

**Nizam's Rule and Muslims
Truth and Fairy Tales about Hyderabad's Liberation**

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Editorial

We welcome our readers to this inaugural issue of Anveshi's *Broadsheet on Contemporary Politics*.

The purpose of the Broadsheet is to provide a forum for the discussion of emerging issues in the national and regional context. This is the first of a series we hope to bring out on an approximately quarterly basis, in a bilingual format. This issue covers the current debate on the Nizam's rule. The two related controversies, one regarding the Nizam's character as a ruler before the Police Action of 1948 and two, the celebration of 17th September as Telangana Liberation Day, define the debate. This edition contains essays already written in popular media in Urdu and Telugu, with two new essays written in English and translated into Telugu. All the essays are presented to the readers in both English and Telugu. Further issues of the Broadsheet are in conception: one is planned on the question of identity in contemporary debate. Another edition is expected to examine debates around the new laws being drafted in relation to sexual violence, mental health and marital breakdown. A third will focus on the proposal for and discussion around the caste census. A fourth issue will discuss the different views on the Arogyasri healthcare programme in Andhra Pradesh, etc.

One of the problems with living political discussion is that it is often conducted without any thought to record and retrieval. Essays momentarily animate scattered news columns and public meetings and are lost to memory soon after. The importance of their voice in pointing to the need to think afresh is lost. The Broadsheet will bring together a selection of important articles on the chosen issue from different locations. We hope that the publication of at least a sample of these in one place will help preserve the liveliness and insight of these eruptions for future readers.

A difficulty with heated debate in media is that it is not too well thought through. It responds to the pressure of the moment, with some insight, much opinion and occasional wisdom. On the other hand, theoretical knowledge enters late, moves slowly and demands rigour. It finds public discussion too rapid and superficial. Theory usually appears in learned journals. Thus media discussion and theoretical writing are separated by both speed and

location. In this forum, we will try to go beyond this familiar split between high theory and local discussion, in an attempt to find effective ways to think about the questions and crises that confront us. The Broadsheet is expected to provide a common location where ideas, ways of arguing and thinking, and 'theory' can speak to each other.

The Broadsheet will provide a milieu for the editorial group [this will be different for each issue] in which they select the writings to be reproduced, and if they feel so compelled, write essays for the broadsheet. Thus on the one hand, the choice of what to reproduce in this compilation will be determined by the editorial group's insight, purpose and agenda in relation to the issue being covered. On the other hand, an essay specially written for this purpose is an offering, in humility, of a point of view. As with all offerings and gifts, it may be only worth throwing away! That is for the reader to decide.

We encourage the readers to continue the debate in letters to the editor. A strong intervention through letters will result in a new, related edition of the broadsheet in the following months, looking at the new material and sharpening the perspective further.

While editorial groups will have specific agendas and perspectives, Anveshi as an organization has its own – i.e., providing a forum in which such discussion can take place. In our understanding a forum is a space for discussion, concurrence and difference. Conceived in this manner, it forces us to look at the possibility that the way we think currently may not meet the need of the situation. A forum helps us think in richer, more responsible and responsive ways. The direction such thinking will take is not predictable. This critical agenda is guided by Anveshi's unique position in political debate and theoretical intervention as an organization that is dedicated to finding ways of thinking that are effective in our predicament.

The twin controversies around the character of the Nizam, and the celebration of 17th September as Telangana Liberation day are the topic of our first edition. We had noticed that interesting discussions were going on in the Telugu and Urdu press regarding these issues. We felt the discussion suitable for our broad-

sheet since many positions express themselves with intensity. Readers of Telugu media are generally not aware about the discussion in Urdu and vice versa. We have therefore decided to cover this controversy by selecting some pieces from the Telugu and Urdu print media. One article, M.A. Moid's "Silences and History" is specially written for this issue. We have also selected a foreword written by Hasanuddin to a paper written by an officer of the Gorkha Regiment about the significance of 17th September. We have titled Hasanuddin's foreword "A Muslim Perspective about Hyderabad" for this selection. There is another article by R. Srivatsan, "Two connotations of 'Nizam'" which tries to examine this Controversy from a somewhat new theoretical perspective. We have also reproduced Rafath Seema and Kaneez Fathima's essay and a few selected responses to it from the Telugu debate that occurred in Andhra Jyothi. These pieces have been selected by the editorial collective to represent the overall debates and discussions that are taking place in the Urdu and Telugu press. The debates on this subject in the English media are limited and uninvolved, as are those in Hindi.

Till a few years ago, many Muslims were lukewarm about the last Nizam and their memories of his rule were somewhat faded. They did not object strongly when the right wing parties and organizations started celebrating 17th September as 'Telangana Liberation Day'. But all of a sudden, especially in the recent separate Telangana Movement, the topic of the Nizam has been revived. Many Muslims who were not too keen about the Nizam have become enthusiastic about him, many Muslims who were interested turned into activists, and activists turned into passionate defenders of the Nizam. A general tendency in support of the Nizam spread widely in the public, especially among Muslims (and notably, as the selections in this issue shows, among Dalit thinkers). The question here is that why is there this sudden change?

Secondly, the Telangana agitation enthused many Muslim and non-Muslim groups and created an imagination about the future, whereas among some Muslims, the same agitation also revived receding memories of the bygone days of the Nizam. The question is: how do we understand these ambivalent responses? How do we understand the meaning of Past and Future in this context? It has been widely mentioned in one section of the Urdu press that Muslims are forced to examine and analyse the BJP's optimism and

activism. This is leading them to fear the worst about dormant and underground Hindutva forces. The other section of the Urdu press does not take these fears seriously; they believe in the composite culture and the left political tradition in the region, and hope for a better future for Muslims. But despite these two trends/perspectives, the common tendency is to take the Nizam as a barometer.

Muslims now want to judge the upcoming pro-Telangana leadership—their honesty, attitude and commitment towards Muslim concerns—by examining their public statements about the Nizam and his rule. The controversy around the 17th September was an opportunity for the Muslims to do so. In other words the issue of the Nizam's character is now intimately related with 'Muslim situation' and the 'Muslim question'. In addition, many Muslims realized that ordinary Muslims were being maligned through the attack on the Nizam. They felt this trend was dangerous and should be stopped before Telangana is actually formed, other wise it would have many repercussions. Muslims realize that in the long run the issue of Nizam's rule and his character will be about their identity, culture and existence. These are some of the important factors that have revived the issue of Nizam among the Muslims.

On the other hand the distortions that are being employed in political assertions for the sake of the mass movement raises large questions about 'fact' and 'Truth' in relation to history and politics. Is the democratic mass movement, which is for development and modernization, going to cut or distort the Muslims' relation with their past, as colonialism did to India? How should the aspirations, world-view and history of the minority and marginalized be positioned and understood in a mass movement? These are some of the aspects that are related with the Muslim question in the present context of Telangana Movement, the articulation and clarity of which has a bearing on the Muslims' political conduct.

Why does translating writings about Hyderabad Muslims or Indian Muslims in general into Telugu prove to be so

difficult? Is the problem with Urdu, Telugu or English as languages, or with language worlds? Initial recognition is that each of these language worlds is shaped through particular print histories, publics and politics that are not considered important in others. Issues that are part of common parlance in one language world do not make any sense in others. The same event is memorized in entirely different ways in different language worlds – the accession of Hyderabad state to the Indian Union is an event denoting the strength of the emerging Indian state in historical and political writing in English; it is an event of liberation in the historiography of the linguistic state of Andhra Pradesh; but it is a catastrophe called Police Action (that is not even discussed) for Muslims of the Hyderabad state.

The translator then recognizes that what one is doing is not a technical rendering of what is written in one language into another language but is an active process involving two or more language worlds. The possibilities are exciting – you straddle these worlds, tussle and engage with a concept, memory, event, statement in one language to speak in another. Sometimes the limitations are daunting. The referential world which is available to the author and his/her readers, anchoring the writing in one language is obviously not available in the world to which the translation is addressed. The phrase 'Hyderabad Muslim' which makes ready sense in Urdu does not in English or Telugu. Sometimes, similar conceptual terms that exist in two languages such as 'identity' in English and '*astitvam*' in Telugu (for example) have quite different referential coordinates. When the authors use either of these terms, it requires the translator to be aware of the connotations in both the languages to render it meaningfully from one to the other.

