intensified the feelings in the youth against the Nizam and the British. The Nizam’s Government seemed to adopt the stringent methods and strategies adopted by the British in the Andhra region to control the Vandemataram movement. The event highlighted the government’s oppressiveness along with the Muslim antagonism to the song. As a result, ill-will towards the Muslims grew among the Hindus. The Vandemataram song, which was neither political nor communal, became controversial because “the song had come to symbolize a singularly militant brand of patriotism and had inspired a whole generation of Bengali revolutionaries in the early twentieth century. Consequently, it had come to be viewed, with suspicion and dislike by India’s British Rulers.” (Ibid, p. 254.).

Freedom Movement

Soon after Mahatma Gandhi entered into Indian politics in 1919, the freedom struggle grew more intense. When Mahatma Gandhi announced his Non-Cooperation and Swadeshi through non-violent methods, the movement spread like wild fire all over India. Its influence was also felt in Hyderabad. The Khilafat movement public meetings became a vehicle to introduce Hyderabad to national politics. Totally, six meetings were conducted in 1920 on the issue of Khilafat in Hyderabad.

“On the 16th (of) March 1920 a public meeting was held at the Vivek Vardhini High School in Hyderabad under the Chairmanship of Barrister Mohammed Asghar, which was attended by more than 15,000 persons. On the 19th (of) March a hartal was observed throughout the city as per secret directions given by the Khilafat Committee. On the 20th (of) March another public meeting was held at the Vivek Vardhini High School, attended by nearly 25000

persons. All the communities participated in this meeting. On this (the) government issued orders prohibiting the Khilafat movement of (sic) any meetings without prior permission. On 23rd April 1920 another meeting was held where a fund was opened and considerable amount(s) were collected. This was also a joint gathering of Hindus and Muslims. On 5th May 1920 the Khilafat committee of Hyderabad held a “Unity Day” under the chairmanship of Pandit Keshav Rao Koratkar where speeches stressing communal unity were made by prominent leaders. On 14th May 1920 a public meeting was held at Vivek Vardhini High School under the Chairmanship of Sri.Waman Naik to thank the Muslims for their cooperation on the issue of cow-slaughter. This meeting was also attended by large numbers of Hindus and Muslims. A further meeting under the auspices of the Khilafat Committee was held on 17th May attended by 10000 persons. This was presided over by Moulana Abdul Hai.”(Rameshan ,pp. 250–251,1966)

This movement had a strong influence in Hyderabad, especially among the Muslims. It united the Hindus and the Muslims. The Arya Samaj took active part in the Khilafat meetings. Their leaders chaired the sessions, and meetings were held in Arya Samaj-inspired schools. The Hindu support helped build Muslim confidence, to which the latter reciprocated, creating an atmosphere of trust.

This helped in spreading the freedom movement in the State despite the close vigil of the government. People started wearing khadi clothes, took up charka spinning and boycotted foreign goods. Though it was on a small scale, the movement was being noticed. The subsequent period, i.e. from 1921 onwards, saw the growth and beginning of journalism, spread of education, social reforms, revolutionary activities and conferences on various issues.

Indian National Congress

When the Indian National Congress was formed in 1885, the intellectuals of Hyderabad welcomed its formation, and Mulla Abdul Qayyum was the first person in Hyderabad to join the party. The Congress was established in Hyderabad much later, in 1938, but prior to that the freedom struggle already started showing its effects in the Hyderabad State.. (Kulkarni,2000)

The provisional committee of the Hyderabad State Congress, in an appeal issued in August 1938, stated that: “The object(ive) of the Hyderabad state congress is attainment by the people of Responsible Government under the aegis of H.E.H. the Nizam and the Asaf Jahi dynasty. This object(ive) is to be achieved by all peaceful and legitimate means and by promoting national unity, fostering public spirit and developing and organizing the intellectual, moral, economic and industrial resources of the country.”

This appeal also addressed the issue of communal conflict as well, which was becoming a serious problem all over the country:

“This communal conflict in the land is too well known to need any mention. At such (a) critical juncture, the duty of cementing harmony among the communities lies not only on the shoulders of the Government but also on the people themselves, who sincerely believe the unity and mutual cooperation between the communities living in the land is necessary before any social, economic and political progress could (sic) be attained. Wide agitation is a

sign of the times and the leaders of both the communities in the state owe to themselves and the land the duty of leading the spirit of education into proper channels; it is not enough if they keep themselves aloof from communal dissensions but it is their positive duty to wean them from the wrong path and give the people the correct lead for fostering a spirit of patriotism in the country. Such a spread of patriotic feeling is the only means by which all kinds of communal activities can successfully be combated. There can be no question of suppressing the growing public agitation, for such a step is neither possible nor profitable. The problem is not that, but of diverting the consciousness into right channels and developing a patriotic movement on proper lines.” (Rameshan, pp.183–184,1966)

The formation of the State Congress was prohibited by the Nizam’s Government on 8 September 1938. The main argument to ban the Congress was the presence of communal elements in it, since the top leaders and most members of the provisional committee were also leaders of the Arya Samaj. The notification ended with these words: “Government is satisfied from its own enquiries and from its knowledge of some of the leading persons associated with the proposed Hyderabad state Congress that it will be, whatever its outward professions, constituted on communal lines and animated by communal and subversive ends which will retire instead of advancing the pace of constitutional reforms in the state. Government have, therefore, decided to prohibit the formation of any organisations so named or so constituted and the Hyderabad state Congress, if formed, is declared to be an unlawful association under the public safety regulations.” (Ibid., p.136)

The Congress tried to convince the Government, but when all efforts failed they went on a *satyagraha* on 24 October 1938. During the same period, the Arya Samaj was also undertaking a *satyagraha* on the issue of religion. Mahatma Gandhi did not approve of mixing religion with politics. He advised that these *satyagrahas* be suspended, and they were on 24 December 1938.

This was followed by a struggle to lift the ban on the Congress. In this connection, extensive correspondence took place for seven years (till the ban was lifted in April 1946) between Sir Akbar Hydari, Prime Minister and Mahatma Gandhi and Jamunalal Bajaj, apart from personal discussions. The local leaders also communicated regularly. The focus of this correspondence was the issue of communalism. The Nizam’s Government was firm in its stand and strongly believed that communalism in Hyderabad State would increase if the Congress was allowed to function.

