



SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS UNDER ASAFJAH I DYNASTY

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ABSTRACT In some of the literary works on the Asaf Jahi Dynasty highlights the dictatorial tendencies under their rule and forgets to give due importance to the socio-economic and cultural developments undertaken by the Asaf Jahi rulers. The rulers of this dynasty were great patrons of art, architecture, literature, culture, ornamental collections and cuisine. Their rule brought socio-economic and cultural transformation in the state and this paper underscores the same. In spite of dictatorial tendencies of the Asaf Jahi rulers, they led for the development of the state by industrialization and urbanization. In this paper an attempt is made to discuss category-wise and chronologically some of the principal institutions and to focus on the important role they have played in the making of Hyderabad State in its various historical phases of growth and development.

KEYWORDS :

INTRODUCTION

With the decline in the authority of the Mughal emperors, the governors of large provinces, subadars, and the great zamindars consolidated their authority in different parts of the subcontinent. Through the eighteenth century, the Mughal Empire gradually fragmented into a number of independent, regional states. Broadly speaking the states of the eighteenth century can be divided into three overlapping groups: (1) States that were old Mughal provinces like Awadh, Bengal and Hyderabad. Although extremely powerful and quite independent, the rulers of these states did not break their formal ties with the Mughal emperor. (2) States that had enjoyed considerable independence under the Mughals as watan jagirs. These included several Rajput principalities. (3) The last group included states under the control of Marathas, Sikhs and others like the Jats. These were of differing sizes and had seized their independence from the Mughals after a long-drawn armed struggle. The Old Mughal Provinces Amongst the states that were carved out of the old Mughal provinces in the eighteenth century, three stand out very prominently. These were Awadh, Bengal and Hyderabad. All three states were founded by members of the high Mughal nobility who had been governors of large provinces – Saadat Khan (Awadh), Murshid Quli Khan (Bengal) and Asaf Jah (Hyderabad). All three had occupied high mansabdari positions and enjoyed the trust and confidence of the emperors. Farrukh Siyar receiving a noble in court. Asaf Jah and Murshid Quli Khan held a zat rank of 7,000 each, while Sa'adat Khan's zat was 6,000. Hyderabad Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah, the founder of Hyderabad state, was one of the most powerful members at the court of the Mughal Emperor Farrukh Siyar. He was entrusted first with the governorship of Awadh, and later given charge of the Deccan. As the Mughal governor of the Deccan provinces, Asaf Jah already had full control over its political and financial administration. Taking advantage of the turmoil in the Deccan and the competition amongst the court nobility, he gathered power in his hands and became the actual ruler of that region. Asaf Jah brought skilled soldiers and administrators from northern India who welcomed the new opportunities in the south. He appointed mansabdars and granted jagirs. Although he was still a servant of the Mughal emperor, he ruled quite independently without seeking any direction from Delhi or facing any interference. The Mughal emperor merely confirmed the decisions already taken by the Nizam. The state of Hyderabad was constantly engaged in a struggle against the Marathas to the west and with independent Telugu warrior chiefs (nayakas) of the plateau. The ambitions of the Nizam to control the rich textile-producing areas of the Coromandel Coast in the east were checked by the British who were becoming increasingly powerful in that region.

RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

The religious social and educational institutions of Hyderabad have, through the ages, acted as powerful magnets to attract people from diverse parts of India and of varied cultural backgrounds. They have also played a key role in integrating these diverse elements of Hyderabad Society. These institutions reflect the cultural heritage of India.

Society of the former Hyderabad State was essentially rural-based, as

around 88% of the population resided in villages. Poor literacy rate which stood at 70 literates per 1000 persons in 1940 – 41 remaining lowest not only as compared to British Indian Provinces, but even as compared to some of the Native States, such as Travancore, Cochin, Mysore Central Provinces and Berar and undeveloped means of transport and communications affected internal and external exchange and impact. Organisation of society became essentially based on the crafts or occupations that were pursued by the different sections of the society. Castes, such as *Kapus*, or cultivators, *Kammari* or blacksmith, *Sale* or weaver, *Golla* or shepherd, *Madigas* or cobblers *etc.*, have developed on their basis. But, it is significant to realise that agriculture and the castes that got engaged in it, became the focal point or the axis around which the vast rural social organisation revolved. *Brahmins* who attended to the performance of marriages, funeral rites and religious ceremonies, *patwaris* or village *Karnams* or accountants who looked after the preparation and maintenance of village land records and revenue matters, and *patels* or village headmen who looked after the maintenance of law and order in the village, were all held in high esteem and regard by the villagers.