Another issue arises when an author explicitly introduces a conceptual term which is new to the language world into which it is translated. Should one be content with rendering it once and for all by a 'suitably matching' term? When we render it in the receiving language with such a term, how does one deal with the meanings, uses and the referential worlds the term already has? For example, the term

'connotation' can be rendered as any of these terms: '*gurthimpu*' (recognition), '*gnaptiki raavadam*' (remembering), '*manasulo medaladam*' (evoke in the mind), '*tattadam*' (recalling), '*spurinchadam*' (to trigger in memory), '*lothaina artham*' (deep meaning). How do we put in place a stable term to represent the concept adequately? We came to understand that this putting place of a stable term is a *process*. Thus while we chose to use '*sphurana*' as the stable term, we also used the other terms to support it in place.

When theoretical terms are also used in everyday discussion, another problem arises. For instance, a phrase such as 'silences and history' may be rendered as '*charitra nissabdaalu*' or '*chaaritraka nissabdaalu*' or '*charitalo nissabdaalu*' depending on whether the author is referring to the academic discipline of history, popular history or memories of the past. Even after accounting for all these differences, it may fail to render what the author intends to convey.

One can imagine the enterprise of translation as replete with possibilities not merely of rendering new concepts, ways of thinking, and argument but also of incorrectness, missed opportunities and failure. This recognition, whether gained individually or collectively, would force the translation enterprise to be attentive to the politics, texture and nuance of the material under translation. And, this has been a part of the editorial team's learning during the translations of the essays in this issue across three languages, Urdu, English and Telugu.

The members of the editorial collective for this issue are: M.A. Moid, A. Suneetha and R. Srivatsan.

We would like to acknowledge Kaneez Fathima and Ashala Srinivas for the enthusiasm with which they have participated in the translation exercise. We would also like to thank Gogu Shyamala, N. Manohar, Uma Brughubanda and Susie Tharu for their editorial inputs to the discussion of the contents and translations. T. Sreelakshmi has been an invaluable support in Telugu word processing and page layout design.

A. Suneetha

On behalf of the Editorial Collective

We welcome letters of comment and criticism in response to this issue. Kindly address your letters to: The Editorial Team, The Broadsheet on Contemporary Politics, Anveshi Research Centre for Women's Studies, 2-2-18/49, D.D. Colony, Amberpet, Hyderabad 500013. Email letters may be addressed to broadsheet@anveshi.org. Responses will be published in the following issue of the broadsheet, provided the content is found to be free of abusive language, hate speech and personal allegations.

Silences and history

■ M.A. Moid

What shocked Americans on 11th September 2001 was not just the destruction and deaths but the realization that they were hated. They wondered why? They had thought that they were God fearing, they believed in freedom and progress, were beneficial to humanity through their science, technology, business and aid across the world, and yet they were hated! A similar bewilderment arose among the Muslims in the aftermath of Police Action in 1948 on the occasion of Hyderabad's accession to India. Muslims were shocked, not by just the destruction of their property and the deaths sustained by their community, but also by the realization that they were hated and hated so intensely. It was shocking, hurt deeply and was degrading. The Americans reacted with rage, attacked and devastated two countries, whereas Muslims in Hyderabad reacted by becoming silent and withdrawn. They were overtaken by guilt, suspected themselves and felt that they deserved the calamity.

For a brief period they thought that the hate shown during Police Action was a momentary act of madness, a rage, a spontaneous overreaction – as it seemed to be the year before, during Partition. But there was a second shock when slowly they realized that most of the actions against them were well planned. The third shock was experienced long after, when the Muslims realized that even three decades after 1948, the anger was not forgotten, they were still hated: communal riots, denial of bank loans, and other forms of discrimination were the signs. They wanted to be equal citizens, but felt they were denied the opportunities and resources to do so.

We see that the character of these shocks intensified the trauma among Muslims. They noticed other kinds of silence. Those Hindus, who were actually the biggest beneficiaries of the Nizam's rule, and were close to Muslims in most senses, were now silent. These Hindus were the ones who had, before the Police Action, wished that Hyderabad should remain a separate country because they saw the possibility that that they might benefit more

than the Muslims. They did not come forward to defend or explain the Muslims' predicament, but for a few exceptions. That even these Hindus opted for silence was shocking to Muslims. In these situations Dalits came closer to Muslims in day-to-day situations and comforted them. Muslims of the erstwhile Hyderabad State realized that their many close Hindu friends were secretly Arya Samajis, Jana Sanghis, Communists and Congressmen. This was another shock that was deeply disturbing. Their social relationships broke down and they withdrew into their own shells.

On the other hand those Hindus who knew the truth were in a minority. This group was overpowered by circumstances and felt guilty that they were not able to do anything for their close Muslims friends in times of their trouble. This group and the Dalits came forward to share Muslim sorrows.

If we examine the nature of these silences in Hyderabad we see that they were at one level a means to hide their fears and anger. At another level, Muslims wanted to hide their embarrassment because of their association or dissociation with different positions. They were embarrassed for their passivity, their aloofness or even their association with the Congress, the communists or the Majlis for various reasons. Every position was wrong and required lies and exaggeration to justify it. Another silence was due to the sense of impotence that emerged, because of lack of material, moral, political resources and the failure of self-confidence. All Muslims, regardless of the group or party they belonged to, felt the same. They were depressed and felt moral pangs that they could not do anything for their fellow sufferers.

The common Muslims, who suffered most in every sense, became silent. They did not want to share their grief and suffering because it was an impossible task to recall the horrors of Police Action. They did not share their grief with similarly suffering members in the family or locality because they did not want to hurt others. There was silence everywhere and every body pretended as if nothing happened

but everybody knew that internally everybody was suffering. They did not want to share their feelings with Hindus because they feared that Hindus would blame them for all troubles. The urgent need was to escape from the haunting memories and focus on bread and butter concerns. They encouraged each other collectively through silence to recover from their trauma and shock. After a point silences became so natural that talking about the past became meaningless.

The Muslims elites and leaders who could retain their positions in the new power structures were also silent. It was impossible for them to raise their voice for their less fortunate Muslims brethren and jeopardize their positions. These people saw with their own eyes, what their Hindu colleagues were doing and the kind of anti-Muslim decisions that were being taken. This group secretly blamed the general Muslim community for its mishap, as if they were saying 'we told these obstinate Muslims to join India without any terms. They did not listen to us. Now they are suffering, we were right, they were wrong. Let them suffer'.

While on the one hand the Muslims were silent for the reasons mentioned, on the other, they were surprised by the silences of the people in power in Hyderabad, Delhi and London. This made them ask 'were we so bad that everybody has decided to dump us? Were the Nizam, the Majlis, and the Razaakaars so evil that the Muslims deserved such a huge punishment in their name?' Similarly, 'Why are the Hindus stuck in their memories of that period? Why is every body so obsessed with the Razaakaars, whose active life was only for two years? When can the Muslims forget about the Police Action? Why can't Hindus forget the Razaakaars? Is this a deliberate attempt to embarrass the Muslims, again and again? It looks as if the Razaakaars will be kept alive for 50 years more and the Muslims will have to perpetually face the consequences of this active memory'.

Thus, post 1948 history of Hyderabad is full of the politics of silences and memories. It is an acknowledged fact that these silences have helped and hindered Muslims in various ways. It is also said that Hyderabad is the only place in India where the Muslims have gained a sustained voice after Independence. In other words recent Hyderabad Muslim history is a journey from 'silences' to 'voice'.

Now if take a brief look the kind of history written in such circumstances and conditions

by Muslims, we come to know that these historical works broadly fall in three categories.

Nizam apologetics This trend tried to justify the last Nizam as the best ruler. In this literature, historical records were used substantially to prove that despite being a king he was open minded, pro-reform and pro-people.

Nostalgia The other trend was nostalgia. There was a tendency in these historical works that showed that the authors were missing the past, feeling that the past was better than the present.

Personal writings Memories, experiences and observations in autobiographic mode. These were mostly pleasant and fall in the second category. They avoid the traumatic aspects of history.

Most of these works are in Urdu.

Thus we find no Muslim work on the politics of the decade of 1940, no local histories, no studies on people lives and the impact of Police Action, no understanding of Muslims adjustment patterns. Most Muslim historians have suggested that they are incapable of handling such topics or have felt that it is politically incorrect.

But on the other hand people affiliated to the right wing, communist and congress perspectives wrote much of Hyderabad history. Most of these works, in Telugu or English, are incomplete and one sided, completely devoid of Muslim perspective and at times looks like 'propaganda' and 'hate speech'. The tendency in such work is to look at the last Nizam's period in black and white. The Muslims appear as violent fools, hedonists or villains.