The other development was the emergence of a communal view of history, which made intentions behind many day-to-day events, traditions and pragmatism appear suspicious. In the correspondence with Sir Akbar Hydri, Jamuna Lal Bajaj referred to the high proportion of Muslims when compared to Hindus in the services of the Nizam’s Government, to which the former replied that “They were not based upon any deliberate or calculated desire of (the) Government to have people of one community in preference to another. The preponderance of Muslims in the higher service was an accident of history and the outcome of historical causes. Hyderabad was conquered by a northern race; in their train came Hindus, like Maharaja Kishan Pershad’s family which even now held positions of trust and enjoyed the same superior and dominant status. Neither at that time nor at this was it a question of Muslims or Hindus or of people of one particular religion or another being a problem from the communal point of view and ascribing communal motives was mainly the result of

consuming indiscriminately the manufacture of biased history written with an obvious political motive.” (Ibid., p.172)

Political Awakening

People in the three linguistic regions of the Nizam’s State were interested in improving their conditions as a result of freedom struggle. The activities were initiated through small literary circles, which later developed into bigger organizations and addressed bigger issues. They also aimed to pressurize the Nizam for ‘Responsible Government’ and reforms. The participation in these activities created political awareness in the people.

Karnataka Parishad

Many literary associations were formed by the Kannadigas in places like Gulbarga, Raichur and Hyderabad. All these small groups were invited to form the ‘All-Karnataka Sahitya Parishad’ in 1934, in Raichur. In 1947, the ‘Nizam Karnataka Parishad’ was formed. In 1938, when the Congress started its *satyagraha*, the members of the Nizam Karnataka Parishad were the first to offer *satyagraha*. The second session of the Parishad was held in 1940 at Bidar, but a few months later there were communal riots in Bidar, Aurad and Aland. The third session was held in 1932 at Shorapur, Gulbarga. When the ban on the Congress was lifted in 1946, the Parishad merged with the Congress.

Maharashtra Parishad

Similarly, the ‘Maharashtra Parishad’ started its activities, and its first conference was held in 1937, and the sixth and last in 1945. The Parishad also merged with the Congress.

Andhra Mahasabha

In Telangana, the library movement initiated the Telugu-speaking people into the freedom movement. Komma Raju Laxmana Rao established the first Telugu library of Telangana at Hyderabad in 1901 and named it ‘Sri Krishna Devaraya Andhra Basha Nilayam’. Another Telugu library, ‘Sri Raja Andhra Basha Nilayam’, was opened in 1904 at Hanmakonda, and the ‘Andhra Samvardhini Grandhalayam’, in 1905 at Secunderabad. In 1906 Komma Raju Laxmana Rao, started publishing popular literature in Telugu and thus laid the foundation for cultural revival in Telangana.

The people from the Andhra region residing in Hyderabad started the ‘Andhra Jana Sangam’, an organization aimed for the social, economic and cultural revival of the people of Telangana and Andhraites of Telangana, in 1921. The first meeting of the Sangam was held in 1922 and Madapati Hanumantha Rao was chosen as the secretary. Another central organization was formed to coordinate the activities of the smaller organizations. This was the ‘Andhra Jana Kendra Sangam’. In 1930, at a conference at Jogipet, Medak, the Andhra Jana Sangam was converted to the ‘Andhra Maha Sabha’. Soon after, the ‘Andhra Mahila Sabha’ was established. From 1941 onwards, the Andhra Maha Sabha came under the influence of the Leftists, and in 1944, at the eleventh session, under the presidentship of Ravi Narayan Reddy, the Sabha came under the control of the communists. (Rao, 1991)

The Andhra Maha Sabha worked for the upliftment of women in general by promoting the spread of education among women, abolition of prostitution and abolition of the *pardah* system, etc. It also promoted private schools in the Telugu medium and worked for the revival of Ayurveda, introduction of cooperatives, Harijan upliftment, and the protection of ryots in the jagirlands. (Kulkarni, 2000)

The emergence of social reform movements all over India, is the result of the freedom movement. These movements, contributed significantly, to the freedom movement as well, by implementing the visions of swaraj and other new ideas. These movements tried to address a limited, familiar and responsive constituency to be more effective. Though this was a pragmatic strategy but it became a cause for other unintended consequences. The need to be limited led to the exclusivity. The Hindus were addressing the problems of their own community and so were the Muslims. This resulted in the community consciousness which later degenerated into the communal consciousness.

Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen

Majlis, the party which played a significant role, in Hyderabad politics of pre and post independence period, emerged on the scene as a social organization to address the growing sectarian differences in the Muslim community. It intended to reconcile all the conflicting groups and create a peaceful environment in the city. The aims and objectives of Majlis were:

- 1-Unite all Islamic sects for the sake of Islam and according to Islamic principles.
- 2-Work for social, economic and educational upliftment of the Muslims.
- 3-Respect the existing laws and loyalty to the king.

With these aims Majlis came into existence on 12 November 1927. It was concerned about the activities of Arya Samaj. In the 1930s when the Arya Samaj intensified its activities, the Majlis started replying to its pamphlets and propaganda. At one point, the Majlis accused the Government of complacency, it said, "When Hyderabad State Congress was established Government declared it illegal. But gave freedom to Arya Samaj and Hindu Mahasabha. When Congress was banned, the same congressmen continued their activities and did *satyagraha* in the name of Arya Samaj, Hindu Maha Sabha, Hindu civil liberty union and Aryan defense league. But it is sad that the Government did not try to control them and counter their damaging propaganda. Nevertheless, the job of Government was done by Majlis and because of its protest and efforts whole of India became 'pro-Hyderabad instead of anti-Hyderabad'." (Hussain, p. 71, 2001)

Similarly, on one occasion, the Majlis accused the government of favouring the Hindus. "This is a sad reality that Majlis-e-itehadul Muslim's efforts were proved successful outside Hyderabad, but suffered failure in Hyderabad. Arya Samajis were busy in their evils. Hyderabad itself became a victim of anti-peace, anti-stability events but the government, instead of using (an) iron fist, was affectionate and kind like (a) mother and provided conveniences in jail (to Arya Samaj Satyagrahis). Despite the courts decision of rigorous imprisonment, they were not made to work hard ... government had forgotten the responsibility of maintaining peace with excessive tolerance and love and also harmed its own image by clarifying its positions in the press. The government proved practically that it is more interested in appeasing the Hindus rather than Muslims. On this occasion Majlis lost its patience...." (*History of Majlis*, pp. 61-63 as quoted by Hussain)

In 1938, when the Majlis' constitution was revised to include political aims its amended constitution had far-reaching consequences on Hyderabad politics, the Hyderabad State, Hindu-Muslim relationship and the Muslims themselves. According to this amendment, "the position of the Muslims of the Asafia State is that the person and the throne of the king of this country are evocation of the political sovereignty and social supremacy of their community and shall be maintained for ever." (Munshi, p. 26, 1957) In other words, Muslim rule was based upon Muslim supremacy.