CULTURAL CONDITIONS

Former Hyderabad State is very well noted for its composite or cosmopolitan culture. People speaking Persian, Urdu, Telugu, Marathi and Kannada languages lived together as members of one community. Persian remained as official language upto 1893, and from this year upto the end of the regime in 1948, Urdu occupied the official language status. Besides these, Hindi and English are also spoken, but not as primary languages. Because of the cosmopolitan nature of Hyderabad city, people from all parts of India and foreign lands flocked to it, and lived harmoniously and peacefully, though professing different religions. Telugu literature got enriched during the rule of the Qutbshahis, the illustrious predecessors of the Asafjahis. Addanki Gangadhara *Kavi* of 16th century and a native of Golconda, dedicated his work '*Swayamvaropakhyanam*' to Ibrahim Qutbshah. Saranga Tammayya, a *Karnam* 167(a) of Golconda at the time of Quli Qutbshah, wrote '*Vaijayanti Vilasam*.'

DARGAHS OR SHRINES OF MUSLIM SUFI SAINTS

The *Dargahs* or Shrines of Muslim *Sufi* saints, on the one hand, throw light on the importance Islam has attained in the area they are located, and on the other hand, they testify to the cultural unity of India for, among the devotees of these Muslim Sufi saints, there are both Muslims and non-Muslims. In addition, these shrines have acted as magnets for attracting people and settlements. This is amply demonstrated in the case of Hyderabad

TEMPLES

The temples of Hyderabad, like the *Dargahs*, have played a significant role in promoting social harmony, religious tolerance and as the nuclei of settlements for certain communities which settled down in Hyderabad. The following discussion seeks to highlight the characteristics of the temple. In the following para, an attempt has been made to account for their location, their cultural role and the part played by them in stimulating physical development of the city.

MAHANKALI TEMPLE, SECUNDERABAD

The Temple of Mahankali, built about 150 years ago is situated in the market area of Secunderabad city. It is dedicated to the Goddess Kali who represents the victory of good over evil. It is said that this temple was constructed by a devotee, Shri Surati Appayya who had served in the British army in the early 19th century. During his stay at Ujjain, he visited a temple of Kali daily to offer his prayers for the successful completion of his work and safe return to his home. In his daily prayers, Shri Surati Appayya used to take an oath to construct a temple of Kali and perform the Puja for the rest of his life. He successfully completed his work and returned to Secunderabad in 1815 and immediately installed a wooden idol of Kali in the place where the present temple stands and started performing Puja regularly. The temple was then called Ujjain Mahankali. In the year 1864 A.D., a marble stone idol of Kali was brought from Ujjain and was installed in the temple, strictly according to scriptures.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Nizam rulers gave importance to Irrigation to promote agriculture. Irrigational works in Hyderabad was on increase there were 5,362 tanks, 14,494 Kuntas and 1,36,568. Project completed during 1868-84 include Ibrahim Patnam Project, Balkapur Channel. During late 19th C Benoor, Mahabubnagar Projects were started. They completed Tungabhadra, Nizam Sagar and the early work of Nagarjuna Sagar was started during this period. From 1875 to 1940 tank irrigation multiplied nine fold, while total irrigation in Telangana grew by seven fold. In 1920, the tributaries of major rivers were tackled by construction of several medium-sized irrigation projects, the notable among them were Pocharam, Dindi, Palair, Wyra, Manair and anicuts at Ghanpur on Manjira and Khanapur on Godavari. Because of bonafide extension of cultivation, regular assessments and beneficial irrigational schemes agricultural production and market for it increased.