The emerging 'Muslim Voice' in Hyderabad is trying to question these versions, finding it biased and is insisting on reexamining it again with new perspectives that include Muslims in the picture.

Acknowledgments: Some discussion on Hyderabad had occurred at the seminar "Islam in South India", August 2007, Osmania University. I also used my material from various interviews I had conducted between 2007 and 2010 to understand some aspects of Muslim situation in Hyderabad. I also drew on my new understanding of the discussion among Muslims about the recent Telangana agitation. Vinod K. Jairath and Huma R. Kidwai, in their paper "Violence of Silence: 'Police Action' in Hyderabad and its Aftermath" deals with the problem of silence from a sociological perspective.

A Muslim perspective about Hyderabad

The following is the English translation of a foreword written in Urdu by Hasanuddin Ahmed, IAS retired, who served in the Nizam's administration and after 1948 in the State and Central governments in various important capacities. He is a Hyderabad and was close to the last Nizam. He was a witness to many of the events and developments that took place before and after 1948. This foreword was written for a paper titled "17th September 1948 A date without significance" by Captain Lingala Pandu Ranga Reddy a officer from Telangana who belonged to 11 Gorkha Rifles Regiment that took part in 'Operation Polo'. The paper was presented in 69th session of Indian History Congress, held at Kannur University Kerala, 28-30 December 2008, and distributed by Madina Education Centre Nampally, as a booklet in English along with the Urdu foreword. This foreword is translated into English and Telugu for the benefit of those who do not know Urdu.

The unique feature of this foreword is that it presents an important Muslim perspective about the circumstances surrounding the event of Hyderabad's Accession in September 1948. This perspective was constantly suppressed and ignored in last 60 years, leading to a misunderstanding about Muslims on a large scale. Acknowledging this Muslim perspective requires courage and intellectual honesty, and will be difficult for many.

Similarly, captain Pandu Ranga Reddy's paper tried to look into the events from an Army insider's point of view. He had accessed many army records, which is not possible for other searchers and that make this paper very important.

(The paper by Captain Lingala Pandu Ranga Reddy is available with Madina Education center, Nampally and Anveshi Research Centre for Women's Studies, 2-2-18/49 D.D. Colony, Amberpet Hyderabad).

FOREWORD BY HASANUDDIN AHMED

A military officer has written the following paper. Each word in it goes beyond politics, emotions and communalism, showing truth and honesty. Captain Lingala Pandu Ranga Reddy was associated with 11 Gorkha Rifles and now, instead of the rifle, he has taken a pen in his hand. He is aware of the greatness of the pen. He has made the recent history of his country the subject of the following paper.

It is not easy to narrate recent history. The writer belongs to those characters of the drama of 1948 that are still alive. He has cut through the thick veil of lies that have been deliberately spread about the military operation in Hyderabad.

I agree with the author's perspectives that Police Action is seen with political glasses and in communal colors. It is a politics that calls repression justice, and oppression pragmatism. Because of extreme ill will and narrow mindedness, the real facts are distorted to the extreme. There is a thick veil over fact to such a level that something as fundamental as truth appears to be strange.

For the majority of the people of Hyderabad a serious crime has been committed by representing Mir Osman Ali Khan's period in a wrong way. Presenting the truth as it is in the real interest of the public. The period of Mir Osman Ali Khan is such that it deserves the introduction of real facts to the public. A few intellectuals and writers have tried to scratch the surface of history but the majority of them were not witness to the events. They try to analyze these events through available writings which are one sided. The writer presents the real picture, and for this he deserves appreciation.

I was related to Nizam but despite that, in the period of his kingship I was never a royalist and I felt that democracy was a better form of governance than the kingship. However, it is a cruel joke of circumstances that today (on 17 September), democracy as it exists is being compared with an exemplary kingship. Today, people are accepting the limits of democracy not only in the South but also all over the world. In contrast, during kingship, there was a pressure group of intellectuals in Hyderabad because of which innumerable magnanimous works for public welfare had been undertaken that are a hallmark of history.

The sign of bread on the Asaf Jahi flag was the assurance that providing bread for the people living under its shadow was the government's responsibility. I have no knowledge of this sign of on any nation's flag. The communist countries too have not put the sign of bread on their flags. This uniqueness belonged only to the Asaf Jahi flag.

If you remember Hyderabad's past and look at it in the South Asian context, a question emerges in the mind: Why did nature end this great and exemplary society? Apart from various reasons the law of nature also played a role.

Our country is still facing the consequences of those elements, factors and causes that were behind the Accession of Hyderabad. As an important element of the tragic trinity (Viceroy, Congress and Muslim League) Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel accepted the two-nation theory. According to one perspective these leaders were eager to gain power at the earliest, and according to another perspective these national leaders felt threatened by the emerging second-generation leaders (which proved to be true).

So the two leaders wanted to achieve power at all costs and set the country on the right course. Hyderabad State never accepted two-nation theory. In Hyderabad, not only Hindus and Muslims but also many communities were living in peace since two centuries.

Why it could monarchy not exist in Hyderabad, when the queen was the sovereign ruler of Britain? Hyderabad was progressing towards democracy and Mir Osman Ali Khan was no foreigner. In Hyderabad, there was a council of ministers to advise the king. The attitude of this council was such that it used to consider royal dictates 'worthy of respect', not necessarily 'implementable', and Mir Osman Ali Khan's attitude was that of an opposition. In Hyderabad secularism was implemented much before the word was coined. The kings of Hyderabad and the nobility never considered Hyderabad state to be theocratic. This was a need, a uniqueness and strategy of the Hyderabad State and the foundation of the kingdom. Mir Osman Ali Khan consistently followed this strategy. He announced, "In my government there are people belonging to various religions. Protecting them and their religion is the constitution of my kingdom".

The injustices done to Hyderabad state by the freedom movement were many:

During the talks about freedom and partition, the special position and legal status of Hyderabad was completely ignored. All the agreements of Hyderabad were directly with the English crown. On the eve of partition, the representative of the crown ignored all agreements and by not accepting the recognized status of Hyderabad, indulged in an act that is tragic for humanity and shameful to the moral sense. The viceroy brought Hyderabad at the level of other princely states. This was the first injustice.

The princely states were ruling one fourth of India. It was tragic that when their future was being decided their representation was not felt necessary. This was second injustice.

The division of the country (rightly or wrongly) was done on a religious basis. In principle this basis should have been used in relation to the princely states also. If there are Hindu majority in a princely state they should have joined India and Muslim dominated states should have joined Pakistan. But instead 3 options were given to princely states. a). Remain independent b). Accede to India. c). Join Pakistan. The rulers of Hyderabad accepted the first option on reasonable grounds. The two countries i.e., India and Pakistan had just come into existence with the act of British Parliament, their future was not sure and soon after coming into existence a bloodbath took place on the borders. Because of the effects created by riots, murder, loot and arson, most of the Muslims and a large number of Hindus were not feeling ready to join India. In spite of this Mir Osman Ali Khan expressed his intention that on a suitable time frame he will join India (not Pakistan). On this basis negotiations began between India and Hyderabad on equal basis and the Stand Still Agreement was reached. Such an agreement was not signed with Pakistan.

The truth was that Hyderabad needed time but the other party was in a hurry. They wanted accession of all princely states at the earliest. At the governmental level the talks were going on seriously, but at the party level this haste was shown in a shabby and inappropriate way. The

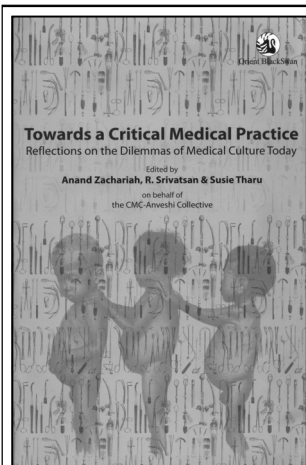
Congress under the leadership of Gandhiji, and on the basis of non-violence, fought the British and gained independence. The same Congress under Sardar Patel and under the influence of RSS started a violent movement against Hyderabad. On the border of Hyderabad, the Communists and the Congress established camps and attacked innocent Muslims in border villages. It was not possible for the military and police of the Nizam to respond to these sudden developments. In this situation Majlis E Ittehadul Muslimeen offered the services of its volunteers, and this was accepted as the last option, since the situation was sensitive and urgent. The anti social elements and workers of political parties wore the dresses of Razaakaars and indulged in loot and murders and put the blame on Razaakaars. In addition massive propaganda was done to malign the latter. In the eleven months, except for the murder of Shoaibullah Khan (which is an interesting story) there was no incident of killing and murder.