This position and its consequences were very well articulated by Kashinath Rao Vaidya, who presided over the IIIrd session of the Maharashtra Parishad in May 1941. His speech also summarized the Hindu–Muslim conflicts of his time. He said:

“Ladies and gentlemen, I shall now draw your attention to one of the most burning topics of the day, not only in Hyderabad but in the whole of India. It is the question of Hindu–Muslim unity. Everybody knows that these two communities have been peacefully living in the State for several centuries and enjoyed the reputation of living together with great cordiality. But since recently the tension between the two communities is growing and we do not know to what pitch it will go. Dhoolpet riots, Bidar incendiaries, mob violence at Nanded and other places have brought disgrace to the good name of the State and words fall too short to condemn them adequately. Criminal cases, regarding communal riots, are still going on in courts and even today nobody can say when communal trouble will arise. Cities or towns are not free from it, nor are the villages outside its clutches. In many places, it is found that the pretext that leads to the trouble is extremely minor and one would even laugh at it. It is high time that we should study and find out the true causes of the communal disunity and friction that is raging now in the country. Hitherto, the two great communities of Hindus and Muslims harboured no thoughts of ill-will and they lived peacefully as subjects of one Ruler, both of them being equal in their loyalty and allegiance to him. But now one has begun to suppose that he is the conqueror and looks upon the other as his subject. This new and unhistorical theory was being so assiduously propagated that it is taking root even among ignorant village Muslims. It is considered that the sovereignty is vested in the Muslims of the state and that His Exalted Highness is merely a symbol of their sovereignty. On the other hand these people cannot tolerate the idea of Responsible Government because they think that the prerogatives of the ruler will be fettered thereby and ostensibly they fight the idea of Responsible Government tooth and nail on this pretext. But at the same time, they have come out with this curious theory that the sovereignty is vested only in the Muslims of the State. If the Muslims say that the sovereignty is vested in the subjects of the state in general, it would not be objectionable to any one in view of the advanced ideas of the times. But an attempt to make invidious distinction between the two communities is suicidal to the interests of the state. To say that Hyderabad is a Muslim kingdom, in this sense, is an attempt to alienate the sympathies of the Hindus from the state. We consider that this state is of both the Muslims and Hindus and to say that His Exalted Highness the Nizam is a ruler only of the Muslims is contradicting the past history. I want my Muslims friends to understand that His Exalted Highness is the Ruler of a crore and a half people and not only of fifteen lakhs of Muslims. By such allegations they are weakening the strength of the state, as well as that of the Ruler. They also forget that this claim of theirs contradicts the gracious *firman* of His Exalted Highness in which he has said that as a king he has no religion but that of looking to the welfare of the subjects, although as an individual he is a Muslim. I, therefore, most earnestly request my Muslim friends to reconsider the effects of such views. They will be serving the ruler and state by abstaining from indulging in such unreasonable and harmful talk. They may think that by such talks, they would catch the sentiments of uneducated

Muslims, but they must remember that if these people once take in to their heads that they are rulers, then no administration would be possible. They will refuse to obey the laws and thus it would lead to chaos.” (Rameshan, pp. 124–125,1966)

In the thirties, there were many attempts for reconciliation between the leaders of the Majlis and the Congress, which became popular as “unity talks”. A compromise emerged which was to be presented to the government, but this compromise lost its importance suddenly when the Prime Minister announced constitutional reforms in 1937.

Thus, protecting Muslim interests, maintaining the status quo, criticizing the Nizam government, and loyalty to the Nizam became the main agenda of the Majlis. The period from 1930 to 1944 under the leadership of Bahadur Yar Jung was very significant. In this period the Majlis emerged as a strong party and sole representative of the Muslims of Hyderabad. But the Majlis under the leadership of Kasim Razvi (1946–1948) is remembered for fanaticism, Razakars (volunteers) and aggressive approaches. The anti-Indian stand, aggressive policies and communalism became one of the main causes of the later Police Action.

Telangana Struggle

The influence of the socialist group was no less significant in Hyderabad. The nature of their activities was secular and related to the urgent needs of the rural populations. In the environment of the extreme positions of the Majlis on the one hand and the Arya Samaj on the other, the communist ideology was one which steered clear of religion. It mobilized the masses and created an organized movement. The emergence of the communists as the only opposition in the first elected parliament of 1952 is proof of its mass popularity. In the Telangana region, they got the maximum number of votes, and won three seats from the old city of Hyderabad as well; indicating their growing influence in the city of Hyderabad. But after the growth of organizations like the Tameer-e-Millat, Jamaat-e-Islami, Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat, etc., and after the revival of the Majlis in 1957 (after a ban for nine years), there seemed to be a shift in favour of fundamentalist positions.

The influence of socialist ideology began in Telangana when the Andhra Mahasabha was formed.. The political awareness generated by this organization transformed the organization into a political one. Initially, its tone was moderate but when it began to pass resolutions on civil liberties and other political demands, the Nizams’ government acted and banned all discussions on political resolutions on peasant issues in the organization.

The Communist Party was banned in British India when the Second World War broke out in 1939. It was at this time that the Communist Party was formed in Hyderabad with the support of the Andhra Communist Party. The members were a part of the Andhra Maha Sabha and continued to be its members because of the ban on the Communist Party and the general political climate. The rift between the moderates and the militants in Andhra Maha Sabha came out into the open, which ended in a split at the Bhongir conference. The moderates formed a rival Maha Sabha, but after two years merged with the Congress. Under the leadership of the communists, the Andhra Maha Sabha became a mass organization.

The Andhra Maha Sabha gave an organizational form to the people’s resentment against the autocratic rule of the Nizam. Under the communist leadership, this developed into an armed

struggle against the oppressive feudal system and the armed militia (Razakars) of Majlis. The struggle continued for nearly three years, for other objectives, after the Police Action of 1948.

The feudal system of land tenure was the most important feature of the political organization of the Nizam's State. Out of the 53,000,000 acres in the Hyderabad State, about 30,000,000 acres, i.e., about 60% were under the government land revenue system (called the *diwani* or Khalsa area); about 15,000,000 acres, i.e. about 30% under the Jagirdari system, and about 10% under the Nizam's own direct estate, that is, *Sarf-e-Khas* system (Sundarayya,1972)

Those who were loyal to the Nizam received jagirs and became revenue officials or generals in the army. The jagirs became hereditary property and the jagirdars acquired the right to enjoy land revenue from them. In addition, they also held the rights over excise, forests and fisheries, and exercised police and judicial functions. Other than the jagirdars, there were also some traditional Hindu rulers who had governed the area even before the arrival of Asaf Jah. Their rights were recognized by the Nizam in between for the payment of an annual tribute. The rulers of these *Samsthanams*, as they were called, enjoyed extensive powers of administration. The Nizam also gifted away some lands as *inams* in between for services rendered to him. In almost every village there were such *inams*.

Conditions in the jagir areas were such that the civil courts had no jurisdiction over the jagir lands, the jagirdars were free to collect a variety of illegal taxes from the actual cultivators. They also amassed vast areas of land by duping the peasants, who continued to remain tenants and to till the land for years without any ownership rights. Agricultural tenants had no security of revenue. The peasants could not inherit the land except by paying a *nazrana*. Taxes were generally higher than in the Khalsa areas and were collected forcibly even when there were no crops. Apart from land revenue, the tenants had to pay several other taxes such as house tax, profession tax, etc. This reduced the peasantry to penury and serfdom. Peasants who had cultivated lands for generations were evicted and their lands given to those who paid the highest nazarana. (Stree Shakti Sanghatana,1987) On the other hand, the *vetti* system (free services to landlord and officials by peasants, washerfolks, barbers, blacksmiths, carpenters, etc) had made their lives miserable.