The State imported articles like Fruits, Silk, Cotton Stuffs, Opium, Scents, and drugs, spirit, sugar, minerals, silk and salt etc. The Chief exports include Grains, Oil seeds, cotton seeds, Indigo, Timber, Jaggery, Paper and live stock exports were more compared to imports. Markets played a very important role in trading activities. The different kinds of markets included regulated markets, unregulated markets, Mandis, Ganja, weekly bazaars, periodical bazaars, Ursus, Melas, Jatra and Cattle Bazaars. The Nizam Government encouraged trade in the state and provided transportation facilities like Railways and buses for Trade. The Government provided protection for traders inside the state and outside the state.

The railway construction work on the Nizam's state Railway began in 1871, and as the work progressed it became increasingly obvious that the State was in capable of coping with the mounting financial burden that had been placed on it. With the consent of the Government of India, the Asaf Jah dynasty entered into an agreement on 27th December, 1883 with the Nizam's Guaranteed State Railway Company by which the company purchased the railway line from Wadi to Secunderabad and under took to construct new lines from Secunderabad to Warangal and then to Bezawada (Vijayawada) and Chanda.

The Hyderabad State occupied good position in trade and commerce in India. The State supplied large quantity of articles for different parts of India and abroad. The exports were more to Hyderabad State, when compared to imports. The State occupied a prominent place in trade. The Government encouraged communication facilities in the State. The Nizam-VII took interest for development of Railways in the State. In the State, two gauges were very important. One is Metre gauge and other is Broad gauge. The railway was very important for trade and passengers were carried. In A.D.1935, the Madras-Karachi Air Service was linked with Hyderabad with Hakimpet as landing ground.

The important industries of Nizam included Singareni Collieries (1921), Nizam Sugar factory (1937). Allwyn metal works (1942), Praga tools (1943), Sirsilk (1946), Hyderabad Asbestos (1947), Kharkahana Zinda Tillismat (1906), Charminar Cigarette (1925), Vazir Sultan Tobacco Company (1930), Azam Jahi Mills Warangal (1934). All these industries played a vital role in the State economy and provided employment opportunity for the people in Hyderabad State. In addition to textiles, dye, sugar, diamond, Iron, ship-building industries were very popular. After agriculture, it was industry that provided employment to the people. There was industrial stagnation from 1724-1870 and there was development of modern industry from

1870 to 1948. Abundance of mineral resources were a great asset to Hyderabad. Coal, Gold, Iron, Granite, Graphite, Diamond and other mines played a pivotal role in improving state economy. These mines gave production for communication and power etc. In 1883 the Raichur Doab Gold fields also started Gold Mining operations. The Wandalli and Topaldoddi mines produced Gold. The Hatti Gold Mine was an important mine in Nizam Hyderabad state, which exported Gold from Hyderabad state to different places abroad.

PUBLIC HEALTH

The Nizam gave much importance to Medical and public health service. They established dispensaries, hospitals and other health centers in various parts of the State. In every district headquarters, one district hospital with good accommodation and beds was established. The district hospitals were manned by a Civil Surgeon, two Medical Officers, one Lady Medical Officer, One Nurse, three compounders etc. The small dispensaries were established in each taluq of the State. The finances of the Medical Department were met from two different sources-Diwani and Sarf-I-Khas. The paigahs, Jagirs, and Samasthans were having their own dispensaries. The first medical institution to be opened is the Residency Dispensary (later Known as Sultan Bazar Hospital, this was followed by Hospital for poor (now Gandhi Hospital) this was established in 1851. The Afzal Gunj Hospital (now Osmania General Hospital was opened in 1866 A.D. It trained Medical students. In 1897, Ronald Ross discovered Malaria spreads through mosquitoes he carried out his discovery in an improvised laboratory in Secunderabad.

CONCLUSION

Telangana, under the Nizam's, was the largest princely state in India. Area wise it was as big as England and Scotland put together. The State had its own currency, mint, railways, and postal system. There was no income tax. During the Asaf Jahi period, Persian, Urdu, Telugu and Marathi developed simultaneously. Persian was the official language up to 1893 and then Urdu up to 1948. The Nizam is also accused of autocracy; if that was true then why he would constitute committees for different purposes such as to establish a university committee. The Nizam is also accused of lacking in vision, if this was true then he would have not separated legislature, executive and judiciary which happened in way back 1920s itself. In fact, the people of Telangana were not fighting against the Nizam but were against village Zamindars, landlords, Jagirdars and most of them were Hindus.

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