If Hyderabad State maintained its distinct identity as part of India, as Pandit Nehru and Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad wished; or at least if the military operation was not conducted in haste for accession; then, things would have been good not only Hyderabad, but for the whole country. There were many treasures in the culture and society of Hyderabad that was much needed for the 'Britishized' India. It is a national duty and a debt that the high values and great achievements of Nizam's period are brought to notice to the fellow countrymen and provide guidance to the new generation.

After reading the paper of Mr. Lingala Pandu Ranga Reddy, I felt as if pen is his and thoughts mine. It is possible that few people agree with our perspective, but how does it matter? It is my effort (and I believe the effort of the author) that the things based on facts should not remain unsaid.

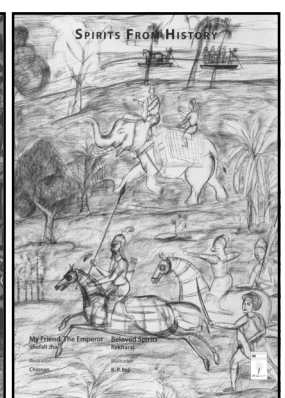
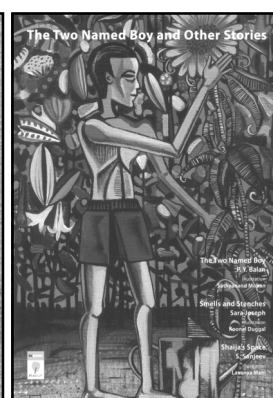
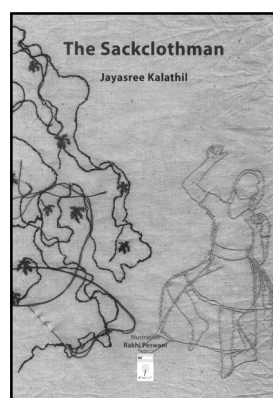
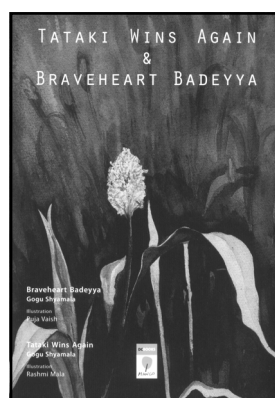
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DIFFERENT TALES



Celebration on my coffin

Hyderabad's Accession or celebration of independence - for whom?

■ M.A. Majid

(From Etemad, Urdu daily, Hyderabad, dated: 28th August, 2010)

Independence day', 'Liberation day', 'Victory day': these are the different names of the demand to celebrate the 17th September. Why? Is the accession of Hyderabad freedom from colonialism? Why, after 62 years, is there a demand to celebrate this day officially? Was Hyderabad State, the only princely state that acceded to India? In 1998 the BJP floated this evil suggestion to celebrate Hyderabad's Independence Day. On that day, in the Nizam College grounds, under the leadership of L.K. Advani, the BJP behaved as if Hyderabad was being acceded to India for the first time. Now after 12 years this BJP agenda has become part of every party's program.

Since the beginning, the BJP has demanded a celebration of 'victory' as Independence Day. Now Congress, TDP, the left, and the right – all parties are demanding that this day should be celebrated officially as victory day, liberation day. The BJP and the communist leaders are writing letters to government – the unity between the two is worth examining. They are united in the demand for 'celebration'—celebration of what? This is not the celebration of transfer of power but it is the celebration of the death of lakhs of men and women, celebration of the dishonor and rape of thousands of women, celebration of the snatching of lakhs of acres of land, celebration of the removal of thousands from government jobs, celebration of the destruction of a language, celebration of the destruction of the character of a University which experimented in providing higher education in a local language. This celebration is going on every year but it has not been given official status until now, when all parties seem united that it should be given official status. The TDP chief Chandra Babu Naidu after being CM for 9 years has now begun demanding the official celebration of Hyderabad's independence. The Telangana leaders of TDP has left the communists and BJP far behind in this demand. The Congress leaders, claiming to be the heirs of Sardar Patel are also making the same demand. TRS will be the first to use this golden opportunity. It has approved the mischief of BJP. It promises 12% reservation but gave no ticket to a Muslim in the recent elections. It appreciates the Nizam, but under this veneer lies nothing but hate.

When the British announced the independence of India on the late night of Friday, 14 August 1947, there were 543 princely states and the majority of them were Hindu Rajas and Maharajas, and almost all of these were loyal to British crown.

The announcement of independence was for those areas that were under direct British control and left the princely states to decide on their own. They could join India or Pakistan or remain independent. Without looking at these political conditions, after 62 years, why is there an insistence on celebrating Hyderabad's 'independence'? If the liberation has to be celebrated then the voluntary or forced accession of 543 princely states should also be celebrated. Why only Hyderabad? When the country gained freedom, Hyderabad was the biggest and richest princely state. This state has been divided and shared between three linguistic states. The British were foreigners, but who fought and gave sacrifices against them? This land is a witness. Was the last Nizam, Mir Osman Ali Khan a foreign ruler? If not, why is there so much hate against his government. Why is the Nizam's period not remembered with good words?

See the background of Hyderabad's Accession. In revenge against a Muslim ruler the Muslim masses had been punished so severely that its wounds are still alive after sixty years. True, the ruler was a Muslim, but masses were not rulers—people were just people. When the sun of Freedom rose, it came as a doomsday to them. This celebration is hate. The future of Hyderabad State became a big question immediately after Independence. The case went even to UNO and with its intervention the Asaf Jahi government was negotiating with the Indian leaders in Delhi. During these negotiations, the Indian government imposed an economic blockage for nearly one year and paralysed the day-to-day life in Hyderabad state. On 13 September 1948, Mohammed Ali Jinnah died. The government of India was waiting for this moment. As the preparations for Jinnah's funeral was going on, the negotiations in Hyderabad House in Delhi kept the Hyderabad's delegation busy. Simultaneously an order for military invasion was passed. You call it 'Operation Polo' or 'Police Action' but the brutal marks of its destruction can be seen even today.

Hyderabad, the identity of Deccan was once known as the Golconda Kingdom. This is the land where, history shows independence was never compromised. In the 17th century this kingdom's freedom was mocking the powerful Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, whose authority was effective between Kabul to Rangoon, and from Delhi to Arcot. The Emperor could not bear it. He decided to subdue this kingdom thinking it was easy, but it took many months. Despite its

massive power he could not invade it with physical force. Later, his forces entered the fort through bribe and treachery. Even then, Abdul Razzak Laary fought bravely and resisted the Mughals. This land, which is called Telangana, asks a question to those who are building their political capital on the suicides of students. It asks those who are creating hysteria and hate in the name of Telangana, 'Do you know the meaning of sacrifice?' Those who want to gain from others sacrifices and selfless deeds cannot decide the political future of this land.

Making a mockery of others' sorrow and writing open letters or requesting the government for an official celebration will not lead anywhere. They want Hyderabad but not Hyderabadis. If they had a liking for 'Hyderabadiness' then they would not have talked about 'celebration'. Muslim leadership has again and again warned against this and clarified its position on Telangana but the worshippers of rising sun, the traitors of Hyderabad wanted celebration..

If there has to be celebration of Hyderabad's accession then the accession of all those 543 princely states should also be celebrated. After Hyderabad's accession, Goa was independent till 1961 and Sikkim till 1975. Why are double standards maintained for Hyderabad? There is the Article 370 for Kashmir, Article 371 for the North Eastern States and for Sikkim; Goa is a special constitutional state but nothing for Hyderabad? On 13 September 1948, Asaf Jahi delegation agreed for a constitutional package but it was cheated.

If Hyderabad's freedom deserved to be celebrated, Swami Ramanand Tirtha would surely have done it since he led the movement against Nizam, even former Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, who was closest to this group (and no one was as anti Nizam as he was) would have done it. After Hyderabad's Accession, why was the Nizam made 'Raj Pramukh'? Will the TRS President KCR, be able to answer these difficult questions?

How can the brokers of power and their sycophants know the meaning of love for the land? Whenever this land called for it, its real lovers spilled their blood. Commander Abdul Razzak Laary knew that he was fighting a mighty emperor who was pious and diligently copied out the Quran. Rather than religion or military might, it was a question of Deccan culture and self respect that drove Laary. Today this question exists in every Hyderabad's mind. How can they accept the celebration on the coffins their dear ones whose blood was spilled in the aftermath of 1948? While their celebration will result in mockery and humiliation, the ultimate aim for which these power brokers are harping on 'celebration' will not be achieved. The celebration of the Accession of Hyderabad is a wound on 'Hyderabadiness'. Saffron and Red flags may become one, but we must remember that Aurangzeb put the Mughal Empire in a coffin after defeating Golconda! History will repeat itself on those who want to celebrate Hyderabad's liberation.