“When these feudal lords of various hues tried to intensify their illegal exactions, to evict the cultivating peasants from their lands and lease them to some others, the peasants had fought many a heroic struggle, even earlier. One such heroic struggle was that of a poor Muslim peasant Bandagi, against Visunuri Deshmukh during the twenties, whose martyrdom was immortalized in the popular drama *Ma Bhoomi* (My land), during the Telangana days of 1945–46. Two hundred other groups staged this play throughout the whole of Andhra Pradesh and wherever the Telugu people lived in the whole of India” (Sundarayya p. 14,1972).

But the event which converted the Telangana struggle into the Telangana Armed Struggle was related to Ailamma, a washerwoman. Vishnur Ramchandra Reddy, the deshmukh of Jangaon taluka, tried to forcibly take over her land by evicting her. His attempt was thwarted by the Sangha Activists associated with the Telangana struggle. Soon after, in 1945, the Andhra Mahasabha conference at Khammam gave a call for the overthrow of the Nizam's autocratic regime and the feudal Jagirdari system, and in November 1946 the decision to engage in armed resistance was taken and village defence squads were formed.

Regarding the communal situation in Hyderabad, the communists made the following observations: “In the state of Hyderabad ninety percentage (sic) were Hindus and ten

percentage (sic) Muslims. At a time when the three regional organizations – the Andhra Maha Sabha, the Maharashtra Parishad and the Karnakata Parishad – were organizing and leading the people on various issues and in the rest of India the national movement was at its peak, the Nizam felt desperate and adopted new methods of perpetuating his autocratic rule. In new measure of tactics to be worked out he was ably aided and supported by Bahadur Yar Jung, a powerful orator and a religious fanatic who opined that Muslims alone could defend and preserve the Nizams' authority; since Muslims were a minority this task was difficult and the way out was to embark upon a comprehensive plan of increasing the numbers through religious conversion....

“The rural population of Telangana were leading the lives of medieval slaves, being subjected to the worst kind of feudal oppressions. Bahadur Yar Jung hit upon an idea. That was to appeal to the oppressed people, particularly the Harijans to change their religion to Islam which would confer upon them special rights since the ruler was a Muslim; at one stroke the system of forced labour would be abolished and they shall be liberated from it. This approach yielded some immediate results. Harijan barbers, dhobis and the other downtrodden and exploited, responded by changing their religion; names were changed, the pigtailed and the thread around the waist were discarded. They went to mosques and offered prayers. Bahadur Yar Jung went into the villages of Jangaon taluka and vigorously carried out their campaign of religious conversion. The villages of Mandrayi, Kothar, Ramavaram, Manchuppala, Dharmapuram, Ramannagudem were his first targets, which were victims of the most brutal and inhuman oppression and violence of their infamous and notorious landlords--- Visunuru Deshmukh, Kathar Ramchander Rao, Narsimha Rao, Pusukuru Raghava Rao of the Velama caste all of whom were undisputed rulers of their realm. On a big scale the campaign was carried out in those villages.

“The landlords reacted to this campaign by forming a body the ‘Hindu Samithi’ with the avowed aim of defending and preserving Hindu religion. To this end, thousands of rupees were collected. Visunuru Ramachandra Reddy presided. In fact, this was only a façade to continue their medieval oppression. The Arya Samaj countered Bahadur Yar Jung’s activities by going into these villages; and it launched a movement for reconversion of people back into the Hindu fold. Arya Samaj leaders like Narenderji, Sanker Reddy were invited to these villages by the landlords who acted as their hosts and accompanied them to various villages. The leaders stayed in the landlords’ fortresses. All this made them suspect in the eyes of the exploited masses who found it difficult to accept their propaganda. Very few returned into the Hindu fold...

“The religious conversions made by Bahadur Yar Jung were almost the last in Kolanupaka. All the converts were reconverted into (the) Hindu fold through Arya Samaj procedures and rituals. With one stroke, forced labour unjust collections etc. came to an end in these Jagir villages. Bahadur Yar Jung’s plans were upset...” (Reddy, Tr. B. Narsing Rao, pp. 16–17, 21,1984)

Similarly, P. Sundarayya in his *Telangana People’s Struggle and Its Lessons*, wrote about the communal situation in Hyderabad. According to him, “The Nizam of Hyderabad state, though a vassal of the British imperialists, being a Muslim and the vast majority of the people of Hyderabad belonging to the Hindu Religion and its various sects, got reflected in the administrative set-up. Though the Muslim population was about 12% in the whole administrative setup, especially in the higher echelons, the overwhelming majority, more than 90%, were Muslim bureaucratic officials. The Nizam and mullas tried to instill a feeling that the Muslims were the ruling class and they had a right to lord it over the last of the people of

the state. Against this, the growing middle class intellectuals, and the growing Hindu business and industrial interests took up the cudgels, and the Arya Samajists became the champions of the 'Hindu Masses' against the 'Muslim oppressors'. There were (a) large number of conflicts and clashes between these sections.

“In the early days, till the 1940s, the Indian National Congress refused to take up the struggle of the people against the 'Princes and Nawabs' of the native states. This also left the field free for the Arya Samajists to come forward as the champions of the struggle against autocracy and enabled them to divert the democratic awakening of the people, to a considerable extent, onto communal lines.

“One of the aspects of this Muslim feudal rule was reflected in the language policy of the state, making Urdu dominate, at the cost of major languages, which were the mother-tongues of the overwhelming majority of the people of the state. Later, during the Telangana struggle of 1946–47, the Nizam and his feudal administrators, his armed Razakars, tried to rally the Muslim masses to support them as against the 'Hindus'. But thanks to the leadership of the Communist party, large numbers of the Muslim peasantry and rural artisans and the rural poor were rallied behind the fighting Telangana Peasantry, though it has to be admitted that a vast section of Muslims in the towns and cities supported the Nizam and the Razakars. It was again thanks to the party's leadership that the reprisals against Muslims, after 'police action', were prevented in the Telangana area. Whereas in the Marathwada region, in many areas where the democratic movement was not so strong as in Telangana, they occurred on quite a large scale.” (Sundarayya, pp. 8-9, 1972)

Thus the communists played an important role in keeping communal tensions under check.. They not only countered the growth of communalism but also protected the people from its effects. There were many progressive Muslims in the communist movement, who wanted to overthrow the Nizam's rule, but there were also the Majlis and the Razakars, who wanted to preserve Nizam's rule and protected the Hindu and Muslim landlords against the communists.

On the one hand, Hindu–Muslim relations in the period were tense under the influence of the Majlis and Arya Samaj and, on the other hand, a unity had been forged between the Hindus and the Muslims under the democratic and socialist movements. The growing communalism of that period was countered in part by the communist movement, which became a hope of the people. If the police action had not been directed against the communist movement, may be the communal situation in Hyderabad in the late 20th century would have presented a different picture.

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Hyderabad After 1947

The period starting from 1947 signifies a new phase in the history of Hyderabad. During this period the feudal pattern of Hyderabad society gave way to a modern democratic pattern. The power structures, politics and social hierarchies changed completely. The effects of these changes were drastic for the Muslims of Hyderabad. The reactions of the Muslims to these changed circumstances created an equally strong reaction in the Hindu community, preparing the grounds for communal conflict and hatred.

The decades of 1930s and 1940s played an important role in the socio-political life of India. These decades were significant for Hyderabad since the events of this period created a 'communal' self-consciousness and various perspectives about socio-political conditions in the two major religious communities. This 'self-consciousness' and these perspectives continue to impact the Hindu-Muslim relationship in Hyderabad even after five decades.. Hyderabad's situation was directly and indirectly linked with that existed in other parts of India. The intensity of the freedom movement, the emergence of new world views, the reorganization of social forces with a vigorous spirit for a new agenda, the growing likelihood of the British leaving India, growing nationalist movements in other countries and later the Second World War and international politics, influenced the general environment of the country. It forced different stakeholders to define their positions, identity and role. Lack of time added to the pressure and excitement. The whole country was highly charged. The gains and losses for all those concerned were enormous. The individuals, groups, parties and various aspects of Indian society were getting influenced by different factors, one of the most important being communalism.

In Hyderabad, the bases of overt communalism originated in the above-mentioned two decades. The Mulki and Non-Mulki movement, though non-communal, led to the emergence of community consciousness among the Hindus and the Muslims. The Nizam's autocratic rule and various restrictions on the Hindu community contributed enormously to it. This situation was exploited by organizations like the Majlis and the Arya Samaj, leading to the further intensification of community consciousness (Alam,1993)

The period starting from 1947 was affected by negotiations about the future of Hyderabad State. The new role and place of Hyderabad and all the princely States were being redefined

when it was known that the Britishers would leave India. To facilitate the transfer of power to independent India a mission was formed by the British Parliament known as the Cabinet Mission. This mission gave recommendations on the future of British-ruled India, the British-protected princely States and unified India. It recommended that: "(1) there should be a union of India, embracing both British India and the states, which should deal with the following subjects: Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communication, and should have the powers necessary to raise the finance required for the above subject. (2) The state should retain all subject and powers other than those ceded to the union." (Majumdar, p. 982,1985)

The princely States agreed to accept these recommendations. Just before Independence there were nearly 600 princely States in India, of which only 18 can be traced back to the seventeenth century; the rest had emerged after the fall of the Moghal Empire and because of British policies. (Munshi,1957)

The Congress did not accept the Cabinet Mission's recommendations. It stated its position in a meeting held on 15 June 1947: that they could not "admit the right of any state in India to declare its independence and to live in isolation from the rest of India." (Majumdar,1985).

Thus "to deal with matters arising between the central Government and the Indian state", Sardar Patel took charge of the Indian states departments created by the Government of India on 5 July 1947. He and Lord Mountbatten, who came to facilitate the transfer of power, convinced the princely States to join the Indian Union. Except for Kashmir, Travancore and Hyderabad, all the other States acceded.

The Hyderabad State took the stand that when the British left and all the agreements and treaties lapsed, then the State by default would become an independent State. Hyderabad was always an independent state, so it had the right to remain independent. A section of the Muslims wanted to preserve the State's autonomy as a Muslim State. But the Government of India felt that from the point of view of defence, internal security and economy India would remain vulnerable to grave dangers with an independent Hyderabad. "An independent state completely landlocked within the heart of another is an unheard of proposition" they noted in their white paper on Hyderabad. (Ibid., p. 985,1985)

The British were also urging the Nizam to be "guided by practical considerations than sticking fanatically to outworn privileges. They further urged him to bring about a peaceful solution with India, bearing in mind that Hyderabad's future was indissolubly linked with that of India" (Chandraya, p. 310,1996). For the Britishers, Hyderabad's perception of its independence was a self-deception. Hyderabad was allowed to function independently, only with regard to a few aspects; the ultimate authority always rested with the British. The aspiration of the Hindu majority was that they "...wanted the state's merger with India so that they could enjoy political freedom and participate in the process of self-government. (Dhanagare. p.196,1983)

Negotiations between Hyderabad and India began in January 1948. During the final phase, a Draft Agreement emerged, but soon Hyderabad changed its position and rejected the draft. Meanwhile, the situation in Hyderabad State became tense because of the Razakars and the Majlis. The Razakars, a militant wing of Majlis headed by Kasim Razvi, were in favour of an independent Hyderabad. They numbered around 1,50,000 in 1948 and were on a recruitment drive. They started harassing all those elements who were in favour of accession – both Hindus and Muslims.

They indulged in extreme activities of killing and looting in some areas. Since the victims were mostly Hindus and the perpetrators were Muslims inspired by the ideology of a Muslim State headed by a Muslim ruler, it created deep insecurities and apprehension in the Hindu minds. The situation became charged and highly communal. The parties who were sympathetic towards the Hindus were also termed communal. In fact, new organizations apart from the Arya Samaj were formed to defend the life, properties and interests of the Hindus. These reactions and responses fuelled the communalist tensions on both sides.

The period from January 1948 to August 1948 was marked by the lowest level of cordiality between the Hindus and the Muslims. The law and order situation deteriorated and the Hindus started migrating from the border areas to safer places. As a response to this grave situation, the Government of India demanded that the Razakars should be disbanded immediately, and the Indian troops should return to Secunderabad, where they had been stationed before their withdrawal early that year according to the Stand Still Agreement signed in November 1947. (Majumdar, p. 987,1985)

The Nizam did not accept these demands. "At this the Government of India informed the Nizam's Government in a final letter on 11th September that they now considered themselves free to take whatever action they thought necessary to restore law and order." (Ibid., p. 987,1985)

On the other hand, beginning from 1946, the communist movement strengthened its roots in the three districts of Hyderabad State, as a reaction to the oppressive feudal systems, which exploited and pauperized the peasants. "The economic conditions of all strata of the Telengana peasantry had deteriorated, first due to the depression and latter on account of the War. The peasant groaned under the tyranny of landlords, deshmukhs and sahuakars, and (an) unsympathetic police force and an unfair revenue, Judicial, administrative machinery that added misery to his poverty." (Dhanagare, p. 191,1983)

The "Telangana insurrection", as the movement is popularly called, was anti-Nizam and pro-merger. It set up village republics, made the Nizam's Government ineffective and functioned as a parallel Government in the areas where it operated. It did not mobilize the people on communal lines. The affected peasants, whether Hindus or Muslims, were a part of this movement. To counter the movement the Nizam's Government would send Razakars and police to protect the Hindu or Muslim landlords. It needs to be mentioned that the communist movement in the rural areas placed the Hindu-Muslim relationship in a context which was non-communal and secular as against the urban areas, where the Majlis and Arya Samaj's politics coloured and vitiated perceptions.