(Translated from Urdu by M.A. Moid)

Do not hurt self respect

■ Rafath Seema and Kaneez Fathima

Muslim Forum for Telangana

(From Andhra Jyothi, Telugu daily, dated 28th February 2010, Hyderabad)

In the democratic movements, there is a need to engage everyone in the broad sense and act in democratic manner. Is the approach of involving the biggest minorities, i.e. Muslims, in the present Telangana movement proper?

Poets, singers and intellectuals abusing Nizam has become part and parcel of the Telangana movement. Is it correct today to sing the Telugu song, 'Banda Enaka Bandi Katti' and say "Nizam gori kat-daam" (we will build the Nizam's tomb)? Do these people not know that this song was written against the landlord Janna Reddy Pratap Reddy, and was later, altered and used for the cinema "Maa Bhumi"! Why do these people not sing the song written in the past, "Rangu Rangula Nehrayya, Nee Rangu Maarenayya Nehrayya", (Oh Nehru of many colors, your color has itself changed) which means that socialism has lost its color?

It is true that communists fought against the Nizam's feudalism. Muslims also took part in that struggle. On one side, while saying no to the feudal Nizam, the communists on the other side bowed down in front of Nehru, why? The bourgeois Nehru himself was against the formation of Andhra Pradesh, but the communists gave the slogan of 'peoples rule in Visalandhra'. From 1944 onwards Razaakaar anarchy took place. Whatever the communists said about the Nizam from 1944 onwards, only that part became recorded in the history. There are books written in English on the Nizam's religious tolerance and development but these are not found in Telugu. A number of books have been written by the communists on peasant armed struggle, why is there not a small booklet on Shaik Bandagi who fought against Deshmukhs? Shoaibullah Khan, editor of 'Imroze' daily, died in the hands of Razaakaars in the year 1948. He was the first and foremost person of India who gave his life for the freedom of press. In the 224 years rule, is only a four-year rule visible? Why are the Muslims ignored in the history, is this the way to treat them?

The rights activists and progressive organizations in their pamphlets criticize Nizam and call him a cruel ruler. Has any king ruled this country democratically? The Nizam had both good and bad qualities, as had any other king; why is it that only the bad side of him is visible to these people? Balagopal, a prominent

Human Rights Activist had appropriately said, 'Hinduism works right in our heads without our consciousness'. This statement of his seems to be correct today! Have these people forgotten the sacrifices of Gulam Rasool and Azam Ali? Is this a responsible position for rights organizations to take?

During the time of constructing High Court building in the year 1919, a Hindu temple was in the middle of that site. The then engineers asked the Nizam whether to eliminate the temple from that site. The Nizam in return asked them, 'how can a temple of Justice be built on the foundation of injustice'? That temple still exists in the premises of High Court. Nizam used to conduct Eid Milap on the festival of Dassera as during Ramzan and interact with common people. Is the Nizam's religious tolerance not visible!

Nizam was the wealthiest (crorepati) person in the world; there were six thousand acres of *sarf-e-khas* lands under him. All these became government property after the formation of 'Visalandhra'. Even the lands given to him as Privy Purse by Nehru were returned back by him to the government. All the kings of the country entered into politics, changed their dressing, came into power and protected their wealth. The Nizam never entered politics, nor did his inheritors. How can the person who left his wealth and power be a cruel ruler? The upper caste people who changed their colours become democrats.

All the historical buildings that are seen today were constructed in the period of Nizam. Nizam was in the position of the Governor as Raj Pramukh of Hyderabad State until 1956. This is ignored completely whereas Burgula Ramakrishna Rao is often referred to as the first Chief Minister. In 1938, Gandhi instructed that there was no need of a Congress struggle in Hyderabad State because every thing was all right.

Formation of Telangana state is the need of our time, but how is it possible for the Muslims under the circumstances mentioned above to take part in the movement whole-heartedly? The people who lost most after the formation of Andhra Pradesh are the Muslims. Earlier forty percent of the Muslims were in the government jobs; now Muslim employees form only two percent. Thousands of acres of lands

are lost. Our history is misapprehended, prejudice increases against us day by day, our language is labeled as religious, and our culture is not respected. Even though the most affected are the Muslims they still hope that their lives will change with the formation of Telangana state. Therefore, we will fight with collective strength whole-heartedly.

Even though some Muslims say that anti-secular forces may rise, we say Modi will not take birth here. Even though he is born, he cannot live politically because Telangana has the history of progressive movements. Can society be democratic which is built on false propaganda? Finally, we the Muslims appeal to all the rights intellectuals democrats, poets and singers not to speak in this manner, which hurts the self-respect of the Muslims. Let us unite and struggle for Telangana movement and move forward shoulder to shoulder.

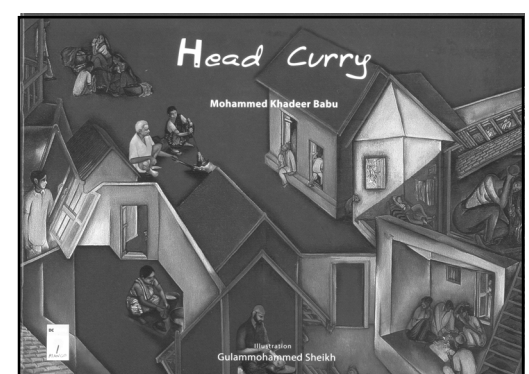
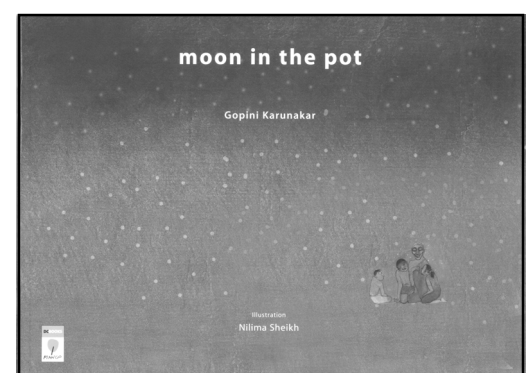
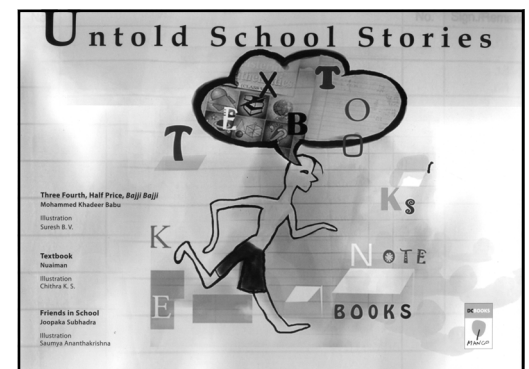
(Translated from Telugu by Kaneez Fathima)

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Half-truths, misconceptions!

■ By Divi Kumar

(From Andhra Jyothi, Telugu daily dated 14th March 2010, Hyderabad)

The article written by Rafath Seema and Kaneez Fathima from Muslim Forum for Telangana on February 28 in *Andhra Jyothi* contains many half-truths. Having used the tune 'Hindustan is mine, Pakistan is mine' (from Habeeb Jalib's song, written in 1960s) as the title of an editorial, now I respond to the article of these friends as someone belonging to neither Telangana nor Samaikyandhra.

As written in this article, Razaakaar movement started from 1944 onwards. Two years before that (in 1942) Shaik Bandagi was killed by the goondas of Visunooru Ramachandra Reddy. The writers of the present article have questioned the Communists: 'Why is there not a single booklet on Shaik Bandagi who died fighting against landlords and Razaakaars?' This is written without trying to know why Bandagi struggle took place, and what communists did. During the years 1946-48, the play written by Sunkara Vasireddy, 'Maa Bhumi' (Madras state banned this in 1948) was performed twice in a day in coastal districts. This play used to start with paying tributes to Shaik Bandagi while standing near his grave. Vallam Narsimha Rao, who acted as the hero of this play until he was 78 year old, did not leave a stage (nor was he allowed to leave) without singing the song on Shaik Bandagi. Telugu people know Shaik Bandagi's name hundred times more than Mir Osman Ali Khan's name. In 1945 itself, Devulapalli Venkateshwar Rao wrote about Bandagi in detail in the book *Janagaam Prajala Virochita Poratalu* (Brave struggles of Jangoan people).