Consequent to the Nizam's refusal to the Indian Government's demand that Indian troops be stationed in Hyderabad, orders were given for the troops to march into the State on 13 September 1948 from five access points. 'The Government of India declared that it was not an 'act of war' but a mere 'Police Action' intended to restore peace and tranquility inside the state and a sense of security in the adjoining Indian territory.'" (Majumdar, p. 986,1985)

In this operation, which was named 'operation polo', 20,000 soldiers from the Indian side (70,000 according to another source) participated under the command of General J.N.

Chowdhary and planned by General RajenderSingh Jee. The Hyderabad forces comprised 22,000 regular army men; 10,000 men with modern small arms; 10,000 armed police; 10,000 indisciplined Arabs and about 1,00,000 Razakars, of whom 20,000 had firearms the remaining spears and swords (Munshi p. 237,1957). On the fifth day of the operation, i.e. on 17 September 1948, the Nizam's army and the Razakars surrendered without offering any significant resistance. The Indian army entered Hyderabad city on 18 September 1948. The Nizam ordered 'cease-fire', outlawed and banned the Razakars, and lifted the ban on the State Congress.

The army action had successfully liberated Hyderabad State and fulfilled the political aspirations of the people by ending the feudal and anachronistic reign of the Nizam, and paved the way for the State's integration. The people welcomed the troops enthusiastically (Dhanagare, p. 205,1983). On 26 January 1950, the state acceded to the Union of India and after the reorganization of states in 1956, Hyderabad ceased to exist as a separate state. It now exists as a city.

The Military Governor, J.N. Chowdhary, was in charge of Hyderabad's administration from September 1948 to November 1949. During this period, the military administration issued the Jagir Abolition Regulation and appointed the Agrarian Enquiry Committee to recommend comprehensive land reform legislation. This was in addition to taking many other urgent measures related to the law and order problem and rehabilitation.

The Military Governor's next task was to contain the Telangana insurrection. "As the Indian Army was advancing and rounding up the razakars, the apparent target, the communist dalams on the Telangana front acquired a large amount of arms and ammunition abandoned by the panicking and disintegrating razakar force. This strengthened the rebels' positions only for a while. Once the razakars were overpowered, and a military administration set up under the command of General J.N. Chowdhary, the offensive was immediately directed at the peasant rebels in the troubled district of Telangana. The superior Indian Army spared no measure to suppress the communist squads. Fighting the Indian Army over 2,000 peasants, and party workers, were killed. By August 1949, nearly 25,000 communist and active participants in the revolt were arrested; by July 1950 the total of detainees had been 10,000'. (Ibid., p. 200,1983). The communists were convinced that the police action was more against them rather than the razakars and the Nizam.

The Police Action and its consequences proved disastrous for the Muslims. It also affected the socio-political, economic and cultural environment of Hyderabad State. The Muslims residing in Hyderabad and Marathwada region were the most affected though Muslims of other places were also equally affected. Earlier the Hindus were affected because of Razakars, whose situation was equally grave in the border areas. "Nearly five lakhs of Hindus who had fled the state from August 1947 to the beginning of September 1948, have had to be resettled; while many Muslims, specially those from the districts where the Razakars activities were the severest, suffered from the retaliations which occurred during and just after the Police Action. Muslims from the affected district came into Hyderabad city and other large centres as displaced persons; others from the unaffected districts also began to move to the towns as a result of (the) panic. The persons who migrated to Hyderabad city alone numbered between 3,000 and 4,000 families. One of the first tasks facing the new government was therefore to create normal conditions and (build) confidence among the local

displaced Muslims, so that they might return to their homes and be restored to their original occupations and properties” (Reid, in *Inventing Boundaries*, p. 260,2000).

Liaq Ali, the Prime Minister of Hyderabad at the time of Police Action, alleged in his article on the events of Police Action "that there was mass massacre of civilian population, men, women and children all along when the Indian forces has entered the towns of Osmanabad, Kalyani, Bidar and many other places with (a) special show of vengence against the Muslims."

Later, Khazi Abdul Gaffar and Pandit Sunder Lal of the Congress surveyed the damages and atrocities of the Police Action and came up with detailed reports. This report was not made public for fear of upsetting sentiments and causing disruption.

The consequences of the Police Action for the Muslims can be summarized as follows:

“...with the defeat of the Nizam and the Razakars, an entire system collapsed. A new ideology and democratic rule replaced hereditary rule. The ideological change had serious material consequences too. The Nizam's bureaucracy was dismantled and reorganized, and the feudal estates abolished. As a result, for the Muslims, in particular, the sources of income dried up substantially.

“Of the six main occupational categories for Muslim occupations – work on feudal estates, domestic service for aristocratic families, public administration, the police force, the armed forces, industry and trade – four were directly affected by the end of the Nizam’s rule. The first two were undermined by the land reforms and the elimination of absentee landlords, and the next two by the overhaul of Nizam’s bureaucracy. The Nizam’s armed forces were folded up between 1949 and 1950, and continuation in Police and Civil administration was made virtually dependent on evidence of lack of association with (the) Razakars. With the terror of the Razakars gone, a large number of personal scores were also settled, leading to the considerable violence against the Muslims in the districts. Since Hindus constituted a small proportion of the Nizam’s Police, Army, and Civil Administration, the drastic alterations in the Nizam’s bureaucracy hurt Muslims disproportionately.

“The number of Muslims who lost their jobs cannot be directly ascertained from the available statistics. Indirect evidence of large-scale Muslim misery after the Police Action, however, is beyond doubt. In a 1956 survey, Muslims constituted 48% of the street beggars in Hyderabad city, more than the scheduled castes, and ‘the Police Action, abolition of Jagirs, (and) disbandment of the regular and irregular forces’ constituted a principal reason for the high Muslim incidence of begging. Similarly, in 1960–61, a survey of cycle rickshaw drivers in Hyderabad city, who earn very small incomes, found that 68 percent of the drivers were Muslim and 32 percent non-Muslim. Moreover, nearly 24% of the Muslim rickshaw drivers were previously employed by the Nizam's estates.

“Under the Nizam, nobility was primarily heredity and employment principally dependent on patronage. Skills or levels of education that could

provide alternative employment were missing. The fall of the Nizam thus left a lot of Muslims without any 'respectable' livelihood. Oral histories and novels suggest that lesser, debt-ridden, absentee landlords were among those who took to rickshaw pulling, and women from some of these families turned to prostitution. In the 1952 elections, Muslims overwhelmingly voted for the communist party because it was the only party in Hyderabad capable of beating the Congress, which most Muslims viewed as an adversary.

“The fate of Muslims thus under went a tragic metamorphosis. Some have argued that the tragedy was self inflicted and that the Muslims felt after 1948, what (the) Hindus did during the period 1944–1948.” (Varshney, pp. 204–205,2002).

Before Police Action, the employment situation and socio-political status of the Muslims were depicted by the 1931 census which

"... showed that in a state with an eighty-eight percent Hindu population, Muslims held two-thirds of all the jobs and in some departments their percentage was as high as ninety. (Only in one area of employment did the Hindus predominate; out of 99,184 village officers, 96,670 were Hindus.) In the same year, Muslims held about eighty eight percent of the 1500 high profile government jobs. While only eleven percent were held by Hindus: of these Hindu officials 138 were Brahmins and only twenty-six Reddys, in spite of the fact that Reddys were the most numerous of the landed castes in the Telengana region of Hyderabad State. According to the 1931 census, another 15% were in trade and business. In 1929, when the Industrial Trust Fund was established to help in the growth of modern industry, except in a very few cases, almost all patronage went to a few Muslim families.

“Given the highly agrarian nature of the economy and given the fact that over eighty percent of the rentier -landlords were Hindus, the composition of the ruling classes was community-wise, obviously of a mixed nature. But also given the fact that key decision making, vantage positions were held by Muslims in an overwhelming number, it created a situation preponderantly in favour of Muslims in the exercise of state power. This fact is of considerable importance in spite of the visible presence of Hindus – both North Indian and indigenous – among the ruling elites: for example, Maharaja Kishan Pershad, an aristocrat, was the Prime Minister of the Nizam for over a decade.” (Alam, p. 163,1993)

Thus Muslims “suffered a very rapid and visible decline within a decade or so after that (Police Action)”. There was a “state of uncertainty and loss of the Muslims’ confidence, and anger” (Ibid.,1993). Also “resentment, agony, and bitterness marked the mood.” (Varshney,2002)

These circumstances affected the Hindu–Muslim relationship in Hyderabad in a drastic way and a new phase of communal conflict and violence began. The period of communal conflict and violence in last five decades can be divided into three phases "an uneasy communal calm (1948-57); the re-emergence of communal violence (from 1957 to the mid-1970s) and

institutionalized communal polarization and unrelenting communal carnage (since 1978).” (Ibid., p. 204,2002)

Other Causes

The circumstances surrounding the event of the Police Action provide a broader context to the communalism experienced in recent times. But there are other specific causes which directly and indirectly contributed to the communal conflicts in the city of Hyderabad.

One cause was the changing demographic pattern of Hyderabad, especially of the old part of Hyderabad which is the epicenter of communal riots. This pattern was disturbed after the Police Action of 1948 and the transfer of power in 1951, when Hyderabad was integrated into the Indian Union. Some of the Muslim families, especially the elites and middle classes, fled. Most of them preferred to migrate to Pakistan, though many settled in other parts of India as well. A simultaneous in-migration occurred along with the out-migration.

A study conducted by Ratna Naidu shows that “A century ago 1,23,675 people (1881 census) lived in the walled area which extended over the same 2.5 square miles as it does today. Nine years ago, the number of people living there was 2,40,962 (1981 census). Thus the population almost doubled in these hundred years. There is also a simultaneous doubling of density figures. The 1881 figure of 77 persons per acre shot up to 178 persons per acre in 1981.... [in] 1951, the census year immediately after the dismantling of the Nizams domain, when there were 3,19,028 people living in the walled area. The Muslims formed the majority community, comprising 69 percent of (the) population. The Hindus constituted 25 percent and the rest (Jains, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhist and others) formed 5 percent of the total population. In 1961, the population in the same area was reduced to 1,62,955. Thus during the decades 1951 to 1961, the population of the walled city experienced a negative growth rate, that is -6.5 percent per annum, reflecting the turmoil of the years immediately following the integration of Nizam’s Hyderabad State with India.

“This negative growth rate was due more to outmigration than to lack of natural increase in population which, infact, was 0.95 percent per annum. There seems to have been a mass exodus of population, especially of the Muslims, who constituted 73 percent of the total population which migrated out of the area during 1951–61. From 69 percent in 1951, the Muslim population thus shrank to about 55 percent in 1961. The population of communities other than Hindus also declined from 5 percent from 1951 to 1 percent in 1961. However, the Hindu presence increased from 25 percent to 45 percent. Thus, while the growth rate per annum was -8.67 percent for Muslims and 1.17 percent for Hindus during 1951–61, the rate of natural increase was 0.87 percent and 1.01 percent per annum for Hindus and Muslims respectively, indicating a slightly higher rate of natural increase among Muslims.”(Naidu, pp. 23–26,1990)

The study also shows that

“...with the flight of Muslims from the walled city during 1951–61, there was an invasion of Hindus into the area. The prices of land and buildings must have fallen during those uncertain times, and the Hindus more confident of the future, took advantage of this fact and invested in them. Thus the proportion of Hindu emigrants into the walled city during 1951–61 was 56 percent of the

total emigrants and their proportion in the population increased from 21 percent to 40 percent during the decade....

“We know from the literature that elsewhere in the world this classic pattern of out-migration of one ethnic group and invasion of (the) inner city by another usually results in 'succession', where by the culture and character of the inner city evolves into a new pattern. This did not happen in Hyderabad. ...[N]ot only is there a dramatic reversal of population trends during 1961–71 as compared to the previous decade (the trend of over all negative growth rate was reversed) but the proportion of immigrants to the walled city, who are mostly Muslims, begins to increase, and continues to do so until the 1981 census.

“In comparison, the in-migration of Hindus during the last two decades declined while out-migration showed an upward swing. The trend depicts the flight of the lower classes of the minority community from the districts to the safe haven of the walled city identified with the symbol of Islamic culture.”
(Ibid., p. 27,1990)

This changing demographic situation fuelled the friction between the two communities apart from a growth in the number of ghettos and slums. On the other hand, it also created fear in the Muslims making them a defensive minority.

After the abolition of the Jagirdari system and the *sarf-e-khas* properties, a land mafia emerged along with other criminal groups who, in order to protect and pursue their self-interests, also contributed to the communal conflicts. The communal riots polarized the communities, which affected the sale and purchase of the properties. The trend today is for the Muslims to buy Hindu properties in Muslim areas and vice versa, leading to the emergence of localities on communal lines.

Communalization of politics was one of the major reasons for communal conflicts in Hyderabad. This phenomenon occurred in Hyderabad in two phases. "The first was the aggressive consolidation of Congress hegemony immediately after the integration of Hyderabad State into the Indian union. During this phase, the minority (mainly Muslim) communities were wooed - thereby communalizing politics - in order to cut into the vote banks of the hitherto well-established left parties. In the second phase, there emerged a 'Hindu' party, the Jan Sangh, as a counter to the Muslim communal party, the Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimin. The emergence of the Jan Sangh was facilitated by the delimitation of constituency boundaries, which inadvertently created Hindu vote banks in Muslim areas. The second phase also saw the rise of factionalism in-fighting within the Congress." (Ibid., p. 118,1990)

The communalization of politics began when the Majlis was allowed to be reborn in 1957 after a ban of nine years. Though it changed its methods in the new political environment, Muslims remained its main focus.