B. Narsing Rao's *Maa Bhumi* film came after the Emergency. In it there is a song sung by Gaddar, 'Bandenaka Bandi katti' in which there is the line, 'Nyzaam Sarkaroda Naazilanu minchinoda'. That is not the original creation of the cinema makers. That song was famous before the military action itself.

The song that was written abusing Janna Reddy Pratap Reddy was re-sculpted afresh as Nyzaam Sarkaroda.... Such things are common in the movements. The important thing that has to be observed is, this song is against the Nizam sarkar but there is no hint of anti-Muslim sentiments in it. The song that was written against an individual was changed to a song against the establishment, government (sarkar). If the Nizam sarkar was not protected by Nehru and Patel government through

military action, people would have built his grave under Golconda Fort!

It is true that Shoaibullah Khan who sacrificed his life for democratic values and freedom of press did not get enough recognition, but it is incorrect to say that no one cared about him. Even Sangh Parivar magazines (whatever may be the reasons) remember Shoaibullah Khan. Journalists' forums have done such things as conducting memorial speeches, giving his name to their offices, and gifting his photo frames.

The authors said there are books in English about the Nizam's religious tolerance and development, but not in Telugu. Many books went from Urdu to English but why didn't some of them come into Telugu? Who is responsible for this? We struggled a lot alongside Nirmalananda to bring a special issue of the magazine *Praja Sahiti* on Maqdoom Mohiuddin in the year 2003. We used to sit in Urdu Hall, Nusrat Mohiuddin would read and explain Maqdoom's writing and we would write them in Hindi first and then translate into Telugu, in that way we brought them out. The people who know both Urdu and Telugu can translate Maqdoom's and other literature into Telugu. Shoaibullah Khan's editorials in '*Imroze*' newspaper should have been introduced to Telugu people (has it come out even in Urdu in a book form?). We felt sad when we got to know about writer Jahandar Afsar only after his death. He died two years ago. Who should be made responsible for the ignorance about journalist, writer, Jahandar Afsar, among his contemporaries? Afsar was born in the wealthiest Nizam family, but revolted against feudal rule, communalism and lived in poverty. I do not know a word of Urdu and until I went to Lahore and Karachi, I did not come to know about Hasan Nasir. He was born in a great freedom fighter's family, actively played an important role in Hyderabad student organization and finally was killed in Lahore jail at a very young age. Until I wrote an article in Andhra Jyothi, even the people who are in the age group of 75 years did not know his name. Is it not the responsibility of the people who know both Urdu and Telugu? During the Razaakaar atrocities, an ex-progressive writer, who worked for Hyderabad Radio as News telecaster, Ibrahim Jalees, later went away to Pakistan and wrote the book *Do mulkon ki ek hi kahani*, (one story of two nations; probably, it

does contain something about the country's partition and last minutes of Nizam State). How should the Telugu people read it? Ok, we can criticize Andhra Pradesh government, Telugu-Urdu academy, but we should also make a self-assessment of ourselves as writers!

Urdu is an Indian language. It gained too much of prominence in the past due to undemocratic politics. At present, it is undergoing discrimination. This fact is the only indication that we have not yet developed a democratic culture. The statistics cited by the writers under discussion also show this. At present, it seems, there are only 2% Muslims in employment! How undemocratic! Wasn't it undemocratic too when that number was 40%?

It is true that Urdu was not born as a religious language. However, are there any non-Muslims whose mother tongue is Urdu? As told by Gandhiji, if at all Hindustani (Hindi, Urdu without Parsi and Sanskrit words) had been accepted by central rulers and both Devanagari & Parsi scripts would have been spread, then that would have been a permanent solution to the problem of Hindi-Urdu. In the past, there were many Hindus who knew Urdu-Telugu. Now there are not many. The number of people who know Urdu and Telugu has increased a little among Muslims. At least these people should have propagated Urdu, as was Hindi. If Urdu is taught through Telugu letters, it would have been easily learnt not only by the Muslims of coastal districts but even Hindus. Unless Urdu becomes the mother tongue of non-Muslims, the label of it being the Muslim religious language cannot be erased. At the same time, while much religious literature is being translated from Urdu to Telugu, creative and secular literature is not. Muslims gather for religious congregations but they do not get mobilized against the establishment (price rise, unemployment, corruption, attacks on women etc) with the same spirit.

The respect commanded by Siraj ud Dowla, Tipu Sultan, Bahadur Shah Zafar cannot be given to the Nizam. Those who did not fight against the enemies of the country, those who did not create history, cannot achieve historical respect. Nizam's personal religious belief was Islam; he was feudal as a ruler. He is responsible for sustenance of British imperialists in South India and for the division among Telugus.

You have also written, 'why are we not visible in your History'. This is (Narendra) Modi's language not that of people. If separate Telangana is formed, how will Muslims achieve things that they do not have now or which they need or what they are aspiring for? The authors were unable to cite one thing that the Telangana Muslims lost due to living together with Andhra Muslims. Sorry!!

(Translated from Telugu by Kaneez Fathima)

Granted the Nizam's despotism, what about ARASAM's?

■ Jilukara Sreenivas for the Singidi Telangana Writer's Association

(From, Andhra Jyothi, Telugu daily 11th April 2010, Hyderabad)

As the debate about the Nizam's despotism stretches on, communists even today continue to repeat their old analyses. The communist party, which has rejected the demand for a separate Telangana for over six decades, is ultimately forced to support it under the compulsion of electoral arithmetic. Alongside this, the perspective of the Progressive Writers' Association (ARASAM) too has changed accordingly.

The essays of S.V. Satyanarayana and Velpula Narayana are stating the new position of ARASAM on Telangana history. Divi Kumar has written saying that while he belongs neither to the separate Telangana group nor to the united Andhra group, he would respond to the essays of his friends. Even as he did so, his argument that the main cause both for British stabilization in the South and for the fragmentation of the Telugus was the Nizam, is nothing but an argument for a united Andhra. That neutrality is ultimately an anti-democratic position is best exemplified by Divi Kumar's essay. Until now, most of the writings about Telangana history have been written from the perspective of the communists. The literature that centres on an anti-Nizam position is filled with a resentment that is ignorant of facts of history. It is also motivated by an ideology that attributes its own errors to others.

The rise to prominence of this unscientific and anti-democratic perspective is also due to the ARASAM role. Their essays show that they believe that history once written is fixed forever. They believe that historiography is that which establishes a foundation of truth. However, it is necessary to accept new concepts as they emerge and rewrite history. They should be able to examine their old convictions on the basis of new insights and correct their inflexible opinions honestly. This is an endless process, never fixed once and for all. However, those who call themselves as Marxist literary figures are conducting themselves in a manner that is against Marxism's fundamental principles. This is a context of de-Brahminizing the Telangana Bahujan perspective and historiography. The foolish assertion that Telangana history is one of a struggle against the Nizam is the main cause for the eclipse of a self-respecting Bahujan history. Until now, there has been a shameless plot to reduce a history of thousands of years to a mere seven-year history. Archaeological excavations indicate that six hundred years before the Aryans invaded Telangana, there was a flourishing agricultural and urban civilization established in the region.

Ancient coinage indicates that a highly egalitarian society existed in Telangana, innocent of the wealthy dominant caste ideology of coastal Andhra. It is this same ideology that is being propagated in the name of Marxism by S.V. Sathyanarayana and Velpula Narayana. There is a mountain of ignorance in those who criticize those who praise the Nizam. The Father of the Nation, Mahatma Jotiba Phule appreciated the Nizam's rule. As far back as 1880, Jotiba Phule observed that the irrigation strategy adopted by the Nizam in Telangana resulted in the steady progress of the farmers here. He criticized the irrigation strategy of the British, observing that they benefited only the Kulkarni, Bhattas, Brahmins, Patels and Patwaris. The Nizam's rule as propagated by the communists is as if carved in stone, but Telangana under Nizam's direct rule was different. On the other hand, that part of Telangana under the rule of deshmukhs and jagirdars was different. In the region that was under the Nizam's direct rule, the Scheduled Castes, Backward Classes and the Scheduled Tribes had an importance unmatched anywhere else in the country. The Nizam, who had honored the great founders of the Adi-Hindu movement, Bhagya Reddy Varma and Arige Ramaswamy, had spent crores of rupees on the development of SC, ST and BC education. The Nizam who had made B.S. Venkat Rao his education minister is bound to be a great man for the SCs, STs and BCs. The Nizam had passed a law eliminating bonded labor in 1910. The story, *Sangala Panthulu*, written by Suravaram Pratap Reddy is framed in this context. There was no bonded labour in Hyderabad, which was under the Nizam's direct rule. He also eliminated Devadasi practice. He instituted several consciousness raising programmes against the consumption of liquor. The movement of the Untouchables, which started as the *Jaganmitramandali* movement was transformed into the Adi Hindu and Adi Andhra Movements. By 1930, Telugu medium free schools were established for the improvement of SC, ST and BC education. The Nizam had warned that refusal of admission on the basis of caste, religion or gender, would result in punishment. The SC, ST and BC leaders had publicly honored the Nizam. The communists have never told of the heroes from the Madiga community like Jambanna, who were conferred many honors and titles in the Nizam's army. S.V.'s charge is that the Nizam filled his coffers by taxing pestle and mortar. There is no record of any G.O. by which the Nizam ordered the levy of so many different taxes. Is it just to hold the Nizam

responsible for the oppressions and exploitations of the upper caste zamindars? While the Nizam was responsible as the ruler of the kingdom, his wasn't the sole responsibility. In the final stages of the Nizam's rule, the political conditions became extremely serious. While history says that the zamindars colluded with Kasim Rizvi to weaken the Nizam, S.V. and Velpula are trying to convince us otherwise. Velpula asserts that we have to identify the Nizam's despotism as the cause for the killing of 4500 peasants in the Telangana Armed Struggle. If the struggle against the Razaakaars resulted in the death of 400 peasants, Sangisetty Srinivas (in a previous article) has shown that 4000 peasants died after Police Action. Velpula however, does not accept this and asserts that the Nizam's despotism alone that must be identified as the cause of these deaths. The communists too must accept responsibility for the death of these 4000 people after the Police Action. A Telangana leader like Raavi Narayana Reddy stated that the Armed Struggle must not continue after the Police Action. Raavi Narayana Reddy called the killing of innocent Muslims because they were suspected to be Razaakaars, fascism. It was necessary to stop the Armed Struggle after the Police Action, but because of the erroneous strategy of the Andhra leadership in continuing the struggle, tragedy occurred. Saying that the people were ready for armed struggle, Ranadive asserted that the struggle must continue according the Russian model, and Basavapunnaiah argued for the Chinese model. Because of this, thousands of innocent SC, ST, BC and minority civilians sacrificed their lives. Instead of asking the Telangana people forgiveness for this, these communists are throwing the blame on the Nizam. How dare these communists (who have been unable to determine the direction of the movement) and their tail end organizations, now teach morals to the Telangana people?

In the context of every struggle against the dominant establishment, different castes, communities and regions re-establish the foundations of their history. The Telangana people are doing just that.

Because of the false propaganda of the communists, that Telangana has only a slave history, Andhra settlers assert, "We liberated you! You are still slaves to the rulers". For this, organizations like ARASAM have to accept responsibility.

The communist party leadership of that day lobbied for the merger of the independent Telangana region into Andhra. ARASAM too supported this. In that way, the leaders belonging to the organization that opposed Telangana, and the forces of oppression criticize the Nizam and injure the self-respect of the Telangana people. The Bahujans will not tolerate this arrogance any longer.

(Translated from Telugu by R. Srivatsan and L.V. Lakshmi)

The attempt to dilute facts

■ Ashala Srinivas

(From Andhra Jyothi, Telugu daily, dated 30th May 2010)

After reading Kadire Krishna's essay "Was the Nizam for the *bahujans*?" (*AJ*, May 3rd, 2010), I was convinced that he had to understand many issues. In history, all the kings have been depicted in a good light. It is only the Nizam, who has been thrown in a dark corner.

He argues, that just because some one Nizam governed well, it would be a mistake to assume that all the Nizams governed well too. Afzal u Dowla, (1857-69) the fifth Nizam, and Mir Mahboob Ali Khan, (1869-1911) the sixth Nizam may possibly have governed satisfactorily, Krishna says. However, he shows his historical ignorance by saying that Mir Osman Ali Khan, the seventh Nizam, was solely responsible for the loot and massacre of Telangana.

In truth, those responsible for the Telangana massacre were the Home Minister of India Vallabhbhai Patel and the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. If the number of peasants killed in the Telangana Armed Struggle was 400, the number of recorded deaths of peasants in the Police Action was 4000. They met their death at the hands of Patel's army. It was only after several thousand innocent Muslims were slaughtered did Patel's army take over the Nizam's government.

Kadire Krishna states that the *bahujans* fled out of fear of Razaakaar terror. In fact many of the Razaakaars were *dalits* and *bahujans*. Many of them were unable to tolerate the oppression of the *zamindars* and converted to Islam. The Razaakaar disturbance was limited to Hyderabad, Nalgonda and Warangal districts. Peesari Veeranna, a dalit leader from Warangal district, objected to the use of the word '*harijan*' and in 1940s criticized Gandhi on a public platform. He formed an armed squad to support and liberate dalits. He founded a place of worship to Allah in Warangal, in the name of Allama Prabhu.

Examining all these historical facts in depth will force the writers of the *Moolavaasi Rachayitula Sangham* (Indigenous Writers' Association) to review and revise their opinions about both conversions to Islam and the Razaakaars. This does not mean that I support the Razaakaars. A wrong by anyone is a wrong!

Kadire Krishna wrote that the Hyderabad Independence Day was celebrated on July 29th some time in the 1940s before the Police Action, at the house of B.S. Venkat Rao (an important Dalit leader of that period). However, this

Independence Day was celebrated on June 29th. On that day, there was a huge public meeting of the Depressed Classes Association near Venkat Rao's house. The Razaakaar commander Kasim Rizvi too attended this meeting.

The dalit movement leader Shyam Sunder said then, "The 'lower' castes even today are suffering oppression at the hands of the savarna castes. We have joined hands with those who have come to our house and sat with us in support, without hesitation and of our own free will".

Bhagya Reddy Varma's *Adi Hindu Murali Nivaaran Mandali* was an association that worked to eliminate the practice of Devadasis. The Nizam's government gave full support to this organization. It is perhaps for this reason that Jilukara Srinivas said in his article that the dalit leaders respected the Nizam. Kadire Krishna is also wrong in saying that Bhagya Reddy Varma and Arige Ramaswamy were influenced by the Arya Samaj. The former was influenced more by the Brahmo Samaj and by Buddhism than by the Arya Samaj.

Krishna also writes that the dalits supported the congress, the communists and the Razaakaars. The Hyderabad dalits entered politics through the Depressed Classes Association alone. We should pay attention to the fact that the Nizam's government earmarked Rs. 1 crore in the year 1947 for the upliftment of the Depressed Classes and for special scholarships to dalits going abroad for higher education. If we examine the cases of Dr. Malayya, a Bahujan doctor sent to Germany to pursue research, M.L. Aadaiah who was the contractor who built the High Court, Valthathi Seshaiyah who was the premier contractor the government, we can evaluate the Nizam's rule to a certain extent.

One of the earlier articles made a mistake of saying that Bhagya Reddy Varma was the Education Minister, when in fact it was B.S. Venkat Rao. If we read the book *Relinquish Untouchability* (1961), written by Kusuma Darmanna, who had extremely cordial relations with the dalit movement here (*Adi Hindu*), we would understand that the dalits in Hyderabad were better off than those in Andhra. The eyes that clamp shut automatically when the Nizam's issue arises, at least now, have to open. An unbiased reading will reveal astonishing facts. We must delve into our history from all perspectives. This work will have to be done responsibly in the context of the Telangana movement.

(Translated from Telugu by R. Srivatsan)

Two Connotations of "Nizam"

■ R. Srivatsan

In recent debates around the movement for a separate Telangana, there has been a tendency to make a political parable out of the defeat of the Razaakaars and the Nizam's rule. Songs were sung and stories told about both the Telangana Armed Struggle and the 'liberation of Hyderabad' as part of the effort to build a constructive spirit among the actors in the agitation. However, the Muslims who are significant participants in the current struggle are considerably dismayed by this turn of struggle culture and rhetoric against the Nizam. A wide range of Muslim opinion has opposed the vilification of the Nizam and celebration of Hyderabad's accession to the Indian Union as 'liberation'. This widespread dismay, expressed in several different positions among the Muslim political and cultural groups, was expressed from one perspective in the *Andhra Jyoti* newspaper leading to a discussion six months ago. Rafath Seema and Kaneez Fathima's essay "Do Not Hurt Self Respect" (*AJ*, 29th February, 2010) protested against the use of anti-Nizam songs and rhetoric in the aim to build the spirit of the Telangana movement. They argued that such rhetoric was anti-Muslim, and that it was also a wrong portrayal of the Nizam, who, though a feudal ruler, was a benevolent one. One could not forget the good things he had done, and this negative rhetoric led Muslims to suspect that the Telangana movement would result in the strengthening of the BJP and the Hindutva agenda.

The response to this article came from many sources. S.V. Satyanarayana argued in his response "Is Nizam Not Cruel?" (*AJ*, 7th March 2010) that the songs composed against the Nizam described a bleak existence and were echoed in the writings of Maqdoom Mohiuddin: despotism, oppression, bondage, conversion, illiteracy, taxation, suppression of language, culture and other aspects of the life of the majority of the non Muslims. The thrust of his argument focused on the well-known 'truth of the Nizam's barbaric despotism'. Divi Kumar's response "Half-truths, Myths", (*AJ*, 14th March 2010) pointed to the lack of a history of other Muslim political figures like Shoaibullah Khan, who sacrificed a lot for the freedom struggle. However, Kumar insisted that it is not possible to see Nizam as a positive figure. Sangisetty Srinivas' article "Why attack Nizam while hiding the facts" (*AJ*, 7th March 2010) defended Rafath

Seema and Kaneez Fathima against Arasam and the Progressive Writers Forum, asking why facts about the Nizam's good work were not mentioned and why he was attacked instead? While we condemn the Nizam, his police, and his government who killed Yadagiri for writing the poem "Nizam sarkaroda", why do we not condemn Sri Sri's reporting of Yadagiri's death as an 'encounter'? Why indeed should we not condemn Nehru and Patel for the murder of four thousand peasants of the Telangana armed struggle? Many other such responses have raised several important questions about the subject, yet I feel something further may be derived from a somewhat different theoretical perspective.

The crux of the issue may be captured by a theoretical term introduced sixty years ago by Roland Barthes – the concept of *connotation*. This concept is set in opposition to *denotation* or the direct, explicit meaning of a word. The term connotation refers to the resonance, or the memory evoked by a word that is wider than its simple meaning. In his book *Mythologies* he has used this concept to elaborate how modern society constructs new myths. These myths provide an ideological foundation for modern forms of living. For example, he demonstrates how the comic book hero Superman is central to Western notions of masculinity. In another direction he showed why space travel captured the Western imagination as a symbol of human progress. Indeed, it is possible to argue that all literature is rooted in connotation. Advertising certainly is. For example, fairness creams are extremely successful commercial products in India. These creams draw on the elementary meaning of the word 'fairness' denoting a 'light skin'. The cream makes the skin of the user fairer. However, the reason for the success of fairness creams is that the connotation of the word 'fairness' is 'beautiful'. This connotation is normally implicit, but is made explicit by the brand 'Fair and Lovely'. Thus, to be fair, is to be beautiful, lovely and desirable. And by implication, to be dark is to be otherwise. Connotation is by its structure implicit and silent in its operation. We will explore the complexity of its operation in the current context.

What then is the connotation of the word Nizam in the current debate? If we think of it, there are actually two opposing strands of connotation.

The first connotation arises in the broad perception that the five centuries of Muslim rule in India were a backward, dark age, much as the medieval period was considered the Dark Ages in European history. Colonialism in India saw itself as the driving force behind the progress from an age of barbarism and savagery. Marx too saw colonialism in this historical light. Indeed many nineteenth century Hindu writers followed the colonial line and extolled the virtues of British rule, which saved them from the clutches of the Muslim ruler. The freedom movement and Independence were seen as a next step towards modernity. It was a struggle against colonialism as a form of rule that held India back from fulfilling its destiny. This

nationalist characterization of Muslim rule in India as the dark age of Indian history also applies to the princely states in general (though some, like Mysore, were seen as undoubtedly progressive). It had to be so because the princely states were precisely those kingdoms that the British Empire for various reasons ruled through indirect control over the local king, as opposed to the three presidencies where they ruled directly. The princely states were thus throwbacks to the pre-British (and therefore Mughal) age. This was especially true of the largest princely state, i.e., the Nizam's dominion. In this line of thinking, the arrival of freedom was seen as a second stage of progress from the dark age of Muslim rule and also crucially the elimination of its residue, the princely state. This contextualization helps us understand the vilification of the Nizam in contemporary writing, both secular and Hindu fundamentalist. It is almost as if there can be no memory of the Nizam having done any good. In comparison to the "memory of his barbaric rule", all crimes by the Indian nation that succeeded him fade into insignificance. It is as if, in comparison to the Nizam, the nation can do no wrong.

Historians and political theorists like Shahid Amin and Partha Chatterjee have shown that the Muslim presence in India was for over two centuries equated in Hindu nationalist writing with the image of the Muslim ruler: Ghazni, Gori, Babur, Nadir Shah, Tughlak, etc. Thus, the *connotation* of the name of these Muslim rulers in the Hindu imagination was the living Muslim presence. This is true even today: the Babri Masjid was demolished not simply because it was built over a Hindu temple, but because the destruction of the mosque Babur built was a symbolic, connotative act of aggression against the contemporary Muslim. Such a historical context provides a shared connotation between the Hindu and Muslim that the word 'Nizam' is nothing but another name for the Hyderabad Muslim of today. This connotation is the unmistakable coercive force of Hindu domination on the Muslim mind in contemporary India. It is as if the Hyderabad Muslim's forehead today is stamped with the 'evil' sign of the Nizam

The second connotation in the Muslim mind of Nizam's Hyderabad is one of irreparable loss. Whatever the situation in the rural hinterland was, the days of the Nizam's rule were the golden age in which the Muslims dominated culture, language, and political life as is to be expected with any ruling elite, even as it is today. The coercive action taken by, and in the name of, the Razaakars was in defense of a threatened elite. With Police Action and the accession of Hyderabad, as Ratna Naidu has documented, the elite Muslims simply left Hyderabad. All Muslims below this top stratum who remained in the region lost life, family members, social standing, jobs, livelihood, cultural confidence and economic security. The post independence history of the Hyderabad Muslim is one of a painstaking reconstruction of a self that crumbled in the Police Action and its aftermath. The memory of the Hyderabad

Muslim today is scarred by the violence and brutality of that collapse of *an entire world*. It is an inevitable law of political force that the Muslim remembers the collapse of his social standing and authority as consequent to the fall of the Nizam. The Nizam's reign and debacle thus connote the zenith and nadir of Muslim life in Hyderabad. In such a situation, it is impossible for the Muslims to take the scientific stand of Marxist historiography and say that the end of the Nizam's despotism was for the progress of the society – it simply was not so for them! It is for this reason that Rafath Seema and Kaneez Fathima respond with such anguish and irritation about the vilification of the Nizam.

What is the relationship between connotation and the writing of history? It is not simply that connotation is ideology, i.e., falsehood, and that the writing of history is the voice of the truth. Clearly nationalist history writing and a great deal of left historiography accept the connotation of the medieval dark ages of Muslim rule. The princely states were seen as a remnant of that Dark Age. Historical vision in these circumstances is a kind of blindness. This vision bundles together the colonial, Muslim and Dalit and sees them as 'backward others'. Just as the national struggle overcame colonialism, progressive struggles have to battle backward identities like the Muslim and the Dalit. These 'others' have to prove their progressiveness by rejecting their community's specific histories, cultures and experiences. In this way, the idea of progress becomes stereotypical, eliminating the possibility of 'other' claims to progressiveness. These other struggles cannot claim their place in history. Thus, secular history writing narrates the story of progress from the island of feudalism (Hyderabad) to the land of freedom (India). Such a story cannot but be a threat to the Muslim, who sees himself as left behind, found wanting, and marked in the present by the darkness of a bygone era. How can a Hyderabad Muslim see his complex life struggle in this linear narrative? Such secular history writing is always under the looming shadow of an implicit Hindutva ideology.

In the end, what progress are we looking towards? We no longer have a surviving socialism that provides our imagination of progress with a model to follow. The way we are headed, there are no guarantees that 'national' development will lead to good things for all either. In these complex and turbulent times, we need to build our models afresh, meticulously, without the possibility of a revolutionary clean slate, drawing strength and vision from what exists in minority and subaltern perspectives. Indeed true revolutions are only possible through such syntheses. To think our politics in relation to contemporary Muslim life, we have to be attentive to these divergent connotations of names like Nizam, Osman Ali Khan, Hyderabad, and indeed, of the word Muslim itself. Such disagreements open new dimensions of our perceived world, and thus reshape it in a fundamental political sense. ●