“It contested election at all three levels: Municipal, State and Parliamentary. In the municipal elections the MIM performed best in 1960, its first electoral test after rebirth, the MIM contested 30 of 66 seats winning 19 against the Congress 33. In the process, it defeated 17 of the 21 Muslim candidates of the

Congress party, show(ing) how ‘Congress Muslims’ were viewed as ‘traitors’ by the Muslim masses. In the late 1980s... the MIM became the largest party in the municipal corporation and ran the local government.

“In the state assembly elections, the MIM did not do as well although it kept improving its position. It opened its account with one seat in 1962. In 1967 and 1972, it won three of eight assembly seats, all from the old city of Hyderabad. Finally, the MIM contested and lost the parliamentary seat in 1962 and 1967, increasing its vote share the second time.

“With the reinvigoration of the new born MIM, two more developments took place. First of all, the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Jan Sangh (BJS), the BJP's predecessor acquired a foothold in Hyderabad. In the 1952 and 1957 elections, the BJS had no presence there at all. After the MIM fought (the) first elections, becoming the second largest party in (the) Hyderabad Municipal corporation in 1960, the BJS emerged on the political scene. It started with a small share of the popular vote in two assembly constituencies. By the time of the next election (1967), one election after the rise of the MIM, the BJS finished second or third in eight of the ten assembly constituencies in Hyderabad.” (Varshney. pp. 205–206,2002)

Thus, ‘instead of providing an associational space for Hindu-Muslim engagement, the MIM and the Hindu nationalist have split Hindus and Muslims.’(Ibid.,2002)

The delimitation of constituency boundaries became another major cause, which converted political conflicts into communal conflicts. In Hyderabad the delimitation took place in 1956, 1966 and 1967, resulting in the creation of new constituencies. A safe constituency became unsafe for particular political parties, after delimitation, which, in turn, increased political friction and conflicts. In the 1967 election, the electorate was polarised into communal vote banks for the first time. The frequency of election-related communal riots in the 1980s was because of the increased uncertainty regarding electoral outcomes.

The factionalists in the Congress Party used the vulnerability of the old part of the city to dislodge their opponents. The well-organized riots of 1990 to dislodge the then Chief Minister M. Chenna Reddy, offer sufficient proof. These were the same factional elements which created tensions in Hyderabad when the 'Telangana Agitation' was launched in 1972. The revival of the Majlis in 1957 in return for the support of the Congress in order to uproot the communists from the city was another aspect of the factionalism and communalization trends in politics.

The Muslim immigration to the Middle East, starting from the 1970s, after the economically difficult decades of the 1950s and 1960s, was another factor contributing to the communal conflicts. “A rough estimate put the number of Hyderabad Muslims living in west Asia in 1980 at ten percent of the local Muslim population. In a short time, very substantial amounts of money started flowing into Hyderabad, mostly into Muslims families which had lost heavily in material position and status after 1948 and were often pretty destitute”. (Alam, p.156,1993)

The Muslims then tried to enter into different trades. The Hindus who were already in those fields and in most cases dominating, felt insecure. This insecurity and growing competition

with Muslim newcomers resulted in ill-will and jealousy. These emotions and feelings were converted into a hatred for the Muslims.

The money from the Gulf came with the puritanical Wahabi ideology. This encouraged the revivalist trend. The spreading Islamization resulted in the support of Madarsas and Mosques, especially after the demolition of the Babri Masjid. The composite culture of Hyderabad was the greatest victim.

Similarly, religious revivalist trends were present significantly among the Hindus. The number of mosques and mandirs offers an interesting parameter to judge this trend. "In 1917 there were 222 places of worship –164 mosques and 58 temples – in (the) walled city. In 1981, these have risen to 388 places of worship, 222 of them being mosques and the remaining 166 temples." (Naidu, p. 123,1990)

The growing religiosity and communalism resulted in mass reorganization of festivals and procession routes. In Hyderabad, every year, three major processions are organized. The Bonalu procession is a ritual of the indigenous population, which originated much before the Qutub Shahi period. The Muharram procession was established by the Qutub Shahi kings and is observed by Shia Muslims. The third is the Ganesh procession, which has a history in Hyderabad since 1892.

The Moharram procession has retained its original character, whereas the Ganesh and the Bonalu procession have undergone considerable change. "In 1980, a Ganesh Utsav Samithi was formed under the leadership of prominent Hindu religious and political leaders. It might be pointed out here that the samithi was formed in the wake of the November 1979 riots sparked off by the Majlis demonstration of strength, although ostensibly, this demonstration was organized to express sympathy and solidarity with the Islamic world on the forcible capture of the 'Kaaba' in Saudi Arabia. Also, the victorious emergence of the BJP (having won in the Chandrayangutta Constituency, which hitherto belonged to the Majlis) during the 1980 parliamentary elections provided additional support for the organization of this samithi.

"During the 1980 Ganesh Festival, the Samithi, whose other active participants were the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, the Hindu Raksha Samithi, the RSS activists and some of the local businessmen, took up the task of bringing together all the old city processions to form a single, monolithic procession." (Ibid., p. 129,1990)

Also "the first chairman of the Ganesh festival, the prominent Hindu nationalist in the city, openly admits that the purpose of enlarged processions was to demonstrate to the Muslims how united the Hindus could be. 'It was necessary to do so', he argued, 'because, riding on the new found prosperity brought in by migration to the Middle East, the Muslims had started causing too much nuisance. Their mosques had become shinier and their prayers louder, often broadcast on loudspeakers. Muslims', he concluded, 'had to be taught a lesson'." (Varshney, p.182,2002)

In response to the Ganesh procession, the Muslim communalists came up with the new 'Panka' procession. It is organized by MIM (as part of the annual death ceremony – *Urs* – of two saints at Nampally) and taken out just three days before the Ganesh procession, which add to the tensions in an already vulnerable environment. These processions have triggered quite a few of the violent communal riots.

Another factor contributing to the communal conflicts of Hyderabad is the social change and mobility in the lower castes. These castes – Bhoois, Lodhas, Pardis, Vadars, Gaulees, Lambadas and Munoor Kapu – were always looked down upon by the Muslims. They have been moving up the social scale and are today employed in the Government services, mostly occupying the lowest rungs. They have acquired a sense of dignity and pride with their professional achievements. But they carry bitter memories from the past, and now harbour thoughts of revenge. They are in the forefront of aggressive Hindu politics in Hyderabad, ready to communally combat Muslim communalism. They have been communally active on their own, though they are often mobilized and used by larger Hindu communal organizations. (Alam, p.152,1993)